



## CC firm invests in tech market

### Manti puts up \$11M for company making molecular markers

**By Naomi Snyder Caller-Times  
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A Corpus Christi oil and gas drilling company is making a more than \$11 million financing commitment for a Dallas technology firm.

Manti Resources, which drills for oil and gas in Texas and Louisiana, has agreed to put up 90 percent of \$12.7 million in equity financing needed to help Isotag Technology grow.

Dallas-based Isotag creates molecular markers that help detect counterfeiting and adulteration in everything from premium gasoline to computer software.

Manti will own 52 percent of Isotag after providing the additional funding.

"It's just the potential for Isotag is unlimited," said Manti's executive vice president Gary Mize. "There's a lot of companies going to invest in these technologies."

The company creates tags on a molecular level that change, for example, the makeup of ink for identification cards so they can't be forged, or gasoline so distributors can't illegally dilute it.

"They can tag anything, polo shirts, alcohol," Mize said. "Literally, (the tag) is impossible to find."

Isotag needs the additional money to expand into South America and Mexico, he said. Shell now is using Isotag to mark gasoline in Brazil.

The company also has begun using the tags for government agencies in the fight against terrorism, although Mize said even he hasn't been told most of the details, for security reasons.

Isotag makes about \$9 million in annual sales and has 40 employees.

Its largest investor, Manti Resources, was formed in 1989 by president Lee Barberito and former Exxon employees.

Although the company drills for oil and gas, it also invests in other companies such as Isotag. Manti also has part ownership in Texas Commercial Energy, which shops for electricity for commercial customers in the newly deregulated market. Manti also invests in New Orleans-based Cimex BioTech. Mize said he hopes all three companies eventually will go public.

Contact Naomi Snyder at 886-4316 or [\\_snydern@caller.com](mailto:_snydern@caller.com)