

Well, first, welcome, everyone. I'm Eva Rooks, Small Planet Supply's Marketing Director. I'd like to thank everyone for coming today and I'm pleased to be able to kick off this evening's dedication.

I'd like to start today's dedication by talking about our name, **the Eklund Innovation Center.**

The first part of our name is Eklund, in honor of Ken Eklund.

For those of you who didn't know Ken, he was a highly intelligent, energetic, and unforgettable man. He dedicated his career to energy efficiency in buildings. Ken worked in policy and research, published papers and he excelled in stoking enthusiasm in people around energy-saving solutions. He did this in years when policy leaned toward conservation, and just as importantly, when it didn't.

In short, Ken was dedicated to finding ways to increase energy efficiency, harness natural energy and reduce carbon to protect the planet he loved.

Ken was one of a team at WSU's Cooperative Extension Energy Program who worked to bring Sanden CO2 heat pump water heaters from Japan to the United States. They studied how they could be used for efficiently heating hot water.

And that brings me to innovation, the second part of our building's name.

So, these CO2 heat pumps come over from Japan and Ken and the WSU team realize they have this powerful heat pump water heater that can get a COP of almost five. AND there are these passive house people who build buildings that have low heat loads. If you're able to produce so much energy, how about using your hot water heater to also heat your home?

And that's how I first met Ken.

We were in the middle of a small Passive House retrofit of our West Olympia home. My husband Albert came home one day, and he said, "there's this guy that says we could possibly heat our home with our water heater and then we won't have to put in a heating system. And, if they can study our house, they can give us a bit of money toward the cost of putting in the system."

I think I probably only heard the part about someone giving us a bit of money, so of course, I said yes. So, the SANCO2 combi system did get put in our house. The WSU Cooperative Extension Energy Program did monitor it and it did really work. Our house stayed warm, we always had hot water and we saved a lot of money on our utility bill.

Ken was the person we connected with the most during the monitoring process. His enthusiasm about our system and learning what it could do was astonishing. Ken showed up on the day we moved in, making a beeline to see the installed system in one of our bedroom's closets before we had even finished unpacking. He measured our system's performance and let us know what the data said.

Before we knew it, we were super excited about these systems too.

This inspired us to get our “feet wet” in the hot water business and Small Planet began selling SANCO2 heat pump water heaters. We began spreading the word to the passive house community that you can have hot water and heat your house with one system.

In short, we became converts, then cheerleaders and Ken (Eklund) and Albert (Rooks) became fellow dreamers about what these systems could do to decrease energy use and reduce carbon emissions on a large scale.

So, using a CO2 water heater to also heat your house was the first innovation.

And then someone, we’re not even sure who, maybe someone at Ecotope, thought about using multiple SANCO2 water heaters working together to provide water for multi-family and commercial projects.

This second innovation was tested in the field and was successful too.

However, because it was something different than the current water engineering community was used to, there was a concern about whether incorrect installation would cause problems and the pondering began again: “what if there was a fully-assembled system that could be delivered to a multi-family or commercial job site and quickly be plugged in and operational in a day or two?”

This led to **yet another innovation** that we’re also celebrating today – the WaterDrop system which is being manufactured here.

WaterDrop Systems take all the guesswork of bringing hot water into a new or existing building. Instead of a big gas boiler using fossil fuel to make hot water, multiple heat pumps are ganged together to create enough hot water for a building of any size.

The WaterDrop system is delivered to the job site, it’s plugged into power, connected to the water pipes and oila! hot water.

The last part of our name is Center

A **center** is the point from which an activity or process is directed. And while this is a manufacturing center that assembles components into a bigger system, we hope that it will be more than that. We hope that the name and this assembly plant reflect the spirit and values of the man for which it is named, the larger community that worked to develop it, and the team members here who work every day to build these energy-saving systems.

We hope this building will be the center of new innovations, as well as a permanent acknowledgement that our work is founded on the contributions of many people, some of whom are here today.

Thank you again for attending our building dedication.