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INDUSTRY NEWS

Blue Water Plant Breaks Ground

By Bill Lofthus

Apr 15, 2004

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Hayden, ID — Blue Water Technologies of Coeur d'Alene broke ground Wednesday, April 14, on the Hayden Wastewater Research Facility, a lab the water treatment

company is developing in cooperation with the University of Idaho and the Idaho Research Foundation.

Located at Hayden's wastewater treatment plant, the 1,200-square-foot wet lab will showcase advanced wastewater treatment technology. Blue Water was founded to commercialize a UI invention that reduces phosphorus and other contaminants to extremely low levels with high flow rates.

Blue Water CEO John Shovic, Ph.D., said, "This facility allows full scale-up to treat one million gallons of wastewater per day. We have attracted significant interest from a broad spectrum of stakeholders including cogeneration plants, municipal wastewater facilities, food processors and NASA."

The high-flow test environment provides opportunities not found in a university laboratory, said UI Professor Greg Möller. "The Hayden facility will be used to scale-up wastewater treatment technology being developed with NASA funding for long duration space flight.

"This new technology can be targeted to remove trace pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and hormonally active contaminants," Möller said. "These municipal wastewater discharge contaminants are of increasing concern due to potential environmental impacts that include antibiotic resistant bacteria and reproductive failure of animals in aquatic ecosystems."

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U.S. Senator Mike Crapo, 3rd from left joins groundbreaking.

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This work is in cooperation with the NASA Idaho Space Grant Consortium. Möller and UI Mechanical Engineering Professor Michael Anderson received a \$30,000 grant from the space agency for the work.

"The challenge that NASA advanced life support research has in providing recycled water for space explorers is not that different from the needs of communities worldwide," Möller added. "We must conserve water resources and provide clean water to growing populations while protecting the environment."

A water quality researcher from Jet Propulsion Laboratories in Pasadena, CA was present for the groundbreaking. Dave Newcombe, Ph.D., looks forward to working with the Hayden facility. "In our work with the International Space Station we are developing molecular detection methods for potentially pathogenic microorganisms. We look forward to using this facility to validate our methodologies."

Additional UI water treatment research to be performed at this high-flow laboratory is supported by a gift from the Boise-based Halliday Foundation. This work for a cleaner environment will explore advanced oxidation processes in wastewater treatment.

Shovic estimated the laboratory project's total value at \$750,000. Much of the value reflects contributions from partners ranging from equipment from UI to engineering services from other partners and a site lease from the Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board.

He expects the new facility to aid both UI research and teaching. Shovic said, "We already have professors arranging to conduct water-related research at the facility with graduate students."

The facility is scheduled to be operational in September.

Tom Daugherty, Blue Water vice president of business development, sees the research facility as a showcase for customers. "We will have a facility of significant flow where operators of large wastewater plants can come to see our phosphorus removal process at work. We are only 45 minutes from the Spokane airport. Due to the modular design of this technology, this unit will be a full-scale version; additional modules could be added to treat flow rates of any size," Daugherty added. "We will be testing endocrine disruptor removal technology beginning in 2005."

"Blue Water has an efficient, cost-effective phosphorus and metals removal

technology," said Remy Newcombe, Ph.D., the company's chief technology officer.

Newcombe is excited about the experimentation potential of the Hayden facility. "This facility will allow us to expand the efficacy of our technology to include the removal of endocrine disrupting chemicals and organic contaminants. It also will allow us to test new disinfection processes and develop state-of-the-art molecular detection methods for pathogenic organisms in water."

Blue Water Technologies provides an innovative, highly effective, low cost solution for removing phosphorus and metals from wastewater and arsenic from drinking water, Daugherty said.

The Idaho Research Foundation encourages the commercial application of discoveries by UI researchers. The majority of the licensing revenues collected by the foundation are returned to university departments and inventors.

Products invented by UI researchers and students include water treatment and computer security systems, animal pregnancy tests and microbial mixes to neutralize explosive charges and control turf grass thatch.

The University of Idaho is Idaho's land-grant university with an educational mission to provide a comprehensive education in liberal arts, engineering and science. The university maintains research stations and cooperative extension offices in 42 counties statewide. UI researchers pursue answers to issues of local, national and international importance. In 2003, the university's research funding topped \$100 million.

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