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Environmentally Friendly System Saves Culver's Small Business Hundreds Every Month

After Dinner, Used Vegetable Oil Fuels Water Heater

(Pleasant Prairie, Wis.) (August 23, 2006) – With the average price of natural gas steadily increasing since 1999¹, Culver's® of Pleasant Prairie owner Ed Rich began looking for financial relief. His search resulted in a partnership with INOV8 International, Inc., a La Crosse-based company that designs and manufactures a line of waste oil furnaces and used oil-burning equipment. The result is the first restaurant water heater application that runs off the restaurant's used vegetable oil.

“I had heard of large factories using similar technology in processing and thought that if a corporation could do it then my restaurant should also be able to utilize the same technology,” said Rich. “I had the raw material already in-house, the challenge laid in ensuring the smooth transition of this proven technology in my restaurant.”

Ed Rich's investment in the new application of INOV8's water heater technology is a first-of-its-kind application. This new use for recycled vegetable oil represents the latest of many proactive steps Culver's has taken to promote the use of renewable energy sources in the operation of its restaurants.

“This prototype took us into uncharted waters in relation to inspections and providing a customized system for the restaurant,” says INOV8 project manager Matthew Fisher. “What we learned in creating this prototype system has almost limitless applications for the restaurant industry.”

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Water Heater Fueled By Vegetable Oil/pg. 2

Including installation, the initial \$11,000 investment in the customized INOV8 system can be justified after looking at the bottom line, according to Fisher. “In the month that the system has been in use in Pleasant Prairie, we project a savings of \$68 a week or more than \$270 a month taking into consideration the lower natural gas bill and elimination of oil storage costs.” INOV8 says the owners of such systems will typically see investment payback within three years when including tax incentives and possible energy rebates.

The new system in Pleasant Prairie uses only three-quarters of a gallon of oil per running hour. Rich estimates the system runs about six hours a day. That is more than six gallons of spent vegetable oil his team no longer has to dump in a disposal container. Rich is so confident in the continued success of the system that he plans to remove the container formerly used for storage. “I have no use for it anymore, and it will also free up more space which is a premium in any restaurant,” says Rich.

An additional bonus of the new system is its length of life. INOV8 estimates the system’s life will exceed 20 years. That is in comparison to conventional commercial water heaters five-to seven-year life. “Beyond immediate savings in energy bills and waste removal, businesses will also save in the long run of not having to replace an entire system,” adds Fisher.

Culver’s co-founder Craig Culver sees the entire project as good for business. “Our guests want more than a great burger, they want to know that we are a company that is doing good in the community and for the environment. This new system also helps us remain competitive in an increasingly difficult marketplace by lowering operation costs. Culver’s cares about the environment, and this new system presents a great win-win for the franchisee and the environment.” Culver’s commitment to the environment was recently honored by the Department of Natural Resource’s Wisconsin Partners for Clean Air Award.

Culver’s restaurants are independently owned and operated in more than 330 locations. With the opening of Culver’s first restaurant in Arizona, guests will be able to enjoy their favorites in 17 states across the nation. The owner/operator concept has been a cornerstone of growth for Culver’s since the first location opened in Sauk City, Wisconsin on July 18, 1984. Culver’s invests deeply in partnerships and programs, including its VIP scholarship program, Culver’s Cares™ charitable program and countless other franchise-driven local efforts. Culver’s is the recipient of numerous industry and community awards, including the 2006 IFMA Silver

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Plate Award, 2005 Nation's Restaurant News' Golden Chain Award and Wisconsin's Ernst & Young[®] Entrepreneur of the Year[®] Award. For more information on Culver's locations, promotional programs, menu selections and other areas of interest, visit www.culvers.com.

For 16 years INOV8, a Wisconsin based corporation, has been committed to providing cost effective, energy efficient, uncompromised technological solutions that are environmentally smart, to meet the needs of our customers. President and co-owner, Rebecca Faas says, "companies wanting to be environmental stewards don't have to spend more for their heat and hot water needs to use 'Green Energy'. By burning available waste petroleum or vegetable oils as fuel in an INOV8 heater, restaurant owners can greatly reduce or eliminate their heating costs. When you consider there are 925,000² restaurants in the United States, many of them using fryers, we believe the U.S. dependence on foreign oils can be reduced using alternate fuels, one restaurant at a time."

In 2004 the founder and patent holder of the INOV8 burner, Harry Foust, received a 'Stewards of the Environment Leadership Award' from the Hixon Forest Nature Center. And recently, INOV8 was notified that it is receiving an innovation award for the restaurant water heater setup, from the Radiant Panel Association. For more information on INOV8 International, Inc. and their products visit www.inov8-intl.com or call 877-684-6688.

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¹Energy Information Administration. www.eia.doe.gov

²National Restaurant Association "2006 Restaurant Industry Fact Sheet"

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