

Moore & Van Allen
mvalaw.com



Local or global, emerging or established, Moore & Van Allen provides clients with sophisticated legal service and a creative business approach.

TechJournal
S O U T H

The Business Publication For The Southeast's New Economy

HOME SUBSCRIPTION ADVERTISE CONTACT ABOUT US

SEARCH

GO

CURRENT ISSUE



LaamScience hopes to market germ-killing masks next year

July 20, 2007

By Allan Maurer

RALEIGH, NC—LaamScience, on the heels of raising \$2.2 million from 42 individual angel investors last month, hopes to go to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for approval of its first product, a face mask treated with its germ and virus-killer coating, in several months. "We hope to go to market by the first quarter in 2008, says CEO Tom Roberg.

Roberg, a well-known angel investor in the Research Triangle area, has put money in 18 companies since 1999, including Triangle-based Saffron Tech, Synthematics, and others, says he sees "unbelievable potential" in Laam. "I lost five and had some exits," he says. That's not bad considering that it includes the really tough period for tech companies."

LaamScience technology, developed by Stephen Michielsen, a textile researcher at North Carolina State University, and researchers at the Emory School of Medicine in Atlanta, uses special coatings that inactivate viruses and bacteria when exposed to visible light. Applied to fabrics such as cotton, nylon, or polyester in a nano-thin layer, light-absorbing chemical dyes convert oxygen in the air into a toxic form that rips apart bacteria and viruses in a second without harming human tissue.

Testing underway

"In the presence of light, a specific reaction takes place on the surface that makes the air poisonous to the microbes, yet harmless to people," Michielsen has explained. "The coating doesn't wear out and continually regenerates so it's able to continue killing viruses again and again."

Roberg notes that the company is just beginning a second round of animal biocompatibility testing of its product, this time applied to nonwoven polyester. "You test it make sure it doesn't cause rashes," he says.

The company is also working with a major NC hospital to test the product on pillowcases, sheets, dividing curtains, nurses gowns and masks. "It's a pilot project in a couple of their wards to verify that we can reduce hospital acquired infections."

Hospital acquired infections are a major problem, causing as many as 100,000 deaths and 2 million infections a year, many of which are hard to treat. "The cost to the hospital is \$30,000 a person, so it's expensive, not to mention the difficulties it causes patients," says Roberg.

Many applications possible

Tests have shown the coating works against cold viruses, certain strains of flu, and staph and strep infections. "We think it will work against all viruses," Roberg says, "Avian flu, SARS, and the virulent MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus)." More testing is required to demonstrate its effectiveness, however, Roberg notes.

The company's first product, a self-sterilizing surgical mask. While aimed at doctors and nurses, the product may also appeal the general public, especially during epidemic scares. "If you go to China, Japan, India, you see people wearing surgical masks routinely," Roberg says. "The problem is that when you take them off you can infect your hands and cause you to infect your face. These would eliminate that problem."

But many other applications for the coatings are possible. They include a room air purifier that incorporates its nano-coated filter technology. Other potential application areas include anti-viral filter systems for airplanes and businesses, as well as for a variety of uses for first responders and the military, including anti-viral masks. Perhaps equally important, the invention may be used to make everyday objects

HEADLINES

■ Maryland's MedImmune wins \$23.9 million DOD contract

■ Florida's Nabi Biopharmaceuticals cuts workforce

■ Virginia's Revive Systems now StackSafe

■ Research says: 72 percent of U.S. Adults have broadband access

■ NC's Network Appliances buys 72 acres in RTP

■ Reston's NEA invests \$10.5M in Chicago's MediaBank

■ Memphis-based Medtronic settles suit for more than \$75 million

■ Misys Healthcare sells business units for \$414M

■ Virginia's ePlus delisted from Nasdaq

■ Earthlink offering SunRocket customers a deal

■ Virginia's ReaOps sells to BMC for \$52.5M

■ Florida's FPL subsidiary converting citrus peels to ethanol



Moore & Van Allen
Attorneys at Law



Our upcoming
August
edition

Internet
Technologies

Web
Development

Search Engine
Optimization

TechJournal
S O U T H

resistant to viruses and bacteria in the presence of light.

"I don't think anybody ever had a better life because of a ledger or computer they bought from me," says Roberg, who worked early in his career for IBM, and later was VP of informatics at Cullinet Corp., then senior VP with Global Software before retiring in 1999. "This is something that could save a lot of lives over time."

For more see: www.laamscience.com



Copyright 2007 - TechJournal South