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Vandermeulen

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(54) **METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR COOLING BUILDINGS WITH LARGE HEAT LOADS USING DESICCANT CHILLERS**

(71) Applicant: **7AC Technologies, Inc.**, Beverly, MA (US)

(72) Inventor: **Peter F. Vandermeulen**, Newburyport, MA (US)

(73) Assignee: **7AC Technologies, Inc.**, Beverly, MA (US)

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F28C 1/16 (2006.01)
F24F 5/00 (2006.01)
F24F 3/14 (2006.01)

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CPC **F28C 1/16** (2013.01); **F24F 3/1417** (2013.01); **F24F 5/0014** (2013.01); **F24F 2003/1458** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC F28C 1/16; F24F 3/1417; F24F 5/0014; F24F 2003/1458

See application file for complete search history.

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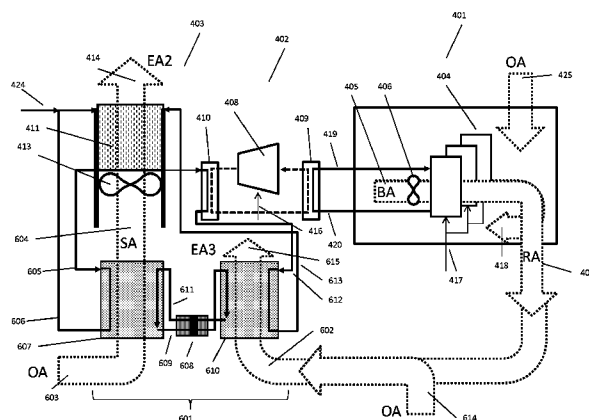
Primary Examiner — Emmanuel Duke

(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Foley Hoag LLP; Rajesh Vallabh

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A system for providing cooling to a building includes a cooling tower for transferring waste heat from the building to the atmosphere and a liquid desiccant system for dehumidifying an air stream entering the cooling tower to increase cooling efficiency of the cooling tower. The liquid desiccant system includes a conditioner and a regenerator. The conditioner utilizes a liquid desiccant for dehumidifying the air stream entering the cooling tower. The regenerator is connected to the conditioner for receiving dilute liquid desiccant from the conditioner, concentrating the dilute liquid desiccant using waste heat from the building, and returning concentrated liquid desiccant to the conditioner.

33 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



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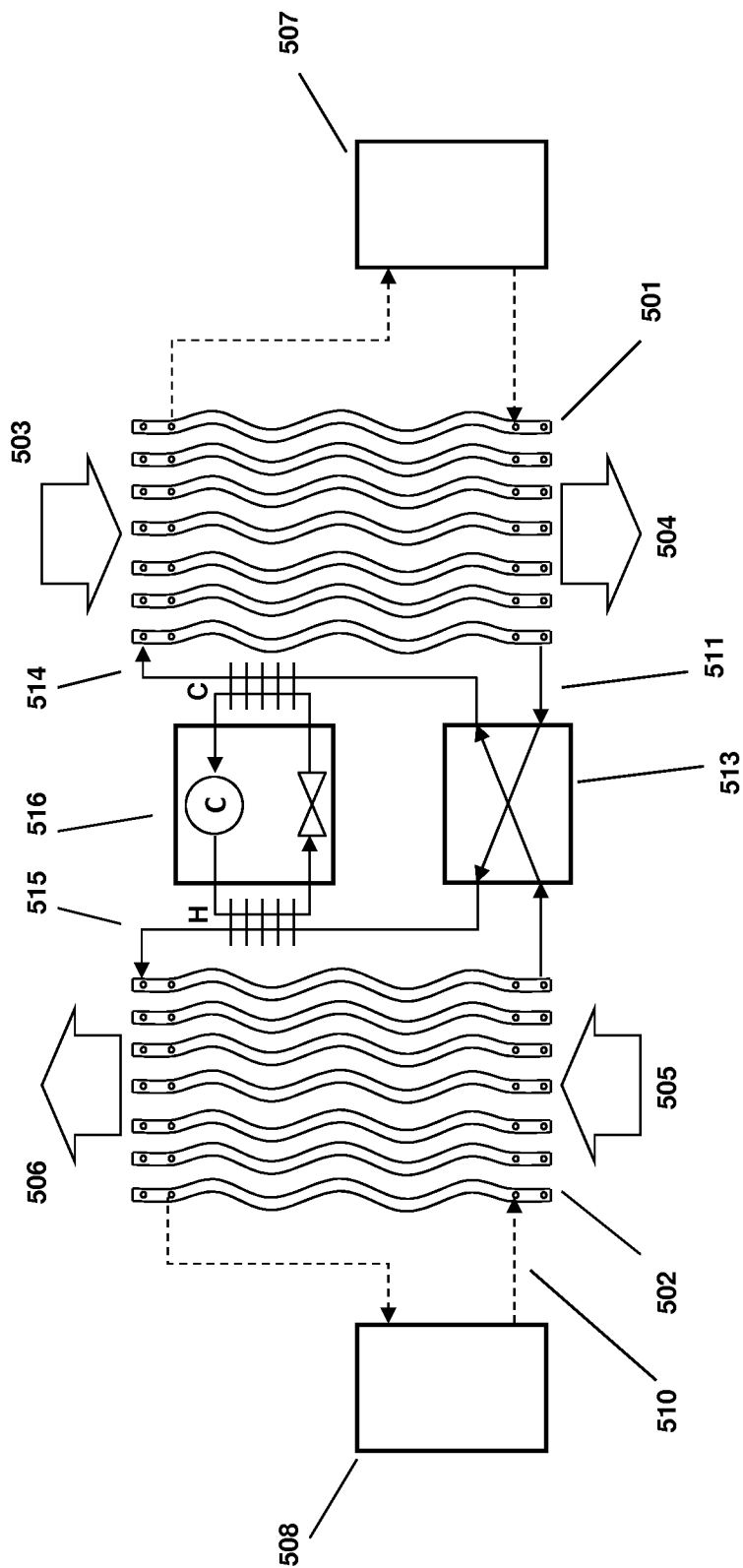


