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HYDROGEN



HY9 CORP.

Business: Hydrogen reformers and purifiers

CEO: Jeffrey Altman

Location: Hopkinton

Funding: \$2.3 million, in 2006

Projected

2007 revenue: \$500,000

Employees: 6

Hy9 finds traction in new hydrogen applications

BY EFRAIN VISCAROLASAGA
STAFF WRITER

Hydrogen as a universal fuel source may be many years away, but **Jeffrey Altman**, CEO of **Hy9 Corp.**, is pitching new hydrogen applications aimed at growing the Hopkinton startup's revenue sixfold over the next year.

Altman is betting a string of new orders for Hy9's hydrogen reformer and purifier products during the past six months underscores opportunity in emerging hydrogen applications.

"The industrial applications are growing, and we hope to do some 700 units next year with our existing and new product lines," said Altman.

Hy9's purifiers turn low-grade hydrogen (about \$24 per cylinder) into a higher-grade product (about \$450 per cylinder) on-site.

Aggregating six years of annual sales totals into one will require a new round of funding to help the six-person company grow to meet demand, said Altman. Last year, the company brought in \$2.3 million from a syndicate of angel investors. Company officials are looking to investors to add approximately \$4 million by the fall.

Altman would not name Hy9's customers, but business comes from both the industrial gas sector and the fuel cell industry, he said. Customers are both public and private

companies, said Altman, and the company expects to do about \$500,000 this year, with major growth planned for 2008.

Forty-two million tons of hydrogen are used annually worldwide, with about 10 million of that use in the United States, equating to an approximately \$60 billion global market, according to the **U.S. Department of Energy** and the **National Hydrogen Association**.

Much of that demand is for low-grade (99 percent pure) hydrogen applications such as making ammonia and improving the grade of petroleum products. However, more complicated applications such as fuel cell and semiconductor manufacturing or electronics production, require high purity hydrogen (99.9999 percent and above), and those applications are growing.

"These kinds of companies (Hy9) are very important to making hydrogen available to many different kinds of companies and applications," said **Patrick Serfass**, technical and program development manager for the National Hydrogen Association. A key value, he said, is making it possible for customers with moderate quantity requirements to make their own hydrogen, eliminating the need for a distribution infrastructure, which makes high-grade hydrogen expensive.