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Tech startup that turns CO2 into minerals plans to open CT HQ

BY ANDREW LARSON
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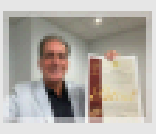
Carbon Capture Machine has leased 8,306 square feet for its new headquarters and laboratory at 60 Commerce Drive in Trumbull. Contributed Photo


For the past four years, Carbon Capture Machine has operated in "stealth mode," its CEO said — zero marketing, barely a website — while developing technology he believes could transform environmental waste into revenue.

Now, the startup is stepping out of the dark, signing an 8,306-square-foot lease for office and lab space at 60 Commerce Drive in Trumbull.

CEO Lance Scott said the site will serve as the central hub for CCM, which until now, has been split between a laboratory in Aberdeen, Scotland, and a prototyping facility in Dayton, Ohio.

The company has been developing technology that captures carbon dioxide from smokestacks before it reaches the atmosphere and converts it into minerals — such as calcium carbonate — that are used as additives in concrete, paint, paper and other everyday products.

Rather than burying captured CO2 underground, as some larger carbon capture ventures propose, CCM aims to turn emissions into a product manufacturers will buy.

Scott said he sees no shortage of potential customers close to home, pointing to Bridgeport's natural gas power plant as the kind of industrial emitter the company's equipment could one day serve. Longer term, he hopes to build a manufacturing facility in Bridgeport — a city he has personal history with, having attended the University of Bridgeport in the 1980s.

Scott, a Weston resident, acquired the company in May 2022 through his firm Alliance Technologies, which both invests in and helps run advanced manufacturing companies.

He discovered CCM, then a University of Aberdeen spinoff, at a conference in Washington, D.C., after the startup was a finalist in an international XPRIZE competition for carbon conversion.

CCM currently has about 14 full- and part-time employees across its locations. Scott projects 30 to 35 people working in Trumbull within three years as the company hires chemists, systems engineers and, eventually, a management team.

The Trumbull space is bigger than CCM needs right now. Scott plans to fill the extra room with a handful of startups he has invested in or collaborates with through Alliance Technologies, creating what he describes as an "innovation ecosystem" rather than an incubator. All told, he said, the facility could eventually house 50 workers.

The company earlier this year completed real-world testing in Cyprus, capturing and converting emissions from a marine diesel engine, and Scott said he expects full commercialization within the next year to 18 months.

CCM has funded its development largely without giving up equity, collecting roughly $15 million in grants and competition winnings, including two U.S. Department of Energy awards. Scott said the company may skip a traditional venture fundraising round altogether, instead pairing continued grant funding with strategic investors from the industries it plans to serve.

The Trumbull lease came together through a decades-old relationship. Commercial real estate broker John Hannigan, principal at Choyce Peterson, who has represented Scott's companies for around 30 years, found the space before it hit the market, Scott said.

Avison Young's Sean Cahill represented the landlord, Cambridge Hanover.

As for why he chose Connecticut — a state not known for low costs — Scott argues its quality assurance talent, New Haven's biotech cluster and its universities make it an ideal place to prove advanced manufacturing can thrive.

"I'm eager to positively impact my state," he said.