

# ECOWATER S Y S T E M S

## Builds on the Success of an 80-Year Heritage of Quality, Innovation and Exceptional Dealers



By Steve Sterling

**E**coWater Systems LLC, one of the world's largest manufacturers of residential water treatment products, looks to the future as it celebrates the past. The company marks its 80th anniversary this year.

EcoWater management says that its heritage of quality, continuous innovation and a dynamic dealer organization is a winning combination today just as it was in 1925 when Lyn Lindsay, the company's founder, began selling the first fully automatic water softener.

"There is significant, long-term growth potential in this industry," says Eco Water President Don Brockley. "Aging municipal water systems, continued degradation of ground water and consumers' rising interest in healthy lifestyles are all increasing demand for new and innovative residential water-treatment products. By embracing the values that have served our organization, dealers and customers so ably for eight decades, EcoWater will continue to prosper as a dominant manufacturer in the industry."

The Marmon Group, an international association of more than 100 autonomous manufacturing and service companies, has owned EcoWater for more than 20 years. Marmon, ranked 26th on the Forbes 2004 list of largest privately held companies, is committed to

making significant investments in EcoWater R&D and in state-of-the-art manufacturing processes.

This commitment has enabled EcoWater to design and manufacture approximately 95 percent of the components in its softeners, giving the company the ability to control their quality and functionality as well as everything downstream of manufacturing. The after-manufacture benefits include ease of installation and maintenance and a low rate of warranty repair. The result of such quality control is the company's combined warranty and performance assurance Consumer Protection Package, a strong marketing tool for their dealers.

"In terms of being able to design and manufacture products that are recognized as leaders in both quality and innovation, EcoWater is at the top of its game," Brockley says. "We do everything, right down to the design of the

electronic controls. This provides our dealers with products that are clearly differentiated from the competition and offer appealing features such as remote monitoring and high efficiency."

In addition to being an ISO 9001 certified manufacturer, EcoWater was the first in the industry to receive the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, a distinction that now extends to their entire line of softeners and ROs. In addition, EcoWater products carry one or more of the following: the UL Recognized Component Seal, the UL Listed Products Seal, the Water Quality Association Gold Seal, the CE Mark, the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) certification, the Canadian Standards Association Certification and the Uniform Plumbing code listing.

EcoWater softeners and drinking water filtration products and systems are distributed to residential, commercial and industrial customers in North America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia through a network of 2,000 independent dealers. The company has more than 500 employees at North American facilities in Minnesota, Mississippi and Ontario, Canada and at E.U. locations in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Belgium and Poland. More than one out of every four automatic residential water softeners in the world is manufactured by EcoWater Systems.

## Dealer commitment

EcoWater has resources dedicated to helping dealers succeed through sales support, training, lead generation and various other programs. Dealers have exclusive sales territories, receive market development funds, have a host of training options available and receive generous margins. The company generates national and regional consumer awareness and also makes the services of its award-winning advertising agency available to dealers.



Water filling resin

## EcoWater Systems: 80 years of innovation

In 1925, Lyn Lindsay founded the Lindsay Company, the forerunner of EcoWater Systems, in St. Paul, Minn. During its formative years, the Lindsay Company helped homeowners in Minnesota and Wisconsin soften water by selling and installing the first automatic residential water softeners. The key to the successful product line was a patented valve for automatically controlling the unit. In those early years, the company invested in educating dealers and customers on the benefits of soft water—prolonged life of appliances and plumbing, faster and easier housework and less soap needed for laundry and other tasks.

The rapid growth of home ownership after World War II spurred sales and the company expanded its national presence. In 1951, sales topped \$1 million for the first time. In 1959, the firm was purchased by the Union Tank Car Company. Ten years later, a new 215,000 square-foot office, research and manufacturing facility was built in Woodbury, a suburb of St. Paul.

From 1969 to the present, the company has grown by expanding its dealer network and various other sales channels, as well as through acquisition. The EcoWater Systems name was first used in 1988, seven years after the company became a member of the Marmon Group.

EcoWater Systems introduced the first units on the market with solid state electronics. Electronic controls offered higher efficiency and lower operating costs. In the mid-1990s, the company began selling water filtration devices.

“On a global scale, the awareness of the health benefits of quality water is greater today than it has ever been,” says Russ Patterson, senior vice president, Marketing and Product Develop-

ment. “EcoWater Systems began in 1925 by providing an answer to the problems of hard water. In the 1990s, we began marketing residential water treatment systems for drinking water. Looking ahead to EcoWater’s 100th anniversary in 20 years, our vision is to continue to apply advances in technology and manufacturing that improve the quality of water for residential, commercial and industrial customers across the globe.”

## About the author

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Water injection molding



Inventory management