

Hudson Harr searches for renewable energy answers through his company ReRev.com

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He's a big renewable energy fan. He's already on his seventh company. He works 70-plus hours a week. He's only 23.

He is Hudson Harr, a St. Petersburg-born and -bred entrepreneur who's starting to win attention for an improbable Clearwater business he calls ReRev.com. That's dot-com shorthand for Renewable Energy Revolution. While a student at the University of Florida, Harr developed technology for elliptical trainers and stationary cycles that lets gym exercisers generate electricity from their own workouts that can be fed back into the power grid.

Harr's system can be found in various university gyms across the country, including the University of Oregon. The university estimates that 3,000 people a day on 20 ellipticals would generate 6,000 kilowatt hours a year, enough to power one small energy-efficient house in the area.

Soon, Oregon and nearby Oregon State University will compete to see whose gym generates more kilowatts.

Next up: installations at the University of Nebraska and James Madison University.

None of this, Harr says, will result in serious electric output. But it's good consciousness-raising as young adults see how much exercise it takes just to power a light bulb.

On Monday, I spoke with Harr from El Paso, Texas, where he's installing solar thermal systems. Solar thermal — not to be confused with solar photovoltaic, which converts solar directly to electricity — is the core of Harr's other, lower-profile but more significant business, SunQuest Energy of Clearwater.

As president, Harr runs SunQuest with solar thermal industry veteran Roger Eschenroeder. They partner with such heavyweights as Johnson Controls, Siemens and Chevron Energy when solar thermal systems can improve the mix of alternative energy systems for corporate clients.

Harr's a big supporter of renewable energy resources but refuses to sugarcoat methods that do not yet make economic sense.

Solar thermal (preheating water for heating purposes) systems are most practical, he says. "It lets businesses make purchasing decisions based on return on investment, not on some 'feel-good' basis."

The Obama administration rekindled interest in renewable energy, but Harr says he was busier when the price of a barrel of oil topped \$140 last year.

Growing up in St. Petersburg, Harr attended the Center for Advanced Technologies (or "CAT") program at Lakewood High School. He went on to UF, where he majored in finance and entrepreneurship, skills he knew he needed to run an innovative energy business.

Harr grew up with his mother, Nathalie Worthington, an artist. His father, described by Harr as a "successful entrepreneur," was not part of his day-to-day life.

Running his renewables businesses from the country's more energy-enlightened West Coast might make sense, Harr



says, except for one thing: He's so busy that operating from Clearwater helps keep both ReRev.com and SunQuest from becoming overwhelmed.

It does not hurt that living in St. Petersburg makes it easy for Harr to indulge his lifelong love of sailing.

Harr's 23 going on 43 when talking about our global energy challenge. "We know there is an energy problem," he says. "We want more domestic production. We've been in the hydrocarbon age for a long time, so how much oil is left?

"We have to think ahead about our energy infrastructure," he says. "That's why I am in this space."

Gotta admit. I feel better about the future hearing that from Harr.

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