



## Simbol buys lithium plant

30 November 2009

### US lithium developer relocates Limtech's Quebec plant as it nears brine breakthrough

USA based Simbol Mining – the company looking to become a major lithium carbonate ( $\text{Li}_2\text{CO}_3$ ) producer from waste stream brine in California – has purchased and relocated the assets of Limtech Lithium Industries Inc.

Limtech operated a 500 tpa lithium carbonate plant in Shawinigan, Quebec, Canada producing grades up to 99.99999%  $\text{Li}_2\text{CO}_3$  for high tech battery applications. Simbol is eyeing the emerging auto battery sector as its primary market as the world moves towards electrification of the vehicle.

The plant has been moved to California where Simbol is pilot testing extraction of lithium, zinc and manganese from geothermal waste stream brine using a new reverse osmosis technology. It will directly tap into its process and will be a ready-to-use, tried and tested production line.

Limtech has sold tonnages of high purity lithium carbonate to Japanese traders in the past.

### Closing in on brine breakthrough

Should Simbol get its geothermal brine source up and running it will be one of the most significant breakthroughs the industry has experienced as it eliminates the need for solar evaporation, a vital step in present lithium brine operations particularly in the Salar de Atacama, Chile where SQM SA and Chemetall GmbH have their world leading production facilities.

“The resource is fairly unique and we have eliminated the need for solar evaporation,” explained Simbol’s president and chief executive officer, Luka Erceg.

“We don’t have the magnesium problem that brine producers face – as there is virtually no magnesium in our brine. We are [however] dealing with highly complex fluid streams – three to four times more complex [than traditional lithium brines],” Erceg told **IM**.

The company would not release details on a timescale but has recently increased its activity with this Limtech acquisition, adding the founder of Limtech’s unique process, Dr Steven Harrison to its management and is soon to announce new chemical industry figures to its staff.