

WaterSaver recycles sink water

By Bill Wolfe

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As a 9-year-old, Mark Sanders was troubled by the water wasted when he brushed his teeth.

"I'm looking down, thinking, you know, that's clean, drinkable water going right down the drain. Somehow you ought to catch it and use it to flush a toilet," he said.

It took a few decades, but that conservation idea soon will become a commercial reality. Production is scheduled to begin by April on the Aquas at Sanders' Louisville company, WaterSaver Technologies.

The Aquas captures, cleans, and stores sink drainage and pumps it as needed to an adjacent toilet, replacing the fresh water that would otherwise be used for flushing. The invention can save families thousands of gallons of water a year, according to the company.

It might not seem quite as important to save water in Louisville, with the Ohio River at hand, but the idea is attracting intense interest from water companies in parched Western states and other areas where populations are outstripping their water systems, Sanders said.

WaterSaver Technologies will use the \$55,000 from its Vogt Invention and Innovation Fund Award for continued marketing.

Sanders said he toyed with the concept of a water-saving bathroom device for years before sketching out an idea in 1999. He took the drawings to Louisville home remodeler Matt Ridge for evaluation.

"And about two weeks later, with a hot-glue gun and some PVC pipe and a Tupperware container for a reservoir, he built this thing and had it working in his house," Sanders said. Sanders and Ridge patented the invention, and in 2003, Sanders began working full time on bringing the device to market.

WaterSaver Technologies, founded in 2001, raised nearly \$1 million from investors and received about \$30,000 in state grants.

Hi-Tech Mold & Tool in Okolona will make parts for the Aquas and will assemble, package and ship the devices, which will sell for \$165 to \$190, Sanders said. Most sales will go to big customers such as water companies or builders, he said, but the Aquas also will be available to individuals at the company's Web site, www.watersavertech.com.



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Mark Sanders' company, WaterSaver Technologies, has developed a device to capture and clean sink drainage and pump the water to an adjacent toilet. It says the device can save families thousands of gallons of water a year. (By Mary Ann Gerth, The Courier-Journal)