

Energy-efficient product turning heads

Ciaran Dickson, The Leader-Post

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As far as new ventures go, Watercycles Energy Recovery Inc. is simply the best.

The company was awarded the honour at the 2007 Achievement in Business Excellence (ABEX) awards gala on Sunday. Andre Cayer, the co-owner and president of Watercycles, was thrilled to receive the Best New Venture award after moving his company from Saskatoon to Edenwold.

Like Archimedes, who discovered the principle of water displacement while sitting in his bathtub, Cayer had his eureka moment in a very similar place, about 2000 years later.



Heather McGinnis, project consultant for Munro Homes Ltd., listens to Andre Cayer, co-owner and president of Watercycles Energy Recovery Inc., explain the Watercycle (pictured here) that won him an ABEX award.

"In January 2005, I was sitting in the bathtub thinking about where all the hot water goes," said Cayer describing his thought process in discovering his Watercycles technology. "Basically, it heats the water coming into your home before it gets to your water heater."

The company, which incorporated in June 2005, sees most of its business currently in the United States, but exports worldwide -- the company recently exported its product to Lithuania. The company has had some difficulty penetrating the market locally. However, that may be indicative of the times for homebuilders.

"Success is coming at the busiest time in the homebuilding industry," said Heather McGinnis, project consultant at Munro Homes Ltd. "I don't think anyone can argue that it's not a great idea, its just that (the plumbers) don't have time to stop and think about something new to do. Even though they can make money and it's energy efficient, it is (lack of) manpower."

Water enters a hot water tank in a home at between two to 12 degrees Celsius and is heated to 50 degrees. During a shower, for example, hot water goes down the drain at approximately 37 degrees. The Watercycle, which uses no moving parts and consumes no energy, works by having the outgoing water heat up the coil system. Cold water from outside is then heated by travelling through the warm coils, entering the water tank at approximately 22 degrees.

While the Watercycle can be ordered for anywhere in the world. Cayer said anyone who wants one can contact their local plumber.

Although the device works well in homes, it also works very well in commercial settings, such as a restaurant. If restaurants keep their dishwashers going on a busy night, the product would save them on their large bills, Cayer said.

Cayer moved his operation from Saskatoon to Edenwold earlier this year, with the primary reason being to keep overhead costs low. But he said that because the company exports worldwide, it doesn't matter where operations are situated.

"If you've got a highway, you can export," Cayer said. "And it's a great product for Saskatchewan because the colder it is, the better it works."

On top of being energy efficient, SaskEnergy offers a rebate of \$150 to people who are installing the devices in their new Energy Star qualified homes.

People can also have them retrofitted into older homes.

The Watercycle costs about \$900 installed after the rebate, and is said to pay for itself within the first two to six years, depending on a homeowner's water consumption.