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## Local startup generates power in a different way

By Bill Frogameni

South Florida's active hurricane season is helping one Boca Raton-based startup sell a new approach to the old problem of losing electricity during a storm – or through power outages in general.

Power Ready International's Indoor Power System (IPS) is a \$9,000 portable unit that doesn't require gas or a permit, can run on solar power – but also can take charge from electrical outlets – and holds 12,000 watts in its battery.

A full battery could last a few days if it's running at 3,000 watts, Power Ready GM Bill Dato said. The generator could last an extra two days if a 200-watt solar panel was plugged in and getting full sun.

And, unlike traditional fuel generators, it can be run indoors without worrying about carbon monoxide poisoning, he said.

The key is the IPS's proprietary battery that is rated to last 1,500 cycles. (A full cycle is when the battery is completely drained and recharged, Dato explained.) Plus, the unit has a full warranty up to five years, and a partial warranty up to 10 years, he said.

"You don't have to wait until the wind stops blowing to go out and fuel up the system," Dato said.

The IPS can stay juiced on a conventional power outlet, a solar panel or windmill, but it basically acts like a giant battery, ready immediately after a home's regular power gives out. In this respect, it's like a laptop computer battery.

Power Ready opened in January, said Jill Serubol, who co-owns the company with a pair of investors who aren't involved in regular operations. Serubol said she started it along with Dato after they worked for a traditional gas generator dealer.

"We built a prototype and started playing around with it," she added.

Both Serubol and Dato declined to disclose how much startup capital went into the company.

Power Ready is currently setting up a series of distributorships, but is also considering larger retail opportunities, Dato said.

Serubol said Power Ready hopes to sell 500 units this year.

That would put it ahead of schedule for achieving profitability, Dato added.

"Our first-year projections are approximately \$2 million," he said.



In that last 60 days, Dato said, Power Ready has shipped over 24 demonstration models to dealers.

But, success may depend on the unit's price.

Ed Huss, GM at Beach Ace Hardware in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, said a conventional 3,000-watt gas generator sells for about \$700, on average.

That's a major cost differential with the \$9,000 Power Ready system, but Huss added that the IPS's solar compatibility could make it very attractive for people living in condos and apartments.

"I don't know one apartment building or condo in our area, up and down the beach, that allows a generator."

Huss also said the IPS technology is "not very common at all," although he noted the unit's price could be a turnoff for many.

Still, Dato said the IPS could help reduce electric bills since it can be used continuously with renewable energy sources.

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