FIG. 1

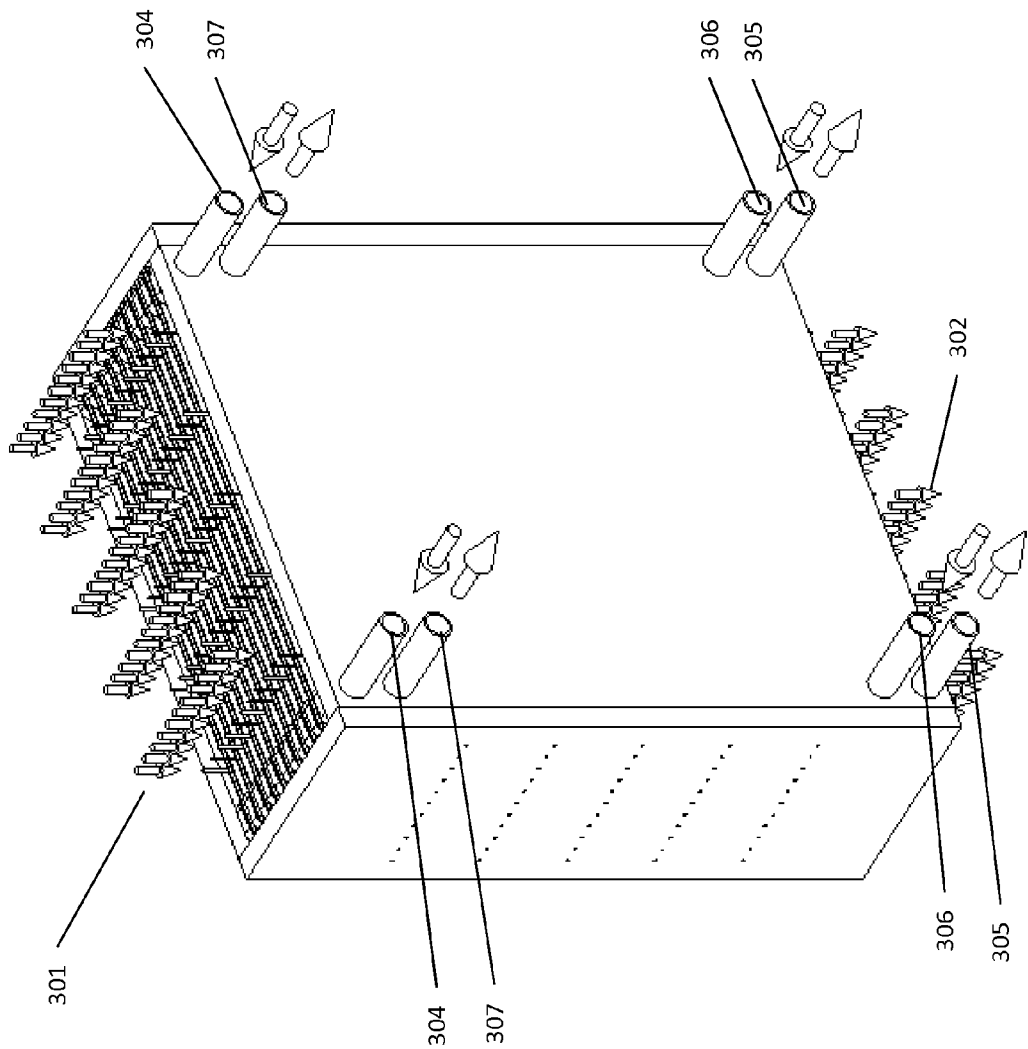


FIG. 2

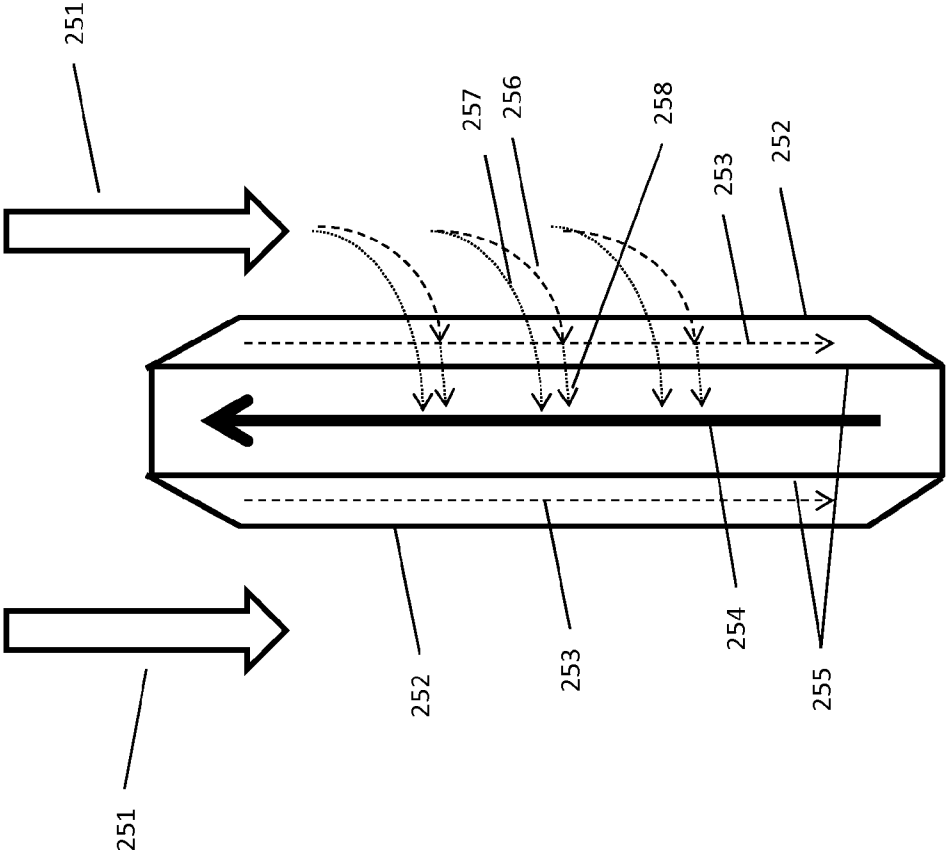


FIG. 3

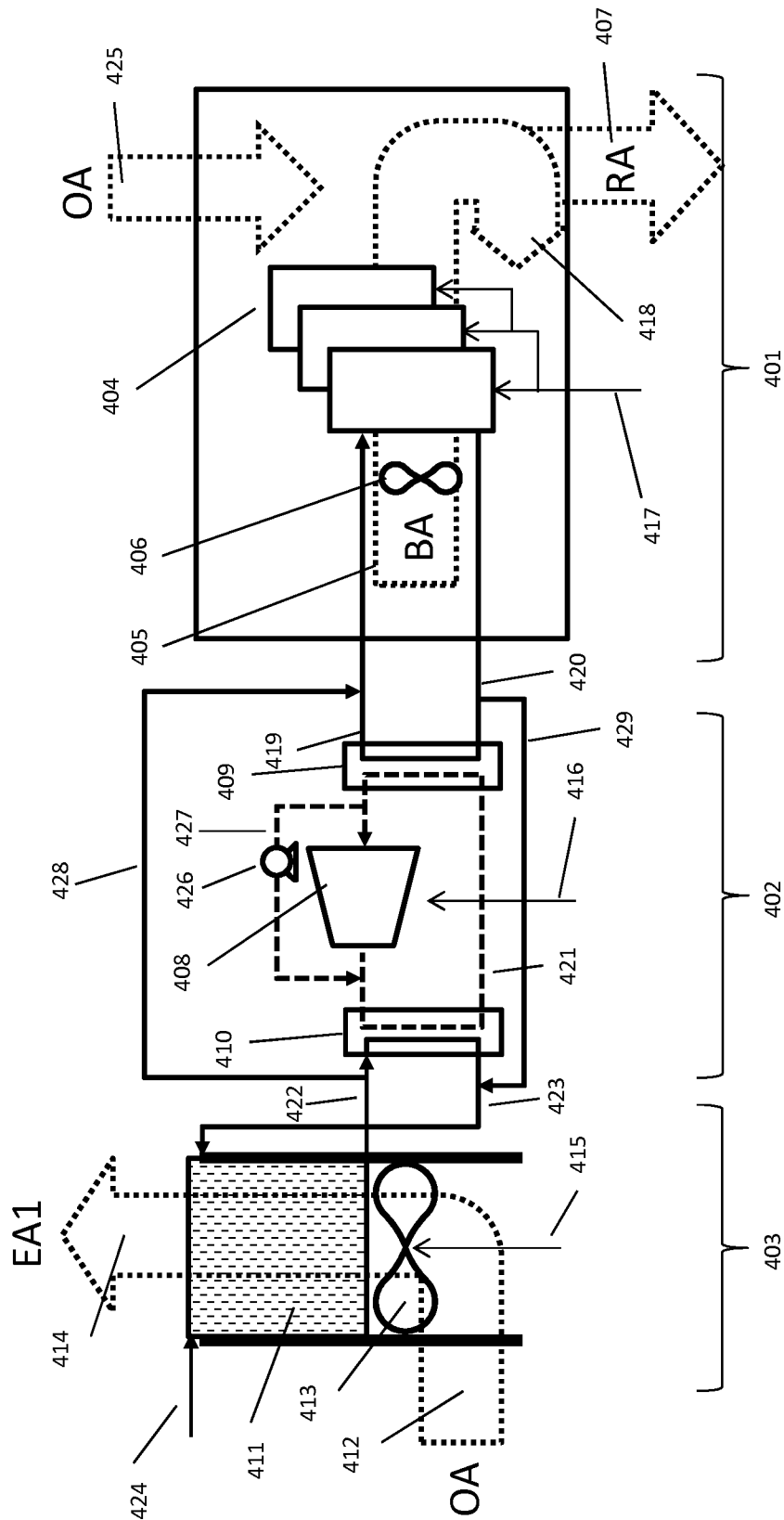


