



Cascade Engineering and Windquest Group form venture to expand safe water for developing world

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Cascade Engineering in Grand Rapids will launch a global safe water program as part of a new business venture with Windquest Group, a Grand Rapids-based private investment fund.

In developing the program, Cascade has concluded an agreement with Spring Lake-based humanitarian agency International Aid, which scaled back operations last year, for the intellectual property related to the initial launch of the HydrAid(r) BioSand water filter, a highly effective, lightweight device that has been manufactured by Cascade and has already begun to provide safe water for communities throughout the developing world.

In addition, Cascade has obtained a license from the Canadian inventor of the BioSand filtration process used in the device, allowing the new venture to sell the water filter globally.

"This new venture is designed to provide a proven solution for families around the developing world who lack access to safe water," Cascade Chairman and CEO Fred Keller said in yesterday's announcement. "We will serve not only non-profit and government agencies, but also focus on enabling individual, in-country entrepreneurs who will distribute, assemble and teach families how to utilize the filter system. This approach fits right in with our sustainable business objectives for Cascade Engineering."

"This innovative approach to making safe water available throughout the developing world makes sense on many levels," Windquest Group CEO Dick DeVos said in the prepared statement. "We are pleased to provide a catalyst for a venture that has the potential both to save — and significantly enhance — the lives of millions of people worldwide."