

Dallas company's tech earns spot in Space Foundation hall of fame, spurs growth to \$250M in revenue

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A Dallas company that manufactures air purifiers and other “healthy home” products got a boost this month when its technology was inducted into the Space Foundation's Space Technology Hall of Fame.

Aerus earned the spot for its ActivePure technology, an air purification system that reduces surface micro-organisms and airborne contaminants. It's just the 75th technology to find a place in the hall of fame in the last three decades, joining other health improvement innovations like LASIK eye surgery and implantable pacemakers, Aerus said in a release.

The technology was developed in the early 1990s to eliminate ethylene gas on board the International Space Station – a crucial step in spurring plant growth –and has been adapted for commercial use since, CEO Joe Urso told the Dallas Business Journal.

Around since 1924, Aerus has enjoyed recent growth related to a wider distribution of the technology. The company's revenue came in at \$250 million in 2016, up 15 percent from the year prior.

Aerus employs 200 people overall, with the CEO and most of the company's executives located in Dallas. Its manufacturing operation is in Bristol, Virginia.

Urso spoke with us about the induction:

How long has Active Pure been on the market?

It was first introduced in its most basic form in 2004. It was really introduced in a limited way. We began to seriously commercialize it in 2010 and have massively improved the technology, so it's much more powerful than it was for NASA and when it was developed in 2004.

How much of the sales come via Active Pure's commercial deployment?

A lot of the sales go into the residential market through different channels, and a lot of them go into the commercial market. Of the products that we sell, well over half of the company-wide sales involve some form of this technology.

What's driving your growth over the last few years?

We really increased our distribution of the technology more than anything. We developed some new applications for it but more importantly, we've really reached out and opened up some new channels of distribution. We have a little dot-com that has grown significantly. We sell into the heating and air conditioning market and we've really expanded our distribution there from a few hundred distributors to well over 1,500. We're hoping to get to over 2,000 this year. These are contractors that have multiple trucks on the road. And then we've opened up some international markets as well. It's been a combination of those things, new market opportunities.

What does this honor mean for you and the company?

The thing that excites me is that at the end of the day, we're doing so much good with this technology. ... What the honor does for us is it helps validate us in our minds and, I think, publicly as a really unique and extraordinary technology. The likes of the companies that are in (the hall of fame) are off the charts. We're in the who's who of science by being a member now of the Hall of Fame of the Space Foundation.



Joe Urso, CEO of Aerus

