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SAN JOSE — Lyten said Wednesday it has launched a pilot production line for lithium-sulfur batteries in San Jose, an endeavor the tech startup hopes will revolutionize the battery industry and usher in new kinds of Silicon Valley innovations. The San Jose-based company believes its batteries can provide a lightweight, low-cost, green and energy-efficient choice for an array of industries, including electric vehicles, electric aircraft and mobile devices.

Lyten said Wednesday that its work in lithium-sulfur batteries could result in less expensive electric and mobile products — that are also homegrown in Silicon Valley.

These kinds of batteries could be produced wholly in the United States and not have to be shipped from suppliers based in Asia, in the view of Dan Cook, Lyten's chief executive officer and co-founder. Lyten is poised to sharply slash battery costs, Cook said in an interview Wednesday with this news organization.

"We think this is a battery for the masses," Cook said. "We believe we can produce sulfur-lithium batteries at half the cost of offshore batteries."

Lyten's production and delivery effort isn't a far-off dream. The plant has been producing the lithium-sulfur batteries for a few weeks and they are slated to land on customer's doorsteps over the next several months.

"The lithium-sulfur pilot line will begin delivering commercial battery cells in 2023 to early adopting customers within the defense, automotive, logistics, and satellite sectors," the company said Wednesday.

The company provided tours of the battery research, development and production center at its campus in North San Jose's Alviso district as part of a ribbon-cutting event on Wednesday.

"Lyten represents the opportunity for a whole new era of innovation based on our roots in Silicon Valley, in hardware, in real basic science, in changing the physics and chemistry to create whole new applications and technologies," San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan said during the event. "I've been making the case about why San Jose is going to lead our region of the pandemic and into a new era."

"For many people, Silicon Valley has been reduced to only software, but that's not the case," said Gen. Steven "Bucky" Butow, director of the space portfolio with the Defense Innovation Unit of the federal Defense Department. "But Silicon Valley produces a lot of hardware that

can be disruptive. Lyten is one of those companies that can disrupt an industry.”

“Lithium-sulfur is the battery chemistry that has the potential to electrify everything,” said Celina Mikolajczak, Lyten’s chief battery technology officer.

“Lyten batteries will be safer in vehicles than conventional lithium-ion batteries because lithium-sulfur does not contain oxygen from metallic oxides, which is what drives thermal runaway events that have plagued many electric vehicles,” the company states in a post on its website.

At present, Lyten has about 250 employees in the city, company executives estimated. That’s double the number of workers that Lyten employed in 2022. And the year-ago number of 125 is roughly double the 2021 total.

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