



Snowboard Clothing Emerges from the Dark Ages

Melbourne, Australia (Wednesday, March 15, 2006) -

As the world's consumers preoccupy themselves with the latest techno gadgets such as cell phones with cameras, iPods, and even handheld mobile internet solutions, one Melbourne-based company called The Specialty Group has also turned their attention to technology by making fabrics "glow-in-the-dark" through a brand new patented innovation that has garments lighting up once the sun goes down.

The product, aptly titled "Energlo", glows for over three hours in total darkness after only twelve minutes of exposure to natural light.

The technology involves the use of photo-luminescent (light absorbing and emitting) crystals that are dispersed within several layers of the company's waterproof breathable coatings and then applied to a variety of face fabrics that will ultimately be used for wet weather clothing where additional night time visibility is required.

Vice President of International Sales & Marketing, Daniel Leipnik, who is based in the company's Vancouver, Canada office, claims that "where the safety of law enforcement officers and ambulance and paramedic crews are involved, adding greater visibility to clothing at night is only going to make them safer and more easily seen than by conventional high visibility fabrics or reflective tapes alone. Imagine the benefits of being able to see Traffic Police out on a country highway where there are no lights or tarmac crew glowing brightly around airports where planes move around in the middle of the night".

What started as a practical solution for people working around traffic or at jobsites has quickly spread to other applications for the product in a variety of other industries.

"We're getting dozens of calls a day right now from leading brands of ski and snowboard wear and even manufacturers of cycling, running, and kids wear who see Energlo as a wonderfully useful fabric. The appetite for this technology is seeing many companies request exclusivity because they know how well the retail reaction is going to be," claims Leipnik.

One company embracing this new invention is Westbeach Sports Inc., a Canadian snowboard outerwear brand.

"Westbeach is constantly searching out new technologies and testing fabrics to be used for our products," says Michelle Gault, Director of Apparel for Westbeach. "With Energlo we saw an opportunity to push the boundaries of style while maintaining the function and the waterproof and breathable properties of the garment. Westbeach has worked closely with the Specialty Group in the development of our first Energlo piece, the Phenom Jacket which will be delivered to retailers this Fall."

With exclusive rights to EnerGlo technology for the Winter 06/07 snowsports season, in an industry where differentiation is key, Westbeach is counting on success with the new fabric.

And it's not likely that sales of EnerGlo will be restricted to the snow sports and work wear sectors. A range of clever entrepreneurs around the world are also expressing an interest in the fabric technology. "I've had calls from a New Zealand company that makes dog coats, a baby stroller manufacturer in Norway, and even a company in Japan that makes hand bags with monkey cartoon prints on them," Leipnik explains. "It's great to see how designers think when they have something innovative to work with."