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Itronics Says 'Capture At the Source' Can Reduce Environmental Concerns With Sewer Sludge, Which is Called a National Problem

RENO, Nev.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--July 9, 2002--Itronics Inc. (ITRO - news) President Dr. John Whitney today said a major, new National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report on sewer sludge illustrates the need to capture environmentally hazardous waste at the source, before it is allowed to cause illness or other problems to the population. Itronics' proprietary beneficial use recycling technology can play a major role in substantially reducing this pollution from our environment.

The study says that sewage sludge, the mud-like material that remains after treatment of the wastes that flow into local sewage treatment plants, may cause illnesses when it is used to fertilize gardens, golf courses and farms in the U.S. The NAS panel determined that the millions of tons of sludge used in the U.S. annually might contain chemicals, which could affect water quality, or particulates, which could wash into ground water or be blown by the wind into homes near farms that use large amounts of sewer sludge.

"In the early 1990's, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency estimated that there are approximately 100 million gallons of silver-bearing photochemical waste generated in the U.S. annually. We estimate that 70 percent of this is partially treated and disposed into our nation's sewer systems where the chemicals in the waste stream end up in sewer sludge, used subsequently as fertilizer. Our technology effectively strips out most of these potentially harmful chemicals including toxic heavy metals," Dr. Whitney said. "If the photochemical wastes, and other industrial liquid wastes that contaminate sewer sludge, were captured at the source and treated by our technology we could avoid having these harmful elements ever reaching the sewer plant."

Dr. Whitney also announced that Itronics has shown, through evaluation work at its Reno, Nevada facility, that its technology can treat waste streams other than used photochemicals. "There are a number of manufacturing hazardous waste streams that we have determined can be captured and processed at the source to convert them to a form suitable for GOLD'n GRO products. There have been concerns that a switch to digital photography will reduce the quantities of photochemical wastes needed to produce our fertilizers. However, there are 1.15 billion conventional cameras in the world compared to less than 60 million digital cameras, and conventional camera use continues to grow, meaning the volume of photochemical wastes should continue to grow as well. In addition, we now have important options for raw material sourcing for our GOLD'n GRO fertilizer program which had not been previously identified," Dr. Whitney said.

"Because of our successful research efforts, Itronics can now begin to diversify its raw material sourcing and play a much broader role for our country's environment by reducing hazardous waste through our beneficial use recycling program," Dr. Whitney said.

Itronics, through its subsidiary, Itronics Metallurgical, Inc., is the only company in the world with the technology to extract more than 99 percent of the silver and virtually all the other toxic heavy metals from photowaste and to convert the resulting liquid into environmentally beneficial, chelated, multinutrient liquid fertilizer products sold under the trademark GOLD'n GRO. These liquid fertilizers, which also can be used for lawns and houseplants, and the popular Silver Nevada Miner bars, a souvenir of the Silver State, are available at the Company's Web site: <http://www.itronics.com>.

Itronics Inc. is one of Nevada's leading process technology development companies and a world leader in photochemical recycling. Headquartered in Reno, Nevada, it specializes in recycling technology development, photobyproduct recycling, silver refining, and technical services for the mining and recycling industries. Dr. John Whitney, Itronics President, was selected as Nevada's Inventor of the Year for 2000 and is a member of the Inventor's Hall of Fame at the University of Nevada, Reno. Itronics was one of five finalists for the 2001 Kirkpatrick Chemical Engineering Award, the most prestigious worldwide award in chemical engineering technologies.

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