

LED maker energized by battery company deal

Welland's CRS Electronics to manufacture products for Eveready

By MARYANNE FIRTH/Tribune Staff, Welland Tribune; Niagara Region; Sun Media

WELLAND — Success keeps going and going and going for CRS Electronics.

The Welland company founded by president Scott Riesebosch announced Monday it has signed an exclusive agreement with Eveready Battery Co. Inc. — a subsidiary of Energizer Holdings Inc. — to manufacture LED lighting products under the Energizer name.

The deal has been in the works for about three months, with products expected to hit retail shelves by August or September of this year.

"The LED business is a great business to be in right now," said CRS chief operating officer Al Hussey.

"This is the lighting of the future."

CRS, he said, is proud to have been chosen the "company of choice for Energizer," recognized for its quality and consistency of products.

To date, a majority of the company's customers have been from the commercial sector — providing products for hotels and larger buildings, Hussey said.

Teaming with Energizer allows CRS to get its products into the retail sector, he said, which is a "big change in our business."

Energizer-branded LED lights will be distributed through commercial and retail networks and flow through major lighting agents throughout North America.

"This means considerable growth for the company right here in Welland," Hussey said.

The expectation, he said, is to see a "fairly significant jump in growth" now that the conditions of this major agreement are underway.

"Expanding our product line to include energy-efficient LED lighting is a perfect complement to our global portfolio of innovative power and lighting technologies," Jim Olsen, vice-president of marketing for Energizer North America, said in a news release.

The new product line in conjunction with Energizer's Now That's Positivenergy campaign "communicates the message of power plus responsibility," Olsen said.

Hussey said the Energizer Bunny and its classic slogan — it keeps going and going and going — speaks to the life span of the LED bulbs, which can last upwards of 20 years in a household setting.

Energizer's decision to side with CRS "has validated everything we've been working on for some time," he said.

Olsen said the Welland company was selected by Energizer for its "commitment to excellence in LED lighting technology capabilities and history of innovation in the LED lighting industry."

Riesebosch will be bestowed a Niagara Original award at this Friday's 2010 Niagara Entrepreneur of the Year awards gala at the Sheraton Fallsview in Niagara Falls.