

Power-sipping cell phone displays come closer

June 3 2009, By PETER SVENSSON , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- The first factory dedicated to making a new type of power-thrifty cell phone display has started operations, Qualcomm Inc. said this week.

Phones or other gadgets using the displays from the factory in Taiwan could be on the market before the end of the year, said Jim Cathey, Qualcomm's vice president of business development.

Qualcomm's "mirasol" displays are different from regular color LCDs because they don't shine with their own light. Instead, they reflect ambient light. Tiny mirrors move in the screens to manipulate light in much the same way that a peacock's plumage gets its scintillating hues.

The mirrors consume power only when they're moving, so mirasol screens can show a static image with very little battery drain. They share this ability with "[electronic ink](#)" displays used in e-book reader devices like the Kindle from Amazon.com Inc. However, unlike [e-ink](#) displays, mirasol displays can quickly change from one image to the next and show video.

Small mirasol displays have already been used in a few Chinese and Korean phones, and in an MP3 player on the U.S. market. These were able to show two colors, but displays from the new factory will be in full color, Qualcomm said.

Their sizes can range up to 5 inches diagonally, and the prices should

eventually be competitive with LCDs, Cathey said.

San Diego-based [Qualcomm](#) set up the factory in Taiwan with local partner Cheng Uei Precision Industry Co., also known as Foxlink. Previously, it has made smaller numbers of displays through a partnership with another Taiwanese firm, Prime View International.

On Monday, Prime View announced it would buy Massachusetts-based E Ink Corp., the maker of the Kindle's [display](#), for \$215 million.

On the Net:

<http://www.mirasoldisplays.com>

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