

## Interview Syrgis looks to evolve through downturn - CEO - VIDEO

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By **Feliza Mirasol**

SAN FRANCISCO (ICIS news)--**Syrgis** expects strong growth over the next five years, along the same vein as the 24.7% compound annual growth rate (CAGR) the group posted over the last four years, including 2009, the chief executive with the international fine and specialty chemical group said on Friday.

“We feel that our growth is going to occur with or without economic recovery, despite a challenging year in 2009 where we had to make some painful but relatively minor difficult decisions compared to others in the industry,” CEO Andy Harris said at the **InformexUSA** conference in San Francisco.

“We are starting to see some recovery, but the word throughout the industry is ‘cautious optimism,’” he added.

As signs of the relatively good health of Syrgis, the group said it hired a new chief technical officer (CTO) and will hire two new chemists in 2010 as well. It is also projected that the group will hire an additional two chemists in 2011, Harris said.

“That is a significant commitment to R&D (research and development) and technology development for a group of our size (175 employees),” he said.

“These chemists are going to be looking at developing new products and how to improve the way we make products today in a more environmentally-conscious manner,” he added.

The group already has one such success story, which occurred when it reduced one of the components in its wastewater stream by 99.7% at its organic peroxides facility in Helena, Arkansas.

The company did so by changing one of the diluents used in the manufacture of the peroxides. Syrgis said it undertook this initiative in its quest to improve production processes in an environmentally-conscious way.

In a further drive towards growth, Syrgis also said it added two new R&D and applications labs to its network - one at its Helena site and another at its El Dorado, Arkansas, site.

“We are really beefing up our technology horsepower to drive a new innovation process that we’ve implemented across the group. We have more planned innovation,” Harris said.

In January, Syrgis announced the rebranding of its Lycus and P Chem operating companies to Syrgis Performance Specialties and Syrgis PChem, respectively, in order to support and create awareness for the company’s overall corporate identity.

Those two units are joined by a third company, Syrgis Performance Initiators, which is the rebranded name of the Norac organic peptides business that Syrgis acquired in 2007.

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