ESI Sells 500th UV Laser Microvia Drilling System for Interconnect Applications; Milestone Reinforces ESI's Position as World Leader in UV Laser Drilling Systems

PORTLAND, Ore.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--March 16, 2006--ESI (Nasdaq:ESIO), a leading provider of world-class production laser systems for microengineering applications, today announced it has sold its 500th ultraviolet (UV) laser microvia drilling system for integrated circuit (IC) packaging and flexible circuit applications. This milestone sales figure includes ESI's Model 5330™ single-head and Model ICP5530™ dual-head systems. Both employ ESI's high-repetition UV laser system to perform high-quality, high-volume drilling of blind microvias in advanced IC packages, flexible circuits and high-density interconnect (HDI). Like the company's other core technology platforms, ESI's UV laser systems are also extendable to address manufacturing requirements for new and emerging interconnect applications.

Chip packaging has become more complex and challenging due to rising consumer demand for laptop computers, PDAs, cellular flip phones, and other personal digital devices that require smaller form factors and increasing capabilities. These stringent packaging parameters drive the demand for very small, highly precise vias. ESI's Model 5330 and Model 5530 drill high-quality microvias on flexible circuits, chip-scale packages (CSPs), flip chip ball-grid arrays (BGAs) and other advanced IC packages -- enabling volume production of smaller, lighter, function- and feature-rich electronic devices.

ESI President and CEO Nick Konidaris said, "One of ESI's core competencies is in UV laser system technology. As a result of over 10 years experience in the interconnect arena, we have been able to utilize our UV technology to address other markets, such as semiconductor link processing. Going forward, ESI will continue to leverage its technology expertise and develop leading solutions for our global customers' emerging applications."

"The demand for ever-smaller microvias in IC packaging and flexible circuits is driving the rapid global adoption of our 5330 and 5530 UV laser drilling systems," noted Sudhakar Raman, business unit manager for ESI's Interconnect Solutions Group. "Thanks to close collaboration with our global IC packaging customers in the design of our tools, ESI has achieved the world's largest installed base of UV laser drilling systems. We look forward to reaching new benchmarks as ESI continues to provide extendable technology solutions that address our customers' most advanced requirements for high accuracy, high productivity and lower overall cost of ownership."

ESI's UV laser drilling solutions are specifically designed for applications requiring the highest accuracy and the smallest via dimensions. With the world's largest installed base of UV laser drilling systems, ESI continues to focus on developing cost-effective solutions that provide increased speed, quality, reliability and serviceability for its global customers.

Model 5330 Key Features

ESI's Model 5330 UV Laser Microvia Drilling System is the premier choice for high-quality microvias in small-geometry circuit boards and electronic packages. The Model 5330 incorporates a high power diode-pumped laser and patented compound beam positioning system making it the most versatile laser processing platform.

Model ICP5530 Key Features

ESI's state-of-the-art ICP5530 dual-head UV laser system combines a high repetition rate laser and field proven, patented compound beam positioner to provide an ideal tool for mass production of blind microvias. The ICP5530 can produce more than 50,000 high-quality microvias per minute for high-end gaming, computing, and other applications that require advanced microprocessors and chipsets with very small vias.

About ESI

ESI is a pioneer and leading supplier of world-class production laser systems that help its microelectronics customers achieve compelling yield and productivity gains. The company's industry-leading, application-specific products enhance electronic-device performance in three key sectors -- semiconductors, components and electronic interconnect -- by enabling precision fine-tuning of device microfeatures in high-volume manufacturing environments. Founded in 1944, ESI is headquartered in Portland, Ore. More information is available at www.esi.com

The Model 5330 and the Model ICP5530 are trademarks of ESI, Inc.

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