

WicKool

A passive evaporative cooling technology for commercial rooftop HVAC units

Building operations consume 39 percent of total energy in the U.S., and HVAC gobbles up a big part of that. Together, air conditioning and ventilation account for 15 percent of the energy used in commercial buildings, with heating responsible for another 36 percent. Air conditioning alone represents about 16 percent of the electricity consumed in homes.

WicKool, a company with a device that takes the chilly condensation that forms on air conditioner coils and uses it to help cool air, aims to change that. The retrofit device makes rooftop air conditioners up to 9 percent more efficient.

The technology was developed by Dick Bourne, associate director of the UC Davis Western Cooling Efficiency Center. He joined forces with Siva Gunda, a doctoral student and a Business Development Fellow at the UC Davis Center for Entrepreneurship, to bring it into the real world. WicKool quickly evolved and was a finalist in the 200x Big Bang! Business Plan competition at UC Davis.

Licensed by Octus Energy in 2008, WicKool's device is currently being tested at a Walmart and Target in the Sacramento, Calif., area.

“Being a Business Development Fellow gives you a shift of vision, so that you’re putting the needs of society and the market in front of pure research,” Gunda said. Today, he is completing his doctoral research and is the senior engineer and head of business development for cooling products at Octus Energy.



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