FIG. 4

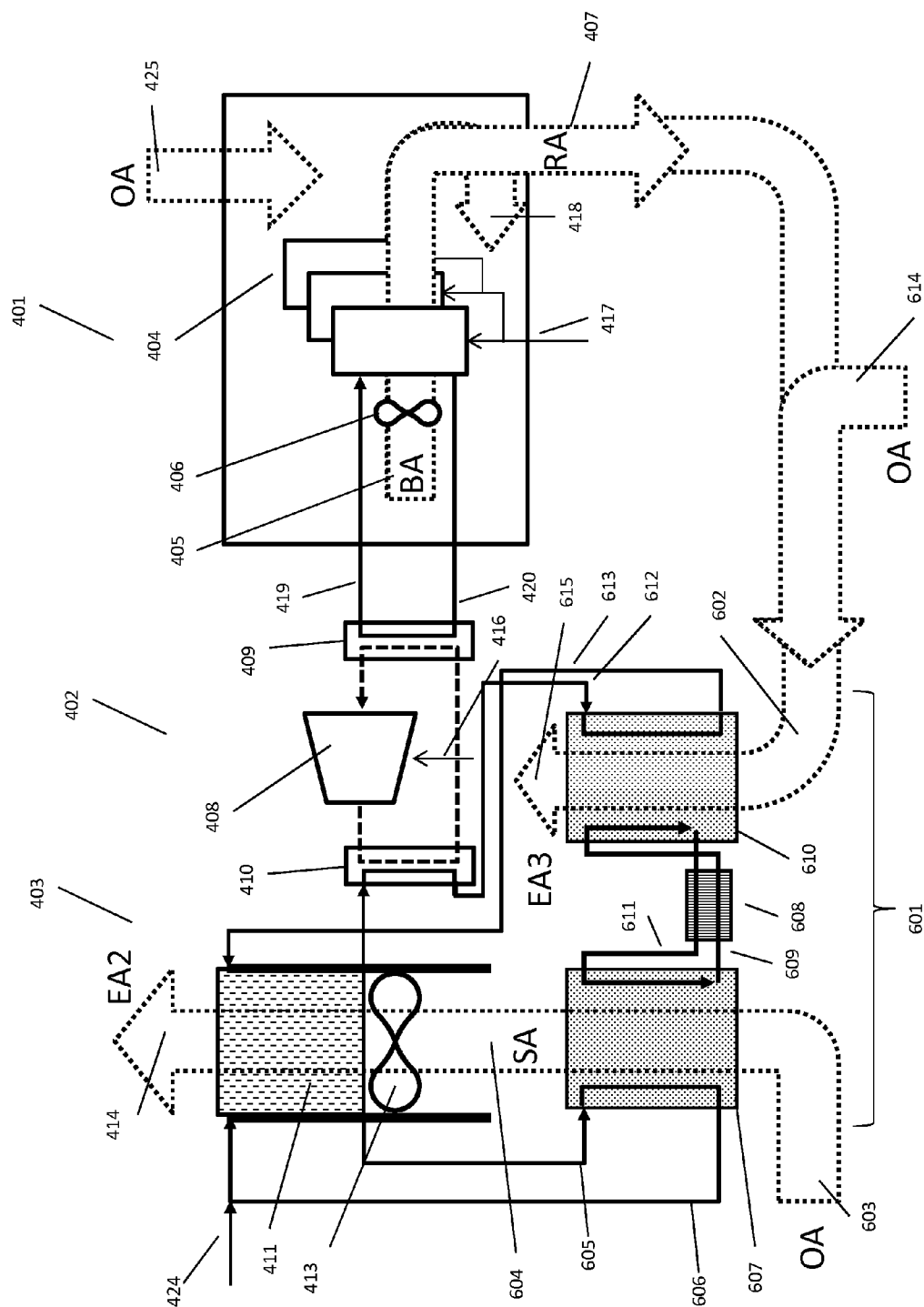


FIG. 5

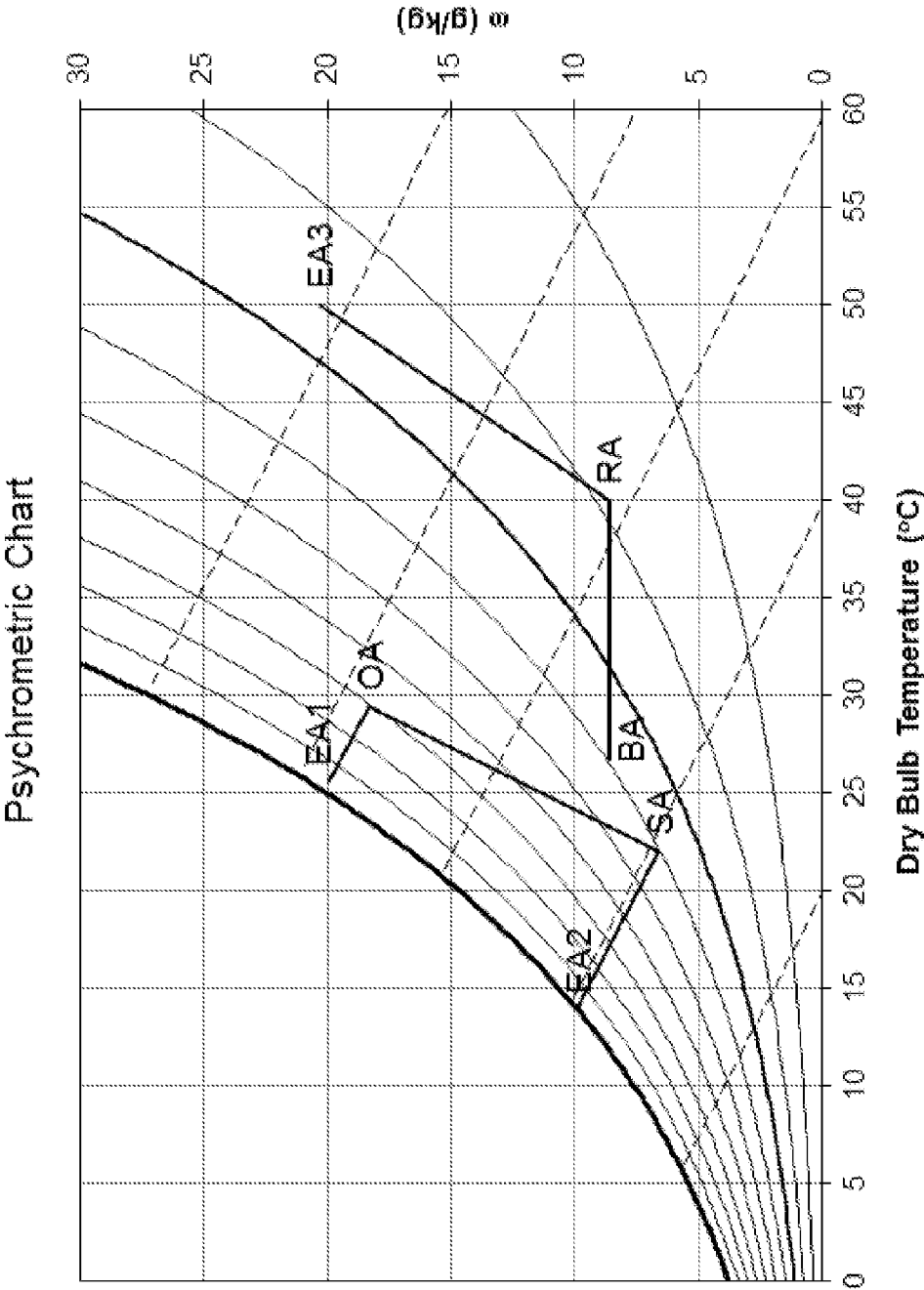


FIG. 6

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METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR COOLING BUILDINGS WITH LARGE HEAT LOADS USING DESICCANT CHILLERS

