

Autron ties up with leading equipment maker Fuji

***Partnership brings together two of the biggest names in SMT equipment supply to the electronics manufacturing industry***

**Singapore, May 10, 2004** – Autron Corporation Ltd (ASX Security Code: AAT) (SGX Security Code: Autron) today announced a strategic partnership with Fuji Machine Manufacturing Co Ltd of Japan as it strengthens its position as the leading SMT equipment solutions provider in Asia's electronics manufacturing industry.

This partnership enables Autron's strategic regional network of extensive manufacturing, refurbishment, sales and servicing, as well as financing capabilities, to complement one of the world's most established Surface Mount Technology (SMT) equipment manufacturer. To date, Fuji, with one of the largest machine installation bases, remains the most popular brand used in the assembly line processes of Multi National Corporations in the electronics industry. Since its inception in 1959, Fuji has become the world's largest SMT equipment provider, setting industry standards by introducing many innovative designs and processes that keep the company on the leading edge of SMT development.

This Autron-Fuji partnership would ensure that the biggest equipment pipeline in the world's fastest growing market – Asia, particularly China – now also carries the most popular brand, a link missing in the channel for several years.

"It is significant that Fuji, which is one of the largest manufacturers of electronics assembly equipment, has formed a partnership with Autron that uses Singapore as a launch pad into the global markets for refurbished assembly equipment," said Mr Ted Tan, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, IE Singapore.

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Autron Corporation Limited is an unrelated and distinct entity to Autron Electronics Pty Ltd

## **Sales and Distribution**

Autron's main distribution subsidiary, American Tec Co Ltd, which owns and operates the largest sales and servicing network for Assembly Equipment in China, will distribute the complete range of Fuji's products in the world's fastest growing electronics manufacturing market. The latest iSuppli / Messe Muenchen research report estimates the China assembly equipment market to be worth US\$1.5 billion in 2005. With a sales and servicing force of about 180 experienced and accredited engineers strategically stationed in more than 12 sales and engineering centres in China, American Tec is poised to further Fuji's market share in the country. American Tec's facilities include full demonstration systems; spare parts hubs; repair stations; as well as technical application and pilot run centres. A recently opened sales and support office in Dalian will penetrate further into Northern and Western China as electronics manufacturing continues to expand in the same direction. Additionally, it plans to open a major business operations centre to house its regional headquarters, state-of-the-art demonstration training, market research and technical support in Southern China at the end of June.

Autron's portfolio, with the incorporation of Fuji's products, will grow to allow a complete range of equipment solutions catering to the market through its three major series of the XP, CP and NXT. In particular, Fuji provides Autron's customers with a flexible platform to tailor to the requirements of large production volume or frequent change-overs to suit a variety of product demands.

This partnership also adds a major Japanese product offering to Autron's portfolio of SMT solutions and caters to the growing demand for better pricing and reliability with Japanese assembly technology. More than 500 of Autron's existing customers, especially the Chinese National Companies – among the world's fastest growing companies – will benefit from the move.

The timely inclusion of Fuji's products in the Autron's portfolio will also increase the company's sales volume over the next few years.

### **Refurbished Equipment Business**

As part of the solutions approach to its business, Autron's refurbishment arm under AGS Pte Ltd has grown tremendously over the last six months. Fuji has selected AGS as its main refurbishment partner in the refurbished equipment business. Under this partnership, Fuji will train and certify all AGS engineers on Fuji's products, supply original spare parts for Autron's refurbished equipment, and audit AGS's refurbishment processes and facilities to ensure that standards are met.

Autron will continue to increase its financial investments in this key, growing business segment. AGS manages its refurbishment business independently and provides its own warranty on its products. The collaboration will maintain the quality and reputation of the Fuji brand, which has been established for many years. Used equipment is commonly recycled today without proper technical back up, spare parts and warranties. With over 500 engineers, Autron – through AGS – has the financial and manpower capabilities, as well as the expertise and experience, to spearhead this growing industry segment. AGS equipment solutions will prove critical for manufacturers who need to reduce production costs. AGS is able to supply a fully integrated line of mixed assembly equipment – both new and used. Fuji's endorsement fits nicely with Autron's recently announced \$50 million investment solution centre in Singapore. Overall, the AGS solutions are expected to contribute significantly to the company's turnover in profits in the short and medium term.

"We have worked very hard over the past few years to transform ourselves from a mundane equipment distributor to be the largest SMT solutions provider in Asia today that is totally customer-focused, on enhancing the production efficiency of its customers, all 500 of whom are the biggest names in the electronics manufacturing industry. Indeed our main challenge today is to put together the most comprehensive

technology and financially effective solutions through the Autron Channel for our customers to reduce their ever-increasing manufacturing cost. To this end we have to tie up with the best in terms of current and future technology, pricing, operational back up and supply chain support. We found in Fuji all these complementary strengths and more importantly the dynamism, commitment, passion and sincerity of its management and employees in wanting to forge a truly mutually beneficial, respectful and long term relationship with us. At Autron we are grateful for this opportunity and would do our best to grow this relationship to even greater heights," said Mr Tan Cheng Leong, Autron's Group Executive Chairman.

"Autron is a capable company which defines its mission clearly with versatile functions. Under this collaboration, we can expect good results, especially from the business with Chinese National Companies. Autron can provide specific satisfaction to their needs and requirements," said Mr. Masayoshi Ohara, Fuji's Senior Managing Director.

At the same time, Autron also announced that it has reached an amicable settlement with Assembleon to terminate its distribution relationship.

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### **About Autron Corporation Limited**


Autron Corporation Limited is headquartered in Singapore and dual-listed on the ASX and SGX-ST (ASX Security Code: AAT)(SGX-ST Security Code: Autron). The Company is the largest Assembly Equipment Solutions Provider to the electronics manufacturing industry.

Please visit us on the web at [www.autroncorp.com](http://www.autroncorp.com)

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