

# Island nail inventor achieves celebrity status

By Heather M. Lightner

You may not know it, but there is something of a celebrity living right here on the island. It might be easy to miss him since he's modest about his achievement, but his achievement is great, so great, in fact, that it won Popular Science magazine's highest award, the "Best of What's New" award and is featured in the December issue of the magazine.

Every year the editors of Popular Science review thousands of new products and technologies in order to find 100 breakthroughs in 10 different categories: automotive, computing, gadgets, home entertainment, personal health, aviation and space, engineering, home, recreation, and general innovation. This year, in addition to the "Best of What's New" award, the magazine also honored one product as the overall outstanding "Innovation of the Year" award — an award that belongs to Jamestown resident Ed Sutt and his innovative HurriQuake nail.

Sutt, who is the engineering manager of fastener technology at Bostitch in East Greenwich, has been studying the relationship between wind velocity and the failure of wood frame houses since his time at Clemson University, where he earned a PhD in civil engineering. Six years at Bostitch and hundreds of prototypes later, Sutt, also known as Dr. Nail, developed the HurriQuake nail, a nail that holds promise in the event of a hurricane or an earthquake.

Compared to standard sheathing nails, the HurriQuake nail offers up to twice the resistance to high-wind

conditions, also referred to as uplift capacity. Two independent laboratory tests found that the HurriQuake nail can withstand uplift forces of up to 271 pounds per square foot. With its 25 percent larger nail head and unique geometric ring designed shank, the high-tech nails can withstand wind conditions and gusts of up to 170 miles per hour.

The HurriQuake nail's design has also been found to deliver up to 50 percent more resistance to earthquake conditions, which can greatly reduce structural damage to build-

ings. Earthquakes create stress at an angle perpendicular to the nail, also known as sheer load, which explains why damaged structures often sag or lean after earthquakes.

Made of high quality carbon steel alloy, the HurriQuake nail is a little more expensive than the standard nail, but well worth the expense. "The additional cost to use HurriQuake nails on an average 2,000-square-foot home is less than \$15," explains Sutt. "It's a small investment when you consider the fact that it may save thousands of dollars

in the long run."

The nail, which has been on sale since June 2006, has been marketed mainly in the Gulf region of the country, where residents are far too familiar with the damage associated with hurricanes. Sutt says the nail will most likely go to mass marketing beginning in the first quarter of the new year.

"We've focused on the areas most aware of the issue (hurricanes)," explains Sutt.

"There's not as much awareness of hurricanes in New England."

Still, Sutt believes people in New England need to be more aware of the potential for hurricanes in the area and says he hopes that people will think about their choices in fasteners when they build their next house or remodel their existing home. By carefully choosing even standard nails, people can improve the quality of their homes and eliminate a common complaint of wood-framed homes — squeaky floors.

"I think on a personal level the thing that I'm most excited about with the nail is that I think people don't think too much about fasteners that put together a wood framed house," explains Sutt. "I'm hoping that contractors or homeowners will think twice about the fasteners that go into their homes."

Currently, Sutt and his team at Bostitch are working on a new fastener, one that is "even better" than the HurriQuake nail. Though he couldn't give specific details of the project, he did say it was "really exciting." He notes, "We're constantly looking to improve fasteners."

Sutt, who is quick to divert the spotlight away from himself, credits his team at Bostitch for the creation of the HurriQuake nail and also the award. "There was a whole team of people that made it happen. It wasn't just me. It was a team effort that made it happen. It's really an award for Bostitch," says Sutt.

Though Sutt is obviously pleased with the recognition the HurriQuake nail has received, he remains humble nonetheless. "There's a guy growing a bladder in a Petri dish — I feel sort of bad the nail beat that guy," Sutt says, chuckling. "I'm still amazed that we won. It's really amazing."



### Peace is subject of artists' works

Winners in the annual Lions Club Invitational Peace Poster Contest, included, in first place, Olivia McGowan; in second place, Amina Brown; and in third place, Jessica Bonnot. Honorable mentions went to Nathan Lambert, Aimee Andrade, Rosibel Kurz, Adam Southworth, Drew McIntyre, Connor Downing, Alex Burke, Olivia Wilcox, Islay Petrie, and Sydney Pazera.

Photo by Andrea von Hohenleiten



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