

Little idea leads to Big Shrimpy

[SEATTLE]



Like many a prospective entrepreneur, Bruce Kelling started with a new product idea.

Kelling wanted to make backpacks that converted into sleeping bags at campsites. But while he was sourcing local manufacturers to produce a prototype, Kelling noticed six-foot tall bags of fleece scraps piled up by one sewing company's dumpsters.

While he pursued production of the backpack sleeping bags, Kelling and his wife Cici used the fleece scraps to create a comfy bed for their hunting dog Maggie. Soon the Kellings were both employed full-time in the production of fleece-stuffed washable pet mattresses, which they call Big Shrimpies (Big Shrimpy is a nickname for Maggie).

Big Shrimpy pet beds are covered in water-resistant nylon packcloth. The products come in a variety of sizes and cost between \$70 and \$150. Cici Kelling said the beds are popular with Seattle, Portland and San Francisco pet stores, but knock-offs have begun to appear.

Minimum Inc., Big Shrimpy's parent company, has recycled 18,000 pounds of nylon fleece into the beds in a year. Big Shrimpy's pet beds and a line of pet blankets are the latest products to be chosen by King County's LinkUp program, which provides technical and promotional support for businesses using recycled materials in products.

As published in the October 2003 issue of
Sustainable Industries Journal NW
www.sijournal.com