

## READY TO GROW

By **WILLIAM FREEBAIRN**  
Staff Writer

**A** new focus on safety and security could bring a glow of profits to light stick manufacturer Cyalume Light Technologies.

Cyalume is part of the former Omniglow Corp. That company was bought by new investors earlier this year, and its entertainment-oriented product line was sold to managers who continue to operate under the Omniglow name.

Cyalume is focusing on products bought by the military and law enforcement, and hopes such products will permit it to grow in the next several years. The investors have their eyes set on an initial public offering, in which shares are sold to the public and trade on a recognized exchange.

"We're focusing on the serious side of the business," said Michael E. Bielonko, Cyalume's chief financial officer.

"A lot of what the Army is doing is geared towards night fighting, so a lot of our products are moving in that direction," Bielonko said.

The company is producing a line of reflective products and infrared emitting light sticks that are being used in Iraq and Afghanistan by the military. Light sticks on lanyards are used by pilots, while reflective belts are sold to police and fire departments.

The new name comes from the name of one of the luminescent chemicals developed by American Cyanamid, the original developer of the technology. That company eventually sold its light stick business to Omniglow.

Omniglow Corp. was the name of the company founded in 1986. In January, however, an investment group purchased the company, and sold off the recreational and commercial fishing products. Those products are sold by a new company called Omniglow LLC, which includes managers of that business and shares office space with Cyalume.

The remaining business was re-named Cyalume.

Terms of the sales were not disclosed.

Cyalume is headed by



Staff photos by DAVE ROBACK

**Michael E. Bielonko, chief financial officer of Cyalume Light Technologies, holds 15-inch glow sticks outside the West Springfield plant. Below are an assortment of items manufactured by Cyalume.**

## Future shines bright for glow stick company

*New focus on military, law enforcement*

businessman Emil "Jack" Jachmann, the chief executive officer.

Top executives are also shareholders, along with two private equity investment firms, Hudson Capital Advisors of New York, and Kline Hawkes & Co. of Los Angeles.

Cyalume's main operation is in West Springfield, and it has a small plant and offices in France that handle supplies for the European market. An assembly facility in Mexico was sold to Omniglow LLC, although a produc-

tion line that made reflective products was moved back to West Springfield.

Cyalume is committed to manufacturing in the United States, especially

customers, Bielonko said. Production in West Springfield is expected to rise thanks to new products on the horizon, officials said.

Far from cutting back, Cyalume's new owners have invested in research and development and are working to implement an internship program with the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, officials said.

One of the first things the company did when it purchased the Omniglow company was install better lighting throughout

the plant on Windsor Street. The firm received a six-figure rebate from Western Massachusetts Electric, but the installation was also intended to improve working conditions, Bielonko said.

A new information technology system is also planned, as is an automation upgrade to its manufacturing facility.

About 125 people work for Cyalume. That figure is supplemented by temporary workers during busy periods.

Employees were recently required to sign non-competition agreements to keep them from working for rivals or disclosing trade secrets, officials said.

Cyalume products work on a technology developed decades ago. Two chemicals kept separate inside a light stick are combined when the stick is bent and a glass ampule inside is broken.

The chemicals react to glow in one of many colors; different formulations yield longer or shorter glowing periods.

The light stick technology, known as chemical luminescence, has been used in toys and for entertainment. However, it has long had serious applications among commercial fishermen, safety officials and the military.

Cyalume has fielded requests from the military for new products, especially those based on infra-red light.

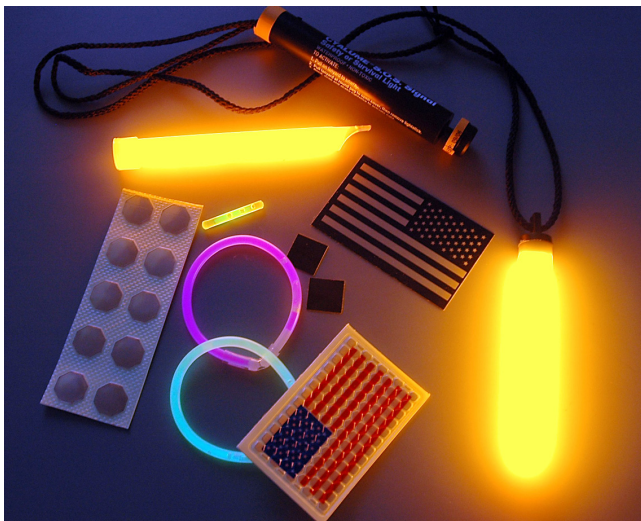
Infra-red light is visible to soldiers wearing night vision equipment but invisible to others. Infra-red light devices can be used to tag locations, leave a trail or provide reading light for maps or orders, Cyalume officials said.

"Infra-red is hot," said Thomas McCarthy, vice president of sales and marketing for the company.

Although the company has gained sales due to the ongoing conflict in Iraq, the firm's sales are strong for military training and steady for law enforcement, officials McCarthy said.

The company's future is as bright as one of its five-minute high-intensity light sticks, officials said.

"We're sort of in motion on a number of fronts," Bielonko said.



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