

# A breath of fresh air

Local firm creates new breathing equipment for firefighters, others

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STAFF WRITER

Breathing new life takes new meaning for a Collin County research firm.

With a handheld plastic container – and infinite ingenuity – OxySure Systems Inc. has conceived an oxygen delivery system that could aid firefighters, heart attack victims and others.

“It’s so simple,” said Julian Ross, chief executive officer of the Frisco firm. “You just push a button or pull a lever, put a mask on and that’s it.”

The entrepreneur hopes his company’s first product revolutionizes emergency response and provides men and women with an edge when seconds mean the difference between life and death.

Firefighters and other professionals now deliver oxygen from compressed tanks. The approach differs from OxySure’s strategy, in which inert powders combine to generate life-saving air.

Every second counts for those suffering cardiac arrest or surrounded by smoke. With OxySure’s offering, Ross hopes individuals in distress can rely on portable cartridges to supply oxygen in emergencies.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, the average response time for fire and other emergency responders is up to six minutes from the time of dispatch. The new product – still awaiting federal approval – would provide immediate self-application of oxygen by the affected person, family member or bystander in the first critical minutes between the onset of the medical emergency and arrival of emergency personnel.



Julian Ross, chief executive officer of OxySure Systems Inc., speaks with Jon Staples and Thomas Franklin about his newly developed product.

Fulfilling his vision persuaded Ross to form OxySure in 2004. With a tiny staff, Ross built his company around a single idea. And fruits of his labors are expected to hit store shelves later this year.

That’s when a product some tout as an industry first would become the first over-the-counter source of medical oxygen. But the road to reinventing medical oxygen comes with challenges – namely, funding.

What started from Ross’s own finances now requires venture capital. But investors already have shown interest, and Ross remains confident that the product will be available in the third or fourth quarter.

“We’re in discussions with potential licensees, too,” said Ross, already launching a marketing blitz among potential retailers.

Helping the firm is the North Texas Enterprise Center for Medical Technology in Frisco, a cheerleader for emerging innovations such as the oxygen canister.

About the size and weight of a thermos, each unit produces 15 minutes of air at six liters per minute.

“This is a breakthrough that can truly mean the difference between life and death,” said Ross. “We are now ready to take the company to the next level.”

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