COGNEX
Vision for Industry

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
Shay Tressa
Senior Public Relations Specialist
Cognex Corporation
(508) 650-3000, ext. 3383

COGNEX ANNOUNCES BREAKTHROUGH IN OBJECT LOCATION SOFTWARE; INTRODUCES NEXT-GENERATION VISION HARDWARE

PatMax™ Software Establishes New Performance Benchmark in Machine Vision Industry; Runs on New, Next-Generation Vision Hardware That Provides 10X Speed Increase

NATICK, MA, July 14, 1997—Cognex Corporation (NASDAQ: CGNX), the world's leading supplier of machine vision systems, today introduced PatMax™, a software innovation expected to become the new performance standard in the machine vision industry for determining the position of objects. The company also introduced the Cognex 8000 Series™, its next-generation hardware platform that operates up to 10 times faster than current systems.

PatMax is an entirely new method for both locating and inspecting objects which are passing under the view of the vision system. PatMax locates objects with a precision that is 10 times higher than the most commonly used methods, and PatMax maintains this precision even when the objects to be located have become severely degraded due to changes in appearance, angle, or size. In addition to accurately locating objects, PatMax also determines if pieces of the object are missing or if there are extraneous pieces present; this inspection capability is extremely important in determining the quality of manufactured items that are being scrutinized by the vision system.

(more)

"Accurately locating the position of an object to be inspected is the first step in virtually every machine vision application," said Dr. Robert J. Shillman, President, Chief Executive Officer, and Chairman of Cognex. "As parts get more complex and as tolerances get tighter, machine vision systems must keep up. PatMax will help to ensure that we will be able to meet the needs of our customers into the 21st century. This unique capability of simultaneously locating and inspecting products will raise the bar for what customers throughout the world expect from machine vision, and I fully expect that it will help us not only to maintain our technological and market leadership position in the industry, but to expand it as well."

PatMax will significantly boost machine vision performance in a broad variety of applications, the first being in the semiconductor and electronics industries. For example, Cognex vision systems using PatMax will be able to locate and precisely align the newest generation of 300 mm semiconductor wafers, despite numerous variations—such as those introduced by chemical mechanical processing (CMP)—which competing systems typically cannot handle. And, PatMax will enable electronics manufacturers to achieve higher yields by providing increased speed and accuracy on a variety of production machines, including surface mount device (SMD) pick and place equipment.

Unlike most existing pattern finding methods, which are based on public-domain algorithms such as normalized correlation, PatMax is a proprietary and patented technology developed by Cognex's co-founder and Vice President of Research and Development, William Silver, and it will only be available on Cognex machine vision systems.

Cognex also introduced today the Cognex 8000 Series, the company's next-generation machine vision hardware platforms which plug directly into the PCI bus of standard PCs. The Cognex 8000 Series includes a number of products ranging from the very low-cost 8100 to the ultra-high performance 8400 which incorporates a digital signal processor that enables the system to operate up to 10 times faster than Cognex's fastest current vision system. "The 8000 series provides Cognex with a wide range of price/performance engines that allows us to serve the needs of our broad base of customers, both OEMs and end-users," said Dr. Shillman. The Cognex 8000 Series will be available for shipment in the second half of 1997, and each member of the product line will be able to run PatMax software.

(more)

Cognex Corporation designs, develops, manufactures, and markets machine vision systems, or computers that can "see," which are used to automate a wide range of manufacturing processes where vision is required. Cognex is the world's leader in the machine vision industry, having shipped to date more than 60,000 machine vision systems. In addition to its headquarters in Natick, Massachusetts, the company has regional offices located throughout the United States, Japan, Europe, and Southeast Asia. Cognex also has a wholly-owned subsidiary, Isys Controls, based in Alameda, California, which specializes in automated, high-speed surface inspection. Visit Cognex on-line at http://www.cognex.com.

###