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/733,209 filed on Dec. 4, 2012 entitled DESICCANT SYSTEMS and U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/787,948 filed on Mar. 15, 2013 entitled METHODS AND SYSTEMS FOR COOLING BUILDINGS WITH LARGE HEAT LOADS USING DESICCANT CHILLERS, which are both hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

The present application relates generally to the use of liquid desiccants to dehumidify an air stream entering a cooling tower. More specifically, the application relates to a cooling system construction that operates using a 2- or 3-way liquid desiccant mass and heat exchanger that can dehumidify an air stream entering a cooling tower, wherein the desiccant is absorbing moisture from the air stream in such a way that the cooling tower experiences a much higher temperature drop than is normally the case, and wherein the desiccant is subsequently regenerated using a waste heat source, which—if available—can be waste heat from the building itself, to which cooling is provided.

Datacenters are an example of buildings that contain a large amount of equipment that generates a large amount of sensible heat. Other examples include semiconductor manufacturing facilities, plastics processing facilities, industrial facilities, and other buildings where large internal sensible heat loads need to be dissipated. Datacenters typically do not have a large number of people in their space, so there is typically no need to bring in a lot of outside air, and therefore the outside air (which in other buildings can be as much as 60% of the overall heat- and moisture-load of a building) does generally not constitute a large load for a datacenter and neither is there a large humidity (latent) heat-load in the datacenter itself. Oftentimes the sensible heat that is generated in these buildings by computers and the like is rejected to a chilled water or cooling water loop that is connected to a central chiller facility, which in turn rejects its heat to a cooling tower. The problem with cooling towers is that in hot, humid climates, the cooling tower is unable to evaporate a lot of water and thus the temperature drop in the cooling water is not very large. This means that either the cooling tower has to be oversized or other means of heat rejection have to be employed. Most of the heat in a datacenter is rejected to a chilled water loop and some is rejected to the air in the datacenter which is replenished with outside air. Datacenters in effect use a lot of electricity and reject the heat that the electrical consumption generates to a chiller plant and eventually to a cooling tower. It could be very desirable if the datacenter's waste heat could be used for other purposes, in particular if the heat could be used for more efficient cooling of the datacenter itself.

Liquid desiccants have been used parallel to conventional vapor compression HVAC equipment to help reduce humidity in spaces, particularly in spaces that require large amounts of outdoor air or that have large humidity loads inside the building space itself. Humid climates, such as for example Miami, Fla. require a lot of energy to properly treat (dehumidify and cool) the fresh air that is required for a

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space's occupant comfort. Liquid desiccant systems are however not very common on datacenters and the like, simply because datacenters have large sensible loads internally and not large latent loads, nor do datacenter use large amounts of outside air. However, the cooling towers that support a datacenter do have large latent loads since they take in outside air. It would therefore be desirable to supply these cooling towers with dry air to improve their efficiency.

Liquid desiccant systems have been used for many years and are generally quite efficient at removing moisture from an air stream. However, liquid desiccant systems generally use concentrated salt solutions such as ionic solutions of LiCl, LiBr, or CaCl₂ and water. Such brines are strongly corrosive, even in small quantities, so numerous attempts have been made over the years to prevent desiccant carry-over to the air stream that is to be treated. In recent years efforts have begun to eliminate the risk of desiccant carry-over by employing micro-porous membranes to contain the desiccant. An example of such as membrane is the EZ2090 poly-propylene, microporous membrane manufactured by Celgard, LLC, 13800 South Lakes Drive Charlotte, N.C. 28273. The membrane is approximately 65% open area and has a typical thickness of about 20 μ m. This type of membrane is structurally very uniform in pore size (100 nm) and is thin enough to not create a significant thermal barrier. It has been shown that these membranes are effective in inhibiting desiccant carry-over.

Liquid desiccant systems generally have two separate components. The conditioning side of the system provides conditioning of air to the required conditions, which are typically set using thermostats or humidistats. The regeneration side of the system provides a reconditioning function of the liquid desiccant most often using heat, so that it can be re-used on the conditioning side. Liquid desiccant is typically pumped between the two sides through a heat exchanger so as to prevent a large heat load from the regenerator on the conditioner.

There thus remains a need to provide a cooling system for datacenters and other buildings with high heat loads, wherein the datacenter's internally generated heat could be used for a more efficient cooling of the datacenter itself.

BRIEF SUMMARY

In accordance with one or more embodiments, a system is provided for providing cooling to a building. The system includes a cooling tower for transferring waste heat from the building to the atmosphere and a liquid desiccant system for dehumidifying an air stream entering the cooling tower to increase cooling efficiency of the cooling tower. The liquid desiccant system includes a conditioner and a regenerator. The conditioner utilizes a liquid desiccant for dehumidifying the air stream entering the cooling tower. The regenerator is connected to the conditioner for receiving dilute liquid desiccant from the conditioner, concentrating the dilute liquid desiccant using waste heat from the building, and returning concentrated liquid desiccant to the conditioner.

Provided herein are methods and systems used for the efficient dehumidification of an air stream using a liquid desiccant. In accordance with one or more embodiments, the liquid desiccant is running down the face of a support plate as a falling film. In accordance with one or more embodiments, the desiccant is contained by a microporous membrane and the air stream is directed in a primarily vertical orientation over the surface of the membrane and whereby both latent and sensible heat are absorbed from the air stream into the liquid desiccant. In accordance with one or

more embodiments, the support plate is filled with a heat transfer fluid that ideally is flowing in a direction counter to the air stream. In accordance with one or more embodiments, the system comprises a conditioner that removes latent and sensible heat through the liquid desiccant and a regenerator that removes the latent and sensible heat from the system. In accordance with one or more embodiments, the heat transfer fluid in the conditioner is cooled by an external source of cold heat transfer fluid. In accordance with one or more embodiments, the regenerator is heated an external source of hot heat transfer fluid.

