

Eltron spinoff develops water purification system using 'green' chemistry

BY JOHN BYNUM

Business Report Correspondent

BOULDER – Startup Eltron Water Systems in Boulder, a spinoff of Eltron Research, is creating “green chemistry” water treatment processes and delivery systems to meet the growing demand for “useable” water worldwide.

The big idea is a better delivery system using complex water chemistry. A major advantage is that it is more green. Its major innovation is its on-site production, which requires less shipping and reduces hazardous waste storage.

Company officials claim its PeroxEgen™ water purification system can reduce labor costs because less sophisticated training and chemical handling are required to operate the system.

“Eltron Research is an R&D company. When I bought the company in June 2005 we did the research well, but there was no focus on development,” said Paul Grimmer, president and owner. “Now EWS will focus on development. We have a fairly large cache of intellectual property, very little of which has been commercialized, although much of it is patented. Hopefully it is the first of several spinoffs.”

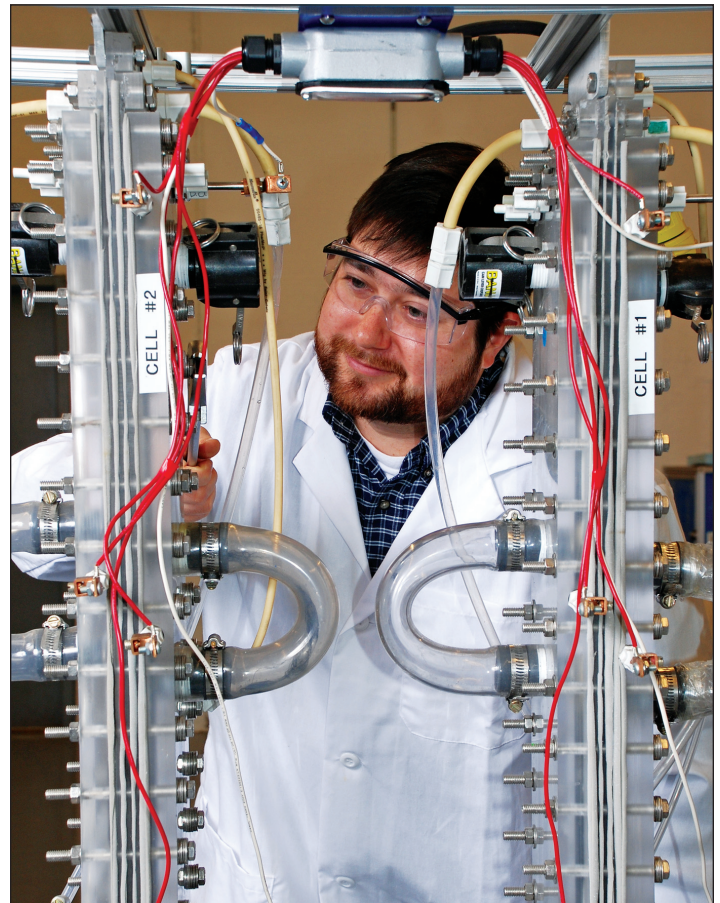
The company also has access to Colorado School of Mines Advanced Water Technology Center. “The synergy between us and them, in regard to water treatment, is obvious,” Grimmer said.

Peter Hagan, Eltron’s vice president of sales and marketing, said Eltron water is providing a more efficient and cheaper delivery system than what currently is employed.

The company’s business model is to manufacture and market new products as rapidly as possible. Some products or specific markets may be licensed to others. Worldwide demand for water continues to grow, and it plays a key role in many major industries. Generating electricity and making paper are only two examples of industries that call for a huge amount of water to be used and reused. In addition, millions of people do not have access to potable water, and therefore water-borne illnesses are a major health concern.

The availability of “useable” water is decreasing. Consequently keeping water pure and free from microorganisms is a major worldwide need. Any time water can be reused, as opposed to buying more, companies save money. This creates a huge market opportunity.

Starting with its PeroxEgen water purifying systems, company officials hope this new process and delivery system will revolutionize water treatment, both by lowering costs



PETER WAYNE

Jason Stotter, of Eltron Water Systems in Boulder, makes adjustments to the company’s PeroxEgen system, which creates hydrogen peroxide and peroxyacetic acid used to purify water.

and safety risks while moving away from environmentally detrimental practices.

Both hydrogen peroxide and peracetic acid/ peroxyacetic acid are used to purify water. They have oxidation and disinfecting capabilities, but these chemicals are hazardous at high concentrations. The system reduces the hazard level.

Eltron Water’s executive team includes Grimmer; Doug Jack, vice president of technology development; Patrick Bryant, vice president of operations; Jon Snyder, senior communications manager; and Hagan.

The startup is a spinoff of 25-year-old Eltron Research, a

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think tank whose scientists and engineers have discovered and developed more than 70 technologies in disciplines such as catalysis, gasification, membranes, coatings, nanomaterials and water treatment.

It has been funded by more than 250 U.S. government grants awarded through competitive bids resulting in many useful technologies. In the last 15 years a good portion of this research has focused on environmentally relevant water treatment.

There is a combined staff of 57 people. More than 40 are scientists, engineers and research specialists. Eighteen of them have doctorate degrees.

Their research and development center rivals any James Bond lab or deep space test program in terms of sophistication and exotic Rube Goldberg types of test machines.

The corporate culture Grimmer had developed is very much like the early days of Netscape. Eltron employees have access to their own basketball court and gym workout area.

Employee compensation is profit-based, and management expects to have Eltron Water cash-positive on a monthly basis by the end of the year.

Eltron Water won't provide names, but it is in discussions with more than 20 companies ranging from privately held to Fortune 10 companies.

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Paul Grimmer

PRESIDENT AND OWNER,
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