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Encinitas entrepreneur lives clean-energy lifestyle, sees profit there too *By: GARY WARTH - Staff Writer*

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"I'm sort of the accidental entrepreneur," Wilder said. "I found it very fertile ground."

With the government offering incentives for clean energy, fuel prices fluctuating unpredictably and future resources uncertain, Wilder sees investing in alternative energy as a no-brainer. But besides seeing a global potential for profit from clean energy, he lives an example from his own home, where he creates more energy from solar power than he uses daily. His home was among 30 featured on the seventh annual San Diego Solar Homes tour in late September, sponsored by the San Diego Regional Energy Office.

The rest of the country, however, has been slower to catch on. Once Wilder opened the door with clean-energy stock funds, including one that took him to Wall Street last week to ring the opening bell of the American Stock Exchange, interest has been soaring.

"This thing has been attracting a great deal of interest," he said. "No one is more surprised than I am."

Inspired to help the environment through preventing damage after years of working in restoration, Wilder in 1999 launched a stock index listing 42 clean-energy businesses.

By creating the WilderHill Clean Energy Index, Wilder intended to show that on average, companies in that field could be profitable. The index is listed on the American Stock Exchange under the symbol ECO.

He was quickly proved right, as the index showed considerable growth. But an index is just a list of companies within a similar field. It's useful for tracking the health of one business sector, but not helpful for investors looking for one hot tip.

"People kept contacting me and saying, 'Can we buy your index?' " Wilder said. "It was in my head that there should be a fund on Wall Street about clean energy." In 2005, Wilder created the PowerShares Wilder Hill Clean Energy Portfolio (listed under the symbol PBW) to mirror the performance of the index. The company was launched with \$10 million.

"I did not expect this, but it's done very well," Wilder said. "It's grown to over \$600 million in a year and a half." As of last week, the fund was valued at \$643 million, ranking it this year's top-performing exchange-traded fund.

On Oct. 13, Wilder launched his second fund aimed at clean energy, but with a slight twist. While the PowerShares fund represents companies that create alternative energy, the new index and fund, WilderHill Progressive Energy (listed under symbol WHPRO), represent 36 companies that work to reduce pollutants from conventional energy that comes from fossil fuels: coal, oil and natural gas.

Wilder was in New York on Oct. 24 to ring the bell at the American Stock Exchange, officially opening the trading day. "I joked with my family that I don't do a lot of cool things, but this was cool," said Wilder...

"I truly believe this makes sense," he said. "It's going to grow. These things are not just goofy, 'Ozone Man' ideas."

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