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Tenrehte Technologies Sets Sights on Green Future

By: Mike Hedeen

A local start-up company has developed a device that will enable consumers to monitor their energy use.

The device won Tenrehte Technologies the 2010 Best of Show Award at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas in January.

A home in Irondequoit doubles as Tenrehte's headquarters.

Some Rochester engineers founded Tenrehte after becoming unemployed when the company they were working for moved to China.

"We knew we wanted to do something in wireless technology and we knew we wanted to do something in the green tech space and Tenrehte was born," said Jennifer Indovina, Tenrehte CEO.

All the work is done in Indovina's basement. Jennifer's father Mark is the chief operating officer; both are also engineers.

Carlos Barrios, an engineer at Tenrehte, met Jennifer while attending the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Since its inception about a year ago, Tenrehte developed a device called the Picowatt smart plug – a box that any standard appliance can be plugged into to control and monitor the energy use of that appliance.

"We just started basically fiddling around trying to get some ideas rolling eventually making a prototype for this device. It's all a breadboard, that's how it all starts, trying out different kinds of circuits and eventually we dialed in on what we wanted to do to make this prototype," Barrios explained.

"Basically we won the largest award you can win in the consumer electronic industry. This is the first year they had a green category. We've been getting a lot of attention from international distributors so we're going to grow very big and fast and we just got to keep up with the company," said Indovina.

The smart plug can only accommodate one appliance. The company said it wants to create a similar device that connects to a home's breaker box, along an extension that can control multiple appliances, but Mark Indovina said the company isn't stopping there.

"We're going to build a commercial version for consumers and small businesses. We want to build a unit that's for utilities, specifically packaged for utility companies. We want to build a unit that's more conducive to hard wiring into either your home or business for more hazardous-type environments," Mark explained.

Indovina said Tenrehte would also like to build a similar device for those who don't know how to use a computer.

All this new technology is being developed from the comfort of his home.

Tenrehte Technologies