In accordance with one or more embodiments, the liquid desiccant conditioner is providing treated air to a cooling tower thereby making the cooling tower a more efficient device. In one or more embodiments, the treated air is cooler than the air would have been without a liquid desiccant dehumidifier. In one or more embodiments, the treated air is drier than the air would have been without a liquid desiccant dehumidifier. In one or more embodiments, the conditioner contains membranes to contain the liquid desiccant. In accordance with one or more embodiments the liquid desiccant conditioner is receiving cold water from the same cooling tower. In one or more embodiments, the cold water is delivered by a chiller system.

In accordance with one or more embodiments, the liquid desiccant regenerator is provided a warm air stream by directing a warm air stream from a building with high internal heat loads to the regenerator. In one or more embodiments, the regenerator receives hot waste water from the building. In one or more embodiments, the hot waste water and/or hot waste air is used to concentrate a desiccant.

In accordance with one or more embodiments, the external sources of cold and hot heat transfer fluid are idled while heat is transferred from the building with high heat load to the liquid desiccant side of the system. In one or more embodiments, the regenerator functions as a replacement for a cooling tower. In one or more embodiments, the conditioner and regenerator are both acting like a cooling tower. In one or more embodiments, the cooling tower and chiller are bypassed and the liquid desiccant system is actively cooling the datacenter. In one or more embodiments, the compressor of the chiller system is bypassed and liquid refrigerant is pumped without the use of a compressor.

In no way is the description of the applications intended to limit the disclosure to these applications. Many construction variations can be envisioned to combine the various elements mentioned above each with its own advantages and disadvantages. The present disclosure in no way is limited to a particular set or combination of such elements.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates a 3-way liquid desiccant air conditioning system using a chiller or external heating or cooling sources.

FIG. 2 shows a flexibly configurable membrane module that incorporates 3-way liquid desiccant plates.

FIG. 3 illustrates an example of a single membrane plate in the liquid desiccant membrane module of FIG. 2.

FIG. 4 shows a typical datacenter cooling system setup.

FIG. 5 shows the integration between a liquid desiccant system and the datacenter cooling system from FIG. 4 in accordance with one or more embodiments.

FIG. 6 illustrates the psychrometric processes of FIGS. 4 and 5 in accordance with one or more embodiments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. 1 depicts a new type of liquid desiccant system as described in further detail in U.S. patent application Ser. No.

13/115,736, filed on May 25, 2011, which is incorporated by reference herein. A conditioner **501** comprises a set of plate structures that are internally hollow. A cold heat transfer fluid is generated in cold source **507** and entered into the plates. Liquid desiccant solution at **514** is brought onto the outer surface of the plates and runs down the outer surface of each of the plates. The liquid desiccant runs behind a thin membrane that is located between the air flow and the surface of the plates. Outside air **503** is now blown through the set of wavy plates. The liquid desiccant on the surface of the plates attracts the water vapor in the air flow and the cooling water inside the plates helps to inhibit the air temperature from rising. The treated air **504** is put into a building space.

The liquid desiccant is collected at the bottom of the wavy plates at **511** and is transported through a heat exchanger **513** to the top of the regenerator **502** to point **515** where the liquid desiccant is distributed across the wavy plates of the regenerator. Return air or optionally outside air **505** is blown across the regenerator plate, and water vapor is transported from the liquid desiccant into the leaving air stream **506**. An optional heat source **508** provides the driving force for the regeneration. The hot transfer fluid **510** from the heat source can be put inside the wavy plates of the regenerator similar to the cold heat transfer fluid on the conditioner. Again, the liquid desiccant is collected at the bottom of the wavy plates **502** without the need for either a collection pan or bath so that also on the regenerator the air can be vertical. An optional heat pump **516** can be used to provide cooling and heating of the liquid desiccant. It is also possible to connect a heat pump between the cold source **507** and the hot source **508**, which is thus pumping heat from the cooling fluids rather than the desiccant.

FIG. 2 describes a 3-way heat exchanger as described in further detail in U.S. patent application Ser. Nos. 13/915,199 filed on Jun. 11, 2013, 13/915,222 filed on Jun. 11, 2013, and No. 13/915,262 filed on Jun. 11, 2013, which are all incorporated by reference herein. A liquid desiccant enters the structure through ports **304** and is directed behind a series of membranes as described in FIG. 1. The liquid desiccant is collected and removed through ports **305**. A cooling or heating fluid is provided through ports **306** and runs counter to the air stream **301** inside the hollow plate structures, again as described in FIG. 1 and in more detail in FIG. 3. The cooling or heating fluids exit through ports **307**. The treated air **302** is directed to a space in a building or is exhausted as the case may be.

FIG. 3 describes a 3-way heat exchanger as described in more detail in U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/771,340 filed on Mar. 1, 2013, which is incorporated by reference herein. The air stream **251** flows counter to a cooling fluid stream **254**. Membranes **252** contain a liquid desiccant **253** that is falling along the wall **255** that contain a heat transfer fluid **254**. Water vapor **256** entrained in the air stream is able to transition the membrane **252** and is absorbed into the liquid desiccant **253**. The heat of condensation of water **258** that is released during the absorption is conducted through the wall **255** into the heat transfer fluid **254**. Sensible heat **257** from the air stream is also conducted through the membrane **252**, liquid desiccant **253** and wall **255** into the heat transfer fluid **254**.

