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Doctor With Invention Has Own Firm

By [Kyle Kennedy](#)

THE LEDGER

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Blue Sky West has a doctor in the house: 45-year-old Brian Jurbala, an orthopedic surgeon with a thriving practice in Lakeland.

The Pennsylvania native studied chemistry and biomedical engineering at Penn State and earned his medical degree from Temple University, but he's here at the incubator to address a gap in his education: How do you turn a medical invention into a full-fledged company?

"It's a big leap to go from idea to company, and then from company to commercialization of the product is another big leap, and they didn't teach me any of that in medical school," Jurbala said. "This is almost like going back to college again."

Jurbala's SonicSurg Innovations LLC, which is about a year old as a company, centers around the development of a new medical device used to treat a condition known as trigger finger. The common hand ailment can cause joint stiffness and loss of motion, and is typically treated at an outpatient surgery center.

Jurbala says his device would allow for a new procedure to be done in a doctor's office instead of the operating room, saving time and money in the process. First-hand experience has convinced Jurbala of its business potential.

"I've practiced for eight years, and over that period of time in orthopedics you see tools and instruments you use, and you see needs for certain things. I was able to get



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Brian Jurbala is an orthopedic surgeon with a thriving practice in Lakeland.

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a broad view of what's out there and what didn't work so well," Jurbala said.

"Ultimately, we want to make things easier, less painful, less invasive, more economical for the patient. I think the company as a whole will do well if we do all of those things."

Since arriving at Blue Sky in the spring, Jurbala has worked with incubator staff on developing the corporate framework for SonicSurg and preparing a private stock offering in the company, getting it ready for early 2011, when the firm is expected to begin selling its first device.

Jurbala has a patent pending on the instrument and says it complies with Food and Drug Administration regulations allowing it to be sold. He also has recruited a chief executive and board members for SonicSurg who have experience in medical device manufacturing.

In addition, SonicSurg has begun work on another instrument designed to "make it simpler and less invasive to treat broken bones," Jurbala said. He anticipates the company will initially need five to 10 local employees for sales and support operations, though he expects that figure to grow as SonicSurg ramps up design and development of other products.

Even as the firm takes shape, Jurbala said he is keenly aware of the risks. He's personally invested an amount "in the upper five figures" just getting SonicSurg to this point.

"I'm pretty sure there's a need for this and it's going to work. I was willing to invest the time and money into it, but it's still a risky thing," Jurbala said. "That's how accomplishments and advancements are made in business, by investment."

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