



Stan Brooks

Water Vending Goes Green

Many industries today are turning toward technologies that are more environmentally friendly. Stephanie Harris, managing editor of Water Quality Products, recently spoke with Stan Brooks, chief executive officer of MoBetta Water, Inc., about new "green" technologies and current trends in the water vending industry.

Stephanie Harris: What are the current trends you are seeing in the vending industry?

Stan Brooks: I think it's increasing. By interest in selling machines, there seems to be more and more locations being built all the time.

Harris: What new technologies are available for water vending applications?

Brooks: The newest technology we are developing is a water vending machine that vends water into handheld containers. Here at MoBetta, we have a new product that we are just starting to go live with, and it is a new type of water vending machine that purifies tap water and flash chills it into 1-liter handheld containers. This is an entirely new concept here in North America and we will be starting to manufacture container loads in the coming weeks.

This machine is not designed to vend bulk water, it's designed to vend small amounts of water and have it chilled or cold. It will be a total coin-operated system—the customer comes up, puts money in the machine and fills the bottle with cold water.

The machine itself utilizes a number of new technologies. For instance, it uses LED lighting to light the front panels. Typically vending machines will use fluorescent tubes. This machine uses LED so that there are no harmful byproducts when the bulbs are done and you don't have to dispose of them in any special manner. The LED lights virtually last forever and they use very little power compared with a fluorescent bulb.

One of the other technologies in this new machine is a flash chilling system. Water is not held cold like

in a water cooler, it is only cooled when you press the vend button. It's very energy efficient. It's an instant water-cooling system that chills water very rapidly and the water is very cold, typically about 40 degrees.

Cashless payment systems are a fairly new technology that is also readily available by a number of manufacturers today. Typically a cashless payment system in a water vending machine will be in the form of a prepaid card, where you may purchase a card either from a store or a card-reload center, and an amount of money is held on that card with a magnetic strip or a computer chip. As you use the card, it depletes the money off of the card and you eventually have to go back and reload your card with money.

The reason for that is most water sales are relatively inexpensive. The water out of a vending machine is going to cost anywhere from fifty cents to \$3 at the most. It doesn't make a lot of sense to have that machine take credit cards.

Harris: How do you expect the market will respond to the new technology?

Brooks: We expect this new machine to be huge. Bottled water can typically cost \$1 to \$2 a bottle depending on where you buy it. This new technology allows one to fill a handheld container with purified water for half the price of bottled water and not create the waste of an empty bottle. There potentially could be one of these machines in every convenient store, in a number of schools, universities, health-care centers, gymnasiums, sports arenas—the list goes on. We'll have some in operation very soon.

Harris: With recent backlash against bottled water, have you seen an increased use in water vending machines?

Brooks: I think we will. As of now, there's nothing out there to act as an alternative to bottled water. When our new machines start to get out there, they will act as an alternative to buying bottled water.

That's why we have gotten into this market—there's quite an outcry right now against bottled water and we think this new machine is a very environmentally conscious way of doing things. It doesn't waste any water because there is no water waste discharge that comes from this machine. There also is no bottle created and there is no hauling of that water to get to the consumer. It's a very environmentally responsible machine.

Harris: What do you foresee to be future trends in water vending?

Brooks: We see future trends to be vending water into handheld containers for immediate consumption. I think that will be the next big growth area for water vending. *wqp*

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May

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Charlotte Convention Center
Charlotte, NC
tel: 303.794.7711
www.ewqa.org

21-23 Aquatech China
Shanghai Exhibition Centre
Shanghai, China
tel: +86 21 62 70 5336/4474
www.aquatechtrade.com

June

5-7 Florida WQA Convention
Caribe Royale Resort
Orlando, FL
tel: 863.644.6622
www.fwqa.com

8-12 AWWA Annual Conference & Exposition
Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, GA
tel: 303.794.7711
www.awwa.org

19-20 Indiana WQA Convention
Holiday Inn at the Pyramids
Indianapolis, IN
tel: 574.522.4159
www.iwqa.org

July

9-12 Texas WQA Annual Convention
San Antonio's Menger Hotel
San Antonio, TX
tel: 361.573.6707
www.twqa.org

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