

## Sunny future for local firm

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Refuting arguments that Canada's climate isn't suited to solar heat products and technology, a former automotive industry executive has established Green Sun Rising, a local company which imports and sells solar heat collectors and systems.

Pointing out that Windsor, in particular, and Canada, in general, are on the same latitude as much of Northern California and Europe, Klaus Dohring said "we have the largest greenhouse operations in North America just outside Windsor (in the Leamington area), so clearly sunlight and the energy derived from it are not a problem.



CREDIT: Scott Webster, The Windsor Star  
SOLAR POWER: Klaus Dohring, president of Green Sun Rising, explains the operation of a German-made solar heating unit.

"Germany is the world leader in renewable energy technology with more than one million installations across the country, so there is no reason why this technology can't get off the ground in Canada," said Dohring.

Dohring also took issue with arguments that Canadian winters are too cold to make solar heating systems efficient and feasible.

"Obviously the system will produce less energy because there's less sunlight and higher heat loss, but well-designed systems will still produce solar heat in winter months."

A well-designed system will meet between 45 and 50 per cent of any building's annual heat energy needs, said Dohring. "They are designed to be supplemental systems, not to replace entire heating systems."

Dohring is installing a five-panel system with dual heat tanks in his Walkerville home.

"It's more than a home of this size requires, but I'm doing it as a show-and-tell project. I expect the system -- combined with a new high-efficiency furnace which was required to be compatible with the solar

heat system -- will cut my energy costs by 70 per cent."

With more than two decades of automotive experience, Dohring believes he is "uniquely placed to bring together the necessary pieces to make this initiative possible.

"Cut me open, take out the automotive stuff I've done and the rest of me is green," said Dohring.

Dohring, German born but now a permanent resident of Canada, holds two masters degrees in mechanical engineering and jokingly calls himself "thoroughly academically over-educated" with work experience in North America, Europe and Japan.

He was most recently president of Leggett and Platt's automotive group, a global automotive company which also owns the Schukra group of companies.

Recently a victim of downsizing when his position was eliminated during a company-wide cost-cutting initiative, the 51-year-old Dohring decided he wanted do "my own thing and I saw significant opportunities in renewable energy projects."

Capitalizing on a lifetime of contacts in the public and private sector, Dohring recently launched his new company focusing on solar heat, since heat is the largest user of all energy consumed.

He currently has enough solar heat panels from Germany in storage in a Windsor warehouse to complete 20 projects, but ultimately his goal is to become a local manufacturer.

"It will require market demand and volume to make this possible, but with the amount of automotive and engineering experience in this community, there's no reason why manufacturing of these products can't be localized," said Dohring. "The market is not here yet, but I'm hopeful that it will be within three to five years.

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