

**Many Wisconsinites Report Strong Entrepreneurial Urge  
A Madison Woman Is Among Those Guiding Ideas Into Enterprises.**

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Sonya Newenhouse knows how to turn ideas into businesses. She's already created three local businesses -- Madison Environmental Group consultants, Community Car car-sharing, and Crescent, owner of the 25 N. Pinckney St. building that houses her other companies and the famed L'Etoile restaurant.

Now, Newenhouse wants to start a fourth company, one that turns doors from demolished buildings into furniture.

"The goal is not only to divert them from the landfill but to create ... furniture that is affordable, environmentally friendly and, of course, (with) beautiful design," said David Waisman, project manager and vice president of Madison Environmental Group.

Newenhouse -- who, as a child, sold surplus homegrown tomatoes door to door and later, drove high school classmates to school for a fee -- is an entrepreneur. And, it turns out, a lot of us would like to follow her example.

Nearly half of the Wisconsin residents polled -- 49 percent -- said they are either thinking about starting a business, trying to start one or already have done so.

"What we found was very startling," said Erica Kauten, managing director of the Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network and state director of the Small Business Development Center. "We uncovered all this entrepreneurial energy ... Now, I think our role is to try to cultivate it."

Kauten said people who moonlight by developing Web pages or working as carpenters are entrepreneurs just as Newenhouse is. Communities might fare better "seeding those folks that are next door" than trying to lure an out-of-state company to drive the local economy, she said.

For her part, Newenhouse, 39, has obtained a two-year, \$121,000 matching grant from the state Department of Natural Resources to investigate the feasibility of her door-recycling plan.

Habitat for Humanity ReStore can sell used residential doors but not the big commercial doors weighing 75 pounds or more, Newenhouse said.

About 700 such doors, with maple and oak laminate, were at the former Meriter Hospital properties being demolished for the Capitol West development along West Washington

Avenue. "We've already sold and salvaged about 200 of them, so we know there's potential," Newenhouse said.

The poll was conducted for the Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network, the state Department of Commerce and UW-Extension. Of 3,000 surveys sent to randomly selected households statewide in May and June by the UW Survey Center, 1,144 were returned.

While the survey found strong interest in starting a business -- especially among college-educated, Internet-accessible men between the ages of 25 and 55 -- only a small percentage contacted a state group for help with finances, marketing or business services.

The survey recommends expanding the definition of entrepreneurship, raising awareness of assistance programs and finding out why some entrepreneurs succeed while others don't.