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TALK TO US

Switch Chip Startup Snags $77 Million

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Samsung, GF Ramp FD-SOI

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Globalfoundries announced that it has 36 design wins for its 22-nm fully depleted silicon-on-insulator process, more than a dozen of which should tape-out this year. Rival Samsung said that it expects to tape-out more than 20 chips in its 28-nm FD-SOI process this year.

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Qualcomm Begins Layoffs

SAN FRANCISCO — Qualcomm has begun laying off an unspecified number of full-time and temporary workers as part of a cost-cutting plan announced in January.

A Qualcomm spokesperson confirmed to EE Times that the workforce reductions have begun. The layoffs had been reported earlier in the day by news services including Bloomberg and Reuters.

"We first evaluated non-headcount expense reductions, but we concluded that a workforce reduction is needed to support long-term growth and success, which will ultimately benefit all our stakeholders," the spokesperson said in an email exchange with EE Times.

Qualcomm told investors in January that it would enact a $1 billion cost reduction program. The pledge was made in a letter to investors as the company's board of directors battled a hostile takeover attempt by Broadcom.

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Targeting applications like smart factories and logistics, RTLS enables precise monitoring of the production process and a transparent material flow. Real-time data made available using RTLS about the location and status of assets forms the basis for networking involved players and logistical processes along the value chain. This allows users to continuously and automatically compare the position of every production asset with the 3D model (or digital twin) of the product or production environment. Evaluation and combination of this digital twin with other information — for instance, using apps in the company's IoT operating system, MindSphere — permit dynamic optimization of production and logistics processes.

Alibaba Adds Embedded CPU Core Designer

MADISON, Wis. — China's internet behemoth, Alibaba Group, announced on Friday the acquisition of C-Sky Microsystems, a designer of China's home-grown 32-bit embedded CPU processing core.

Alibaba did not disclose terms of the acquisition.

The move underscores a growing trend among companies, such as Google, Amazon, and Alibaba, who are eager to swallow up chip companies with a goal to design chips that fit their businesses.

As EE Times reported last year, even well before this acquisition was announced, C-Sky enjoyed a unique tie with Alibaba. As Xiaoning Qi, CEO of C-Sky, explained then, C-Sky was already the first chip company in the world to receive a sizable investment from Alibaba. C-Sky was founded in Hangzhou in 2001.

Switch Chip Startup Snags $77 Million

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Startup Innovium announced it secured $77 million in Series D financing, bringing its total to date to a whopping $160 million. The deal shows investors have confidence the designer of Ethernet switch chips will grab sockets away from Broadcom which dominates the field.

The round closes as Innovium announced it is sampling its 12.8 and 6.4 Terabit/second switches aimed at large data centers. The funds will be used in part to ramp production of the chips and fuel their road map.

Samsung, GF Ramp FD-SOI

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Globalfoundries announced that it has 36 design wins for its 22-nm fully depleted silicon-on-insulator process, more than a dozen of which should tape-out this year. Rival Samsung said that it expects to tape-out more than 20 chips in its 28-nm FD-SOI process this year.

The latest data points were taken as welcome signs that FD-SOI is finally gaining traction as a lower cost and power alternative to FinFETs. Among other news at an SOI Consortium event here, Andes Technology announced that it will release in July a 32-bit RISC-V core capable of running Linux.

The semiconductor industry now sees FD-SOI and FinFETs playing complementary roles, said G. Dan Hutcheson, chief executive of VLSI Research.

However, "people still think the FD-SOI ecosystem is weak, it needs more IP, more full design flows, and that it's a technology where you need to know what you are doing," said the market watcher, referring to its ability to control power using body biasing.