FIG. 4 shows a high level schematic of a typical datacenter cooling system setup. The datacenter itself **401** comprises a large number of computer racks **404** that are cooled by fans **406** that blow building air ("BA") **405** through the computer racks **404** or the computer racks **404** are cooled by heat transfer fluid (oftentimes cooling water) **419**. Some of

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the air recirculates **418** in the space itself; however some of the air **407** ("RA") is exhausted. The exhausted air **407** is made up by an external outside air intake **425** ("OA"). The computer racks **404** are powered by electricity feeds **417** and the heat that is generated by the electrical consumption is rejected to the cooling water **420**, the exhaust air **407** and the recirculating air **418**. The chiller system **402** receives the cooling water **420** which is pumped through an evaporator heat exchanger **409** that is the evaporator of the chiller system **402** with compressor **408** compressing a refrigerant **421**. The heat of compression is rejected to condenser heat exchanger **410**. The heat exchanger **410** is then coupled to a cooling tower **403** that includes a fan **413** that blows outside air ("OA") **412** through a filter media **411** which is then exhausted at near fully saturated conditions **414** ("EA1"). Cooling water **423** is sprayed on top of the filter media **411** where a portion of the cooling water evaporates. This causes a cooling effect in the water and the cooled water **422** is pumped back to the heat exchanger **410**. Make-up water **424** is provided to the cooling tower to replace the water that is lost through evaporation. It is possible to not compress the refrigerant using compressor **408**, but instead to use a refrigerant pump **426** to create a refrigerant bypass loop **427** that can be used in part-load conditions, which can lead to substantial energy savings. It is also possible to use a cooling fluid bypass loop **428** and return cooling fluid loop **429** that bypasses the chiller section entirely. The electrical consumption of the complete system comprises primarily of electrical power **417** provided to the datacenter **401**, which largely turns into sensible heating of the building air **405** and cooling water **419**. Other electrical consumption comprises electrical power **416** for the chiller plant **402** and primarily the compressors **408** inside that plant and electrical power **415** for the cooling tower **403**, which is relatively small compared to the datacenter electrical power **417** and chiller plant electrical power **416**.

FIG. 5 illustrates the integration of the datacenter cooling system of FIG. 4 with a liquid desiccant cooling system. The liquid desiccant system **601** comprises a 3-way conditioner **607** (shown in FIG. 1 as **501**) and a 3-way regenerator **610** (shown in FIG. 1 as **502**). The conditioner **607** receives cold water **605** from the cooling tower. Concentrated liquid desiccant **611** is supplied to the 3-way conditioner **607**. Outside air **603** ("OA") is supplied to the conditioner **607** as well, which results in a much cooler and drier air stream **604** ("SA") supplied to the cooling tower **403**. The liquid desiccant **611** absorbs moisture in the air stream **603** while simultaneously cooling the air stream. The supply air **604** ("SA") to the cooling tower is thus drier and cooler than the outside air was. The warmer cooling water **606** is returned to the cooling tower. Diluted desiccant **609** is pumped through a heat exchanger **608** to the 3-way regenerator **610**. The regenerator **610** receives hot water **612** from the chiller's condenser heat exchanger **410** which is used as a heat source for desiccant regeneration. The somewhat cooler water **613** coming from the regenerator **610** is subsequently directed to the cooling tower **403** or back towards the condenser heat exchanger **410**. Warm return air **407** ("RA") from the data center **401** is directed to the regenerator **610**. An outside air stream **614** can optionally be mixed in with the return air to create a mixed air condition **602**. The dilute desiccant **609** is directed over the regenerator plates and is thus re-concentrated by the heat from the datacenter. The regenerator exhausts a much higher temperature and humidity air stream **615** ("EA3"), which contains the water vapor that was removed at the conditioner **607**. Like the system of FIG. 4, it is possible to not compress the refrigerant using

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compressor **408**, but instead to use a refrigerant pump **426** to create a refrigerant bypass loop **427** that can be used in part-load conditions, which can lead to substantial energy savings. It is also possible to use a cooling fluid bypass loop **428** and return cooling fluid loop **429** that bypasses the chiller section entirely. The refrigerant bypass loop and cooling fluid bypass loops have been omitted from the figure for clarity.

FIG. 6 illustrates the psychometric processes in the system of FIGS. 4 and 5. In a conventional cooling tower (as illustrated in FIG. 4) the outside air (labeled "OA") is subjected to an adiabatic humidification process (line segment OA to EA1) and the air leaves the cooling tower at a slightly lower temperature but more humid (point EA1). However, with a desiccant conditioner the outside air ("OA") is cooled and dehumidified (line segment OA to SA) and the cooler and drier air SA is supplied to the cooling tower, wherein the air undergoes an adiabatic humidification process (line segment SA to EA2). This results in a much more efficient cooling process since the temperature of EA2 is significantly below the temperature of EA1. In essence the waste heat air **407** of the datacenter has been used to create a concentrated desiccant, which otherwise would have been rejected without getting used. The regenerator process is shown as well: the building air **405** ("BA") is heated by the equipment **404** in the space to a higher sensible temperature but without adding any significant water vapor. The resulting waste heat air **407** ("RA") is then directed through the regenerator plates where both heat and moisture are added resulting in an exhaust air stream

Having thus described several illustrative embodiments, it is to be appreciated that various alterations, modifications, and improvements will readily occur to those skilled in the art. Such alterations, modifications, and improvements are intended to form a part of this disclosure, and are intended to be within the spirit and scope of this disclosure. While some examples presented herein involve specific combinations of functions or structural elements, it should be understood that those functions and elements may be combined in other ways according to the present disclosure to accomplish the same or different objectives. In particular, acts, elements, and features discussed in connection with one embodiment are not intended to be excluded from similar or other roles in other embodiments. Additionally, elements and components described herein may be further divided into additional components or joined together to form fewer components for performing the same functions. Accordingly, the foregoing description and attached drawings are by way of example only, and are not intended to be limiting.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for providing cooling to a building, comprising:

- a cooling tower for transferring waste heat from the building to the atmosphere; and
- a liquid desiccant system for dehumidifying an air stream entering the cooling tower to increase cooling efficiency of the cooling tower, said liquid desiccant system comprising:
 - a conditioner utilizing a liquid desiccant for dehumidifying the air stream entering the cooling tower, wherein the conditioner is connected to the cooling tower through a first heat transfer fluid loop such that cooled heat transfer fluid from the tower flows through the conditioner to cool the liquid desiccant in the conditioner; and
 - a regenerator connected to the conditioner for receiving dilute liquid desiccant from the conditioner, concen-

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trating the dilute liquid desiccant using waste heat from the building, and returning concentrated liquid desiccant to the conditioner.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the liquid desiccant in the regenerator is heated by hot waste heat from the building.

