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## Durham firm helps purify water in Balkans

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By SUSAN STUMME, The Herald-Sun Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - When U.S. forces coordinating relief efforts in the Balkans needed technical advice to build water-treatment systems in Albanian refugee camps, they consulted Durham resident Dr. Roddy Tempest. Tempest is chairman and chief executive officer of Tempest Environmental Systems Inc., a Durham company specializing in water-purification technologies. He is in Albania, working with U.S. military leaders to help provide safe drinking water to the Kosovar refugees living in Camp Hope, an American-built refugee camp.



Roddy Tempest, Chairman and CEO of Tempest Environmental Systems, discusses Camp Hope's water purification needs with Commanding General Hellend (USMC) of Operation Shining Hope.

"Everything is moving very fast over there," said Keith Gibbs, the company's environmental specialist. "It's a lot more crazy and chaotic than we first understood. But we're just trying to get the system installed and solve other water-quality issues."

Camp Hope opened Wednesday, with 490 refugees arriving Thursday in the first wave. Forces participating in Joint Task Force Shining Hope, the U.S. arm of the NATO-sponsored humanitarian relief effort, are overseeing construction of the site. Camp Hope is expected to house up to 20,000 refugees by June 1.

"They're looking to actually build a city from the ground up," Gibbs said. "This has all been done on the turn of a dime."

Gibbs is Tempest's point man in the United States, facilitating communications between the Durham office and the Balkans as work continues on installation of the mobile water treatment plant. The plant will clean 30,000 gallons of water per day, enough to fulfill the needs of about 2,500 refugees. The system would remove bacteria, heavy metals and inorganic materials such as lead and arsenic from the refugees' drinking water, exceeding World Health Organization standards for clean water. "Eighty percent of all disease is

water-borne. We're trying to make sure that water supplied to the refugees is of high quality so we can prevent disease and cross-contamination [of drinking water and waste water]."

Tempest serves on the Environmental Technologies Trade Advisory Committee, a group focused on the international competitiveness of the U.S. environmental industry, at the invitation of Commerce Secretary William M. Daley. "Even though we are a very small company, we have a large global footprint," Tempest said.

Tempest Environmental Systems supplies environmental products to more than 40 countries and has been particularly active in disaster relief. Its water-processing units were used after the January 1995 earthquake in Kobe, Japan, and the company also is working on Hurricane Mitch relief projects in Honduras.



Refugees wash clothes for the first time in months using clean water provided by Tempest Environmental Systems