

BUSINESS

DOE grants for green work go to Colo. firms

Boulder-based Eltron Research and Development receives \$71.3 million to help with clean coal.

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By Mark Jaffe

The Denver Post

Boulder-based Eltron Research and Development Inc. on Tuesday received a \$71.3 million federal grant to speed commercial development of technology to produce usable hydrogen gas from coal gas.

The grant was one of three to Colorado companies announced by U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu for technologies to capture carbon dioxide before it goes up the stacks of coal-burning power plants.

"These new technologies will not only help fight climate change; they will create jobs now and help position the United States to lead the world in clean-coal technologies," Chu said at a news conference.

In all, Chu announced \$575 million in projects in 15 states.

A buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has been linked to climate change by scientific studies. In the U.S., power plants are the largest man-made source of the gas. Coal plants produced about 44 percent of the country's electricity in 2009, according to federal data.

Littleton-based ADA-ES, which has a technology that absorbs carbon dioxide from flue gas, had an \$11.1 million grant that was awarded in July increased to \$15 million, ADA-ES spokeswoman Melissa Dixon said.

Eltron, which in its 28 years has generated more than 70 patents and patent applications, has a new technology to cost-effectively separate hydrogen from gasified coal — a product known as synthetic gas.

"We are separating useful goodies from carbon dioxide," said Douglas Jack, Eltron vice president of technology. The hydrogen can then be used in other industrial processes, such as refining and plastics manufacturing. The carbon dioxide is captured under pressure for [storage](#).

Eltron is already partnering on a pilot plant with Eastman Chemical Co. of Kingsport, Tenn. The new federal [grants](#) will cut the commercial development time by about three years, according to the DOE.

North American Power Group, based in Greenwood Village, received a \$5 million grant to help develop an underground storage sink for carbon dioxide in Wyoming.

"We are trying to characterize safe and permanent carbon storage," said Michael Ruffatto, the company's president. North American also received a \$5 million DOE grant in 2009.

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