Applied Materials Awarded Key Patent for CMP Endpoint Detection Technology; Optical Endpoint Methodology Critical for Sub-130nm CMP Processing

April 14, 2003

SANTA CLARA, Calif., Apr 14, 2003 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Applied Materials, Inc. today announced the grant of patent No. 6,537,133 by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office entitled the "Method for In-Situ Endpoint Detection for Chemical Mechanical Polishing (CMP) Operations." This innovative endpoint technology is essential for the manufacturing of advanced chips, providing chipmakers with precise control of their CMP processes.

Applied Materials' optical endpoint technology, which is available on its Mirra(R), Mirra Mesa(TM) and Reflexion(R) CMP systems, uses a laser to direct a light beam through a transparent window in the polishing pad to the wafer. Light reflected from the wafer provides information to determine the precise point at which the polishing process must be stopped.

"Applied Materials pioneered optical endpoint detection technology on our breakthrough Mirra CMP system, which allowed semiconductor manufacturers to dramatically increase chip complexity by enabling precise control of the planarization process," said Russell Ellwanger, vice president and general manager of Applied Materials' PPC Business Group. "This innovative endpoint technology plays a critical role in enabling shallow trench isolation, copper interconnect, tungsten and poly applications, and is a key factor in our leadership in CMP."

Applied Materials (Nasdaq:AMAT), the largest supplier of products and services to the global semiconductor industry, is one of the world's leading information infrastructure providers. Applied Materials enables Information for Everyone(TM) by helping semiconductor manufacturers produce more powerful, portable and affordable chips. Applied Materials' web site is www.appliedmaterials.com.

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