



**WISCONSIN  
ENTREPRENEURS'  
NETWORK**

[HOME](#) | [ABOUT US](#) | [NEWSROOM](#) | [THE DIGEST](#) | [CONTACT US](#)

NEED ASSISTANCE?

RESOURCE CENTER

FINANCE & GRANTS

EVENT CALENDAR

SUCCESS STORIES

#### Sitewide Search

➔

[Return...](#)

## Lightweight Building Product Has Heavy Potential



#### WEN Resource Connection

Looking for business guidance? [Click here](#) and get connected with an organization in your area that can help you.

#### entrepreneur@work Digest

The entrepreneur@work digest features aggregated content from top writers and business publications with a focus on entrepreneurship and business innovation. [SIGN UP TODAY](#)

#### WEN Resources

WEN is a network of diverse service providers who share information and resources. [LEARN MORE](#)

Five years ago Hartland entrepreneur James Jendusa, owner of Jendusa Design and Engineering, had an idea for a low-cost, energy-efficient framing product for use in construction of residential buildings with in-floor heating systems. Today he markets his innovative building product for not only residential use, but also for floor and wall framing of large commercial buildings through his company, Lightweight Structures LLC.

The Lightweight Structures framing system is a light gage steel and concrete floor decking and wall product that can knock down construction costs by as much as 15%. The system replaces a commonly used process of laying down reinforcing steel and then pouring concrete on form work.

"Typically those floors cost between \$20 and \$30 per square foot. We install for between \$12 and \$15 per square foot," notes Jendusa. "We are able to use our product in those same buildings, except there is no form work needed. This product is delivered to the job site in panels, or we can deliver in pieces and put it together at the job site."

By eliminating the shoring and reinforcing steel, the typical floor of a high-rise building can be completed in a day versus a week, cutting the time to completion by up to 30%, adds Jendusa.

There are additional cost savings because of reduced weight, which allows for smaller foundations and structural framework. Prepunched openings enable easy installation of electrical, HVAC and plumbing work .

This green building product uses 100% recycled steel, and the decking insulation, which adds energy savings throughout the building, is made of 15% to 90% recycled material. Using the same framing system, Lightweight Structures has also introduced a new super insulated wall panel.

"And the fact that we are able to produce it and fabricate it either right on site or very close to the project reduces the transportation costs tremendously," says Jendusa.

Since the product can easily be manufactured and installed with low-skill labor, Jendusa hopes to someday see it used in developing countries. "All you need is a screw gun and concrete."

After completing rigorous testing, Jendusa turned to BizStarts Milwaukee, a partner in the Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network (WEN), for advice on the best strategy to market his product. Through the BizStarts mentoring program he met David Linz, WEN southeast regional director.

"Dave actually came out to my office. I showed him the product, and he liked it," recalls Jendusa. "He has been very helpful in providing resources for me to help launch this company. The first thing he did was recommend that I get a business plan done and enter the Governor's Business Plan Contest."

Linz helped Jendusa secure an Early Planning Grant, administered by WEN, to hire a consultant to help write his business plan. Jendusa ultimately earned a spot as a finalist in the 2009 Governors Business Plan Contest.

As more and more developers show interest in his product, Jendusa expects to take on larger projects and eventually expand his business nationally and internationally. Linz continues to assist Jendusa as he seeks investors in order to reach that goal.

"Once we get the investment money, we will be able to really promote the product throughout the country, and then it really could launch pretty quickly. That's our goal - to bring it to market as fast as possible."



[HOME](#) | [ABOUT US](#) | [NEWSROOM](#) | [THE DIGEST](#) | [CONTACT US](#)  
[NEED ASSISTANCE](#) | [RESOURCE CENTER](#) | [FINANCE & GRANTS](#) | [EVENT CALENDAR](#) | [SUCCESS STORIES](#)

If you have trouble accessing this page, require this information in an alternative format or wish to request a reasonable accommodation because of a disability contact: [Ashwini Rao](#)

©Copyright 2005-2007 by The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System | All Rights Reserved | [info@wenportal.org](mailto:info@wenportal.org) | [Site Credits](#)