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Toro Purchases New Jersey-Based R & D Engineering

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. (August 5, 2003) – The Toro Company recently completed the acquisition of New Jersey-based R & D Engineering, innovators of wireless rain and freeze switches and sensor technology for homeowner and contractor-installed residential irrigation systems. The patented switches transmit a signal up to 300 feet to the systems controller, ceasing all irrigation functions in the presence of rain or freezing temperatures. They are easy to install and eliminate unsightly wires that may be subject to vandalism or wear.

“The acquisition aligns well with our long-range strategies for the irrigation market that include providing water management solutions to our customers,” explained Leo Lovato, managing director of sales and marketing for the irrigation business at The Toro Company. “The technology is compatible with our existing controllers, and more than half of R&D’s distributors are channel partners with whom we currently have strong relationships. The transition will be virtually seamless to customers.”

Water management has become a critical issue in many regions as municipalities and other water purveyors push for legislation to require rain sensors on home irrigation systems. “From an environmental standpoint, we have a responsibility to ensure that irrigation systems do not duplicate the natural benefits of a rainfall whenever it occurs,” continued Lovato. “Wireless sensors make it easy for homeowners and contractors to do their part in properly managing their use of water and in protecting this resource that will likely become more scarce in the future.”

The wireless rain sensors will continue to be sold under the R & D brand for the remainder of the season. Plans for product line and brand expansion are under development and will be unveiled at the IA Show in October.

The Toro Company has more than 5,000 employees worldwide and is a leading provider of outdoor maintenance equipment and irrigation systems for home, recreation, and commercial landscapes.