

EcoThermics continues work on cleaner compressor system

BY STEVE TARTER
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PEORIA — When it comes to green jobs, Merle Rocke hopes to provide plenty of them as his startup EcoThermics edges closer to providing the business world with a clean compressor.

The recent opening of a laboratory in Kansas City, Kan., will allow the firm to test its system, which uses CO₂ as a refrigerant rather than harmful fluorocarbons, said Rocke, who founded EcoThermics in Peoria in 2007 after a 35-year career with Caterpillar Inc.

Work goes on at the EcoThermics lab at the Peoria NEXT Innovation Center, 801 W. Main St., as well as at labs in Ohio and Indiana. "The applications are endless," said Rocke, referring to a concept that

could revolutionize the nation's heating, air conditioning and refrigeration needs.

"We know that we could save a commercial laundry \$100,000 a year in energy costs," he said.

In the meantime, Rocke and his team are testing every aspect of their system. With two unique CO₂ compressor models in development, the next order of business is to design a HVAC heat pump system that combines the latest CO₂ technology and components for a variety of applications, heating air and water as well as cooling, he said.

Rocke said he expects to be able to announce definite developmental plans for the company before the end of the year.

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