



Batteries bound for space to be made in Roswell

GS Yuasa Lithium Power assembles lithium ion battery packs

By [Ralph Ellis](#)
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

4:48 p.m. Thursday, September 17, 2009

Lithium ion battery packs assembled in Roswell will soon power cargo ships carrying supplies to the International Space Station.

GS Yuasa Lithium Power has leased a 40,000-square-foot building at the Northmeadow Office Park to fulfill a contract with a NASA subcontractor, said company president William Moll. The contract is still being negotiated, but Moll expects assembly to start in February.

If all goes well, up to 100 people might be working in a few years at the Roswell location for GS Yuasa and sister company GS Batteries USA, Moll said. The firms now employ about 35. GS Yuasa also plans to open a small research-and-development unit.

The two companies now share office space in Alpharetta but don't do any assembly there. They are part of GS Yuasa of Japan, the world's third largest battery manufacturer.

Other nations' satellites and the American space shuttle carry supplies to the International Space Station, a multi-national research facility that got a publicity boost recently when it received a treadmill named for comedian Stephen Colbert. When the space shuttle retires soon, two cargo vessels will take over supply transfer for the United States, with one powered by battery packs from Roswell.

None of the materials will be manufactured in Roswell. The battery cells, which cost about \$20,000 each, will come pre-assembled from Japan. Other electronics and enclosures will be produced stateside. The firm expects to produce only half a dozen packs a year for the space station vessels and satellites, Moll said.

"These are very expensive because there's a lot of technology that goes into making the mass very light, but it's got to be very reliable," Moll said. "You can't pop these out in space."

Roswell, which has not attracted new light manufacturing in a long time, is happy with the move, said Loren Conrad, a member of the city planning commission for about a decade.

"It's good clean industry and it looks like it will bring good-paying jobs," Conrad said.

GS Yuasa had about \$2 million in revenue in 2008, compared to \$76 million for GS Batteries, which specializes in batteries for motorcycles and other vehicles. It has a motorcycle battery manufacturing plant in Pennsylvania.

The companies hope to expand. GS Batteries president Yasuyuki Nakamura said the firm will install a photovoltaic, or solar cell, energy conversion demonstrator system in Roswell and eventually hopes to manufacture the inverters there.

The company now manufactures lithium ion batteries for the Boeing 787 Dreamliner in Japan, but bringing assembly of those battery packs to the United States is part of the company's long-term plan, Moll said.

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/business/batteries-bound-for-space-140890.html>