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Local News - Friday, June 8, 2007

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Oakwood resident pushes safety

Her alarm system alerts homeowners when county is issued tornado warning

By **KATIE DUNN**
 The Times
 OAKWOOD

Tornadoes are unpredictable. They can materialize in minutes and destroy lives in seconds. Weather radios and tornado sirens can help, but are beneficial only to those with access to them.

Pamela Harrell wants to change that.

Harrell, 55, of Oakwood invented a device, the Tornado Alarm System or T.A.S., which alerts homeowners when a tornado warning is issued for their county.

Growing up in Indiana, which is in the middle of Tornado Alley, Harrell understands the danger of tornadoes. "I moved away because they scared me to death," she said.

After seeing a news broadcast about the tornado that struck Evansville, Ind., in 2005 killing 23 people, Harrell knew she had to do something.

She told her husband, Terry Moseley, that she wished there were a warning device that people could keep in their homes.

He encouraged her to, "go invent it."

The T.A.S. is designed to pick up tornado warning signals from the National Weather Service, and then alert people with an alarm.

"(It's) similar to a smoke detector, but with a different sound," explained Fred Pescitelli with Phoenix Design in Lilburn, who helped design the prototype.

"We can emulate what the weather radio does, but (the T.A.S.) will just emit an alarm whenever there is a tornado in your county," Pescitelli said.

The device has been tested using the weekly test signals that the weather



For The Times

Pamela Harrell displays her tornado warning device at this month's Invention and New Product Exposition in Pittsburgh. The Tornado Alarm System, or T.A.S., has been in development since 2005. Harrell hopes the initial price will be less than \$34.



service emits, and also with weather radios to see if it receives the appropriate signals.

The alarm system, which is the size of a thermostat, must be plugged in to work.

How much will it cost?

"We are really hoping that the initial cost will be less than \$34," Harrell said.

Taking one more step toward her goal, Harrell joined about 300 other inventors in Pittsburgh for the Invention and New Product Exposition, a four-day event that started Wednesday.

In an e-mail to the Times, exposition publicist Shad Connelly said that the show invited inventors "to showcase their inventions and new products available to license, manufacture or market."

The Expo offered several seminars to help inventors market their product. Participants also had the chance to present their inventions to several companies.

Harrell and her husband were supposed to make the trip to Pittsburgh together. But Moseley, who Harrell called her "rock," died May 23 in an automobile accident.

"He's stood beside me and has encouraged me throughout this process ... he would be pushing me ... to finish what I started," she said.

Harrell drove 12 hours with her son, Nick, to reach the exposition. She chose not to fly, fearful that she would have been "pulled off the plane ... because of how the device looks in a suitcase."

"We're just real excited to be here and ... I hope that we can get them (T.A.S.) in people's homes and keep them safe," she said.

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