



Press Release  
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## **Tampa-Based Thermablok, Inc. May Have the Answer to Oil Spill Clean-up Using Aerogel**

Tampa, Florida – Can **aerogel**, the highest insulating material in existence, help with the catastrophic BP oil spill off the Louisiana Gulf shore? According to one Tampa Florida company it can efficiently do what other materials currently in use cannot, and can do so while possibly recovering some of the oil.

Utilizing NASA aerogel technology, Thermablok® is developing a floating device which takes advantage of the unique characteristic of this particular aerogel.

Thermablok's aerogel particles are extremely hydrophobic (will not combine with water), and yet extremely lipophilic (oil-absorbing.) As such Thermablok's aerogel particulate is capable of soaking up as much as 14- to 20-times its weight in oil according to Don Adrian, head of thermal research for Thermablok.

"It actually does something that the older solutions are failing to do in the Gulf of Mexico," Adrian said. "It completely separates the oil from the water."

Engineers have been working tirelessly to halt the estimated 2.6 million gallons of crude that have spilled into the Gulf of Mexico since an April 20<sup>th</sup> oil rig explosion that killed 11 workers.

According to Adrian, the Thermablok material can be used without delay for cleanup. Not only is it an immediate answer to the oil spill woes in the Gulf, Adrian says it can be stockpiled in large quantities for future use since this material will not age.

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Once absorbed by Thermablok, the oil can be squeezed out and the Thermablok redeployed into the slick.

Lahnie Johnson, president and founder of Thermablok says that an alternative to squeezing the oil out and redeploying Thermablok aerogel is to simply ignite it and burn the oil out, as the aerogel is not damaged by the flames.

“Oil slicks themselves will generally not stay lit unless they are a minimum of 10 mm thick, however, the Thermablok aerogel acts just like a candlewick, drawing up the oil but not burning itself,” Johnson said. “As Thermablok aerogel is 95-percent air and five-percent silica (sand) it has virtually no environmental or marine life impact.”

Acoustiblok Inc., Thermablok’s parent company, received international attention for Thermablok’s role in the prestigious 2009 Solar Decathlon competition, in which the energy-conserving house built by architectural students at California College of the Arts (CCA) and Santa Clara University (SCU) won first place in the Architecture division with it’s state-of-the-art *Refract House*. Thermablok was featured in the Refract House, chosen for inclusion because of its incomparable insulating properties, the highest in existence.

Made in the USA, Thermablok is 100-percent recyclable, impervious to moisture and mold and unaffected by age. “Green” energy-conscious architects are currently incorporating this latest answer to energy conservation and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Just one, 3/8-inch x 1½-inch (10mm x 38mm) strip of Thermablok added to only one edge of each stud before hanging drywall breaks the *conductive* “thermal bridging” and can increase the overall wall R-factor by more than 40 percent (US Department of Energy/JM Laboratories.)

Thermablok is listed as one of NASA’s top “spin off” companies of 2009. For more information about Thermablok and its parent company Acoustiblok, Inc., contact [sales@thermablok.com](mailto:sales@thermablok.com), visit our website at [www.thermablok.com](http://www.thermablok.com), or call us at 813.980.1400.

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