



**For Immediate Release**

## **Cascade Engineering and Windquest Group Form Venture Focused on Expanded Safe Water Vision for Developing World**

**GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., Jan. 11, 2010** – Cascade Engineering today announced that it will launch a global safe water program as part of a groundbreaking new “social business” venture with Windquest Group, a West Michigan-based private investment fund.

In developing the program, Cascade has concluded an agreement with Spring Lake, Mich.-based humanitarian agency International Aid for the intellectual property related to the initial launch of the HydrAid® BioSand water filter, a highly effective, lightweight device that has been manufactured by Cascade and has already begun to provide safe water for communities throughout the developing world. In addition, Cascade has obtained a license from the Canadian inventor of the BioSand filtration process used in the device, allowing the new venture to sell the water filter globally.

The combination of these assets with Cascade’s existing mold, tooling and manufacturing capabilities, and Windquest’s capital resources, will enable the new venture to significantly expand on Cascade’s safe water efforts to date. The program will:

- Accelerate and enhance the distribution of the HydrAid® BioSand filter – an innovative means for addressing the global safe water crisis
- Implement a new vision for international development that involves cultivating sustainable entrepreneurship in the developing world and the potential for bringing additional, life-changing products to this market

“This new venture is designed to provide a proven solution for families around the developing world who lack access to safe water,” said Fred P. Keller, Cascade’s Chairman and CEO. “We will serve not only non-profit and government agencies, but also focus on enabling individual, in-country entrepreneurs who will distribute, assemble and teach families how to utilize the filter system. This approach fits right in with our sustainable business objectives for Cascade Engineering.”

“This innovative approach to making safe water available throughout the developing world makes sense on many levels,” said Windquest Group CEO Dick DeVos. “We are pleased to provide a catalyst for a venture that has the potential both to save – and significantly enhance – the lives of millions of people worldwide.”

The initial focus of Cascade’s new venture with Windquest involves providing a solution to one of the world’s preeminent health crises. Each year, more than 10 million people – half of them children and teens – die from disease due to unclean drinking water. In developing countries, 70 percent of poor people lack access to treated water.

In addressing this crisis, the joint venture also plans to address another, critical issue faced by individuals in these countries – the significant barriers to economic self-sufficiency. To help solve this broader challenge, Cascade and Windquest have structured their new venture as a “social business” – a for-profit company whose overarching goal is to benefit society. The venture will look to help the enormous population of people who routinely contend with waterborne disease, primarily in Latin America, Africa, China and India.

By mentoring community-level entrepreneurs in the distribution, installation and maintenance of the HydrAid® BioSand filter – and supporting these individuals with micro-loans or rental programs – Cascade and Windquest plan to enable significant and sustainable local economic growth over the long term. In implementing its safe water program, the new venture plans to sell the HydrAid® BioSand filters directly to these entrepreneurs and via partnerships with non-profit groups, NGOs, faith community organizations and governmental entities.

### **About the Filter**

The HydrAid® BioSand water filter involves a major design improvement to the traditional concrete BioSand filter, which typically weighs more than 300 pounds and is currently in use in more than 70 countries worldwide. An injection-molded, non-electric device, with no moving or replacement parts, the HydrAid® BioSand filter weighs less than 10 pounds, making it far easier to distribute in remote locations. It can be installed in about 30 minutes and provide up to 75 gallons of clean, safe water per day, meeting all of a family’s safe water needs

The ability of the BioSand method to achieve dramatic disease reduction involves removing pathogens from water through a combination of biological and mechanical processes. The filter itself comprises a plastic container enclosing layers of sand and gravel, including a surface layer of sand that is infused with bacteria-consuming micro-organisms during the filter’s initial preparation. Water is poured into the filter as needed, where the first, biological layer consumes pathogens before the water travels through additional layers of sand and gravel. As it collects at the base of the filter, the water is propelled out of the filter through plastic piping attached to the unit’s exterior.

### **About Windquest**

Windquest is a West Michigan-based private investment fund.

### **About Cascade Engineering**

Based in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Cascade Engineering is a leader in the development, engineering and manufacturing of plastics solutions for multiple industries, including the automotive, furniture, renewable energy and recycling markets. The Company is a strong advocate for sustainable business practices that emphasize the key role business can play in building financial, social and environmental capital. For example, through its unique focus on workforce development – guiding welfare recipients towards long-term employment – Cascade has learned that becoming an "Employer of Choice" can be a powerful component of overall business strategy.

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