

Power to the People

Panel Will Allow Consumers to Monitor, Control Energy Usage

By Candace Gwaltney

For an entrepreneur, inspiration can come when least expected. For Josh Beatty, it was on a spring day about two years ago while playing ball with his dog. Just outside of his Louisville home he couldn't help but notice the rapidly spinning electric meter – not to mention the corresponding dollars adding up on his power bill.

After searching for a product to help reduce his energy consumption, Beatty started conceptualizing an energy saving panel that would allow homeowners to track how energy is being used.

A desire to give consumers more options for regulating their energy consumption and reducing their carbon footprint motivated the Indiana University graduate (entrepreneurship and marketing) to start GreenerWay. He enlisted Greenville, Indiana-based Techshot to develop the technical components for the project.

“Two years ago I came to the decision I could either be a part of the problem or I could try to solve the problem and try to go down that second path, and we'll see how successful it is,” Beatty asserts.

Here's how the energy saving system works: the panel, which replaces the traditional circuit box, can monitor and control energy on a per circuit basis. Information on energy use is transferred to

the Internet, where software allows the homeowner to monitor usage in real time. The software also allows the consumer to turn circuits on and off remotely.

“The way that we use energy – where we get a bill at the end of the month – it really inhibits conserving electricity because you just see your total usage,” Beatty notes. “You have no idea where it came from, when it occurred, and you're really not able to control it.”

The online component provides detailed reports on daily and monthly usage in each room, along with ways to reduce energy consumption. Instead of energy use equating to a \$200 bill in the mailbox, GreenerWay customers also know how many pounds of greenhouse gases that month's energy produced.

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The GreenerWay system allows homeowners to monitor in real time how much energy each outlet is using. GreenerWay customers will use a web-based program to track current energy usage as well as compare day-to-day and month-to-month data.

GreenerWay

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While the system isn't on the market yet, Beatty has a working model and is now focusing on raising funds for a commercial launch this fall. The energy saving panel will be marketed primarily to new home construction and small businesses, but another project in development is specifically for existing homes or rental units.

"This is a guy to watch," notes Rich Boling, vice president of corporate advancement for Techshot. The company has worked with Beatty for more than 18 months.

For Techshot the eco-friendly aspect of GreenerWay wasn't the hook (in fact Techshot is working on a couple of other green projects). Instead it was the innovation of Beatty's system.

"He wanted to monitor and control power usage from anywhere in the world via the Internet, and we just think that's really interesting and really challenging," Boling explains. "That's the kind of stuff that gets us excited."

Techshot developed all new circuits and circuit boards for the project and solved technical challenges to link each component of the product. Mechatronics (tying together mechanical, electrical and software components) is a Techshot specialty, so working with GreenerWay made sense, Boling says.

Already GreenerWay has earned recognition for its product. In February, the Community Foundation of Louisville awarded Beatty the Vogt Invention and Innovation Award. The honor gives promising entrepreneurs financial support to commercialize their product. Typically, the monetary award is given to a couple of companies, but GreenerWay was chosen as the sole recipient from about 50 applicants, Beatty shares.

INFORMATION LINK

Resources: Josh Beatty, GreenerWay, at www.greenerway.com

Rich Boling, Techshot, at (812) 923-9591 or www.techshot.com



The energy monitoring circuit board was designed by Greenville-based Techshot.

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