3. The system of claim 1, further comprising a chiller system connected to the building by a second heat transfer fluid loop, wherein heat from the building is rejected to the chiller system through the second heat transfer fluid loop; and wherein the cooling tower is connected to the chiller system by a third heat transfer fluid loop, wherein heat from the chiller system is rejected to the cooling tower through the third heat transfer fluid loop.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein the regenerator is also connected to the chiller system through the third heat transfer fluid loop to heat liquid desiccant in the regenerator.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein the regenerator is connected to the cooling tower such that heat transfer fluid in the third heat transfer fluid loop flows from the regenerator to the cooling tower.

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the conditioner comprises a plurality of structures arranged in a substantially vertical orientation, each structure having at least one surface across which the liquid desiccant in the conditioner can flow, wherein the air stream flows through or between the structures such that the liquid desiccant dehumidifies and cools the air stream.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein each of the plurality of structures includes a passage through which a heat transfer fluid can flow.

8. The system of claim 7, wherein the liquid desiccant and the heat transfer fluid flow in generally opposite directions in the conditioner.

9. The system of claim 6, further comprising a sheet of material positioned proximate to the at least one surface of each structure between the liquid desiccant and the air stream, said sheet of material permitting transfer of water vapor between the liquid desiccant and the air stream.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the sheet of material comprises a microporous membrane.

11. The system of claim 1, wherein the regenerator includes a plurality of structures arranged in a substantially vertical orientation, each structure having at least one surface across which the liquid desiccant in the regenerator can flow, wherein an air stream flows through or between the structures causing the liquid desiccant to desorb water to the air stream.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein each of the plurality of structures in the regenerator includes a passage through which a heat transfer fluid can flow.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the liquid desiccant and the heat transfer fluid flow in generally opposite directions in the regenerator.

14. The system of claim 11, further comprising a sheet of material positioned proximate to the at least one surface of each structure between the liquid desiccant and the air stream, said sheet of material permitting transfer of water vapor between the liquid desiccant and the air stream.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the sheet of material comprises a microporous membrane.

16. The system of claim 1, wherein the building comprises a data center or an industrial manufacturing or processing facility.

17. A method for providing cooling to a building, comprising:

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transferring waste heat from the building to a cooling tower to be released into the atmosphere; and dehumidifying an air stream entering the cooling tower to increase cooling efficiency of the cooling tower using a liquid desiccant system by:

utilizing a liquid desiccant in a conditioner for dehumidifying the air stream entering the cooling tower, wherein the conditioner is connected to the cooling tower through a first heat transfer fluid loop such that cooled heat transfer fluid from the tower flows through the conditioner to cool the liquid desiccant in the conditioner; and

receiving dilute liquid desiccant from the conditioner at a regenerator, concentrating the dilute liquid desiccant using waste heat from the building, and returning concentrated liquid desiccant to the conditioner.

18. The method of claim 17, further comprising heating the liquid desiccant in the regenerator using hot waste heat from the building.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein transferring waste heat from the building to the cooling tower comprises rejecting heat from the building to a chiller system through a second heat transfer fluid loop, and rejecting heat from the chiller system to the cooling tower through a third heat transfer fluid loop.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the regenerator is connected to the chiller system through the third heat transfer fluid loop to heat liquid desiccant in the regenerator.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the regenerator is connected to the cooling tower such that heat transfer fluid in the third heat transfer fluid loop flows from the regenerator to the cooling tower.

22. The method of claim 17, wherein the conditioner comprises a plurality of structures arranged in a substantially vertical orientation, each structure having at least one surface across which the liquid desiccant in the conditioner can flow, wherein method further comprises flowing the air stream flows through or between the structures such that the liquid desiccant dehumidifies and cools the air stream.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein each of the plurality of structures includes a passage through which a heat transfer fluid can flow.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the liquid desiccant and the heat transfer fluid flow in generally opposite directions in the conditioner.

25. The method of claim 22, further comprising a sheet of material positioned proximate to the at least one surface of each structure between the liquid desiccant and the air stream, said sheet of material permitting transfer of water vapor between the liquid desiccant and the air stream.

26. The method of claim 15, wherein the sheet of material comprises a microporous membrane.

27. The method of claim 17, wherein the regenerator includes a plurality of structures arranged in a substantially vertical orientation, each structure having at least one surface across which the liquid desiccant in the regenerator can flow, wherein the method further comprises flowing an air stream through or between the structures causing the liquid desiccant to desorb water to the air stream.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein each of the plurality of structures in the regenerator includes a passage through which a heat transfer fluid can flow.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the liquid desiccant and the heat transfer fluid flow in generally opposite directions in the regenerator.

30. The method of claim 27, further comprising a sheet of material positioned proximate to the at least one surface of

each structure between the liquid desiccant and the air stream, said sheet of material permitting transfer of water vapor between the liquid desiccant and the air stream.

31. The method of claim 27, wherein the sheet of material comprises a microporous membrane.

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32. The method of claim 17, wherein the building comprises a data center or an industrial manufacturing or processing facility.

33. A system for providing cooling to a building, comprising:

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a water cooling tower utilizing water for transferring waste heat from the building to the atmosphere; and

a liquid desiccant system for dehumidifying an air stream from outside the building, said liquid desiccant system connected to the cooling tower such that the air stream dehumidified by the liquid desiccant system is provided to the cooling tower to increase cooling efficiency of the cooling tower, said liquid desiccant system comprising:

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a conditioner utilizing a liquid desiccant for dehumidifying the air stream provided to the cooling tower; and

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a regenerator connected to the conditioner for receiving dilute liquid desiccant from the conditioner, said regenerator configured to concentrate the dilute liquid desiccant using waste heat from the building and return concentrated liquid desiccant to the conditioner.

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