

Inventor/entrepreneur's first priority is saving lives

John J. Henry — no, not the steel drivin' man of historic lore — has a fascinating line of work. He's an inventor, president and CEO of Innervision.

John J. Henry

Henry established the company as a full-time enterprise in 2000, receiving his first patent for safety devices for recreational, sports and military vehicles and drivers three years later. The patent has 23 claims and will produce at least 12 new products.

A second patent, granted in 2005, considerably expands on the first. No small accomplishment, calling for a unique skill set. Henry combines a background as Bristol-Myers Squibb business manager with a knowledge of electronics and that ever-growing aspect of contemporary life, computers.

He also holds a University of Minnesota master's degree in technical education. Before Bristol-Myers Squibb and the U of M, he graduated from Control Data Institute in electronics and went to work at Control Data Corporation.

When you think of inventors, the first image that comes to mind for most of is some White brainiac in a white coat sequestered in an ivory tower lab. This, despite that throughout history a great many such geniuses have been African American. Henry (JJH) gave the *Minnesota Spokesman-Recorder* (MSR) an interview in which that was one of the first topics of conversation.

MSR: History is rife with listings of African American inventors whose work was not credited or, worse, stolen by White inventors. What are your reflections on that?

JJH: I am extremely sensitive to that, and I have that fact in the forefront of my mind with every feature and product I create or patent I apply for. I have surrounded myself with extremely talented legal counsel and I am prepared to defend my technology and patents anywhere in the world.

I have great respect for African Americans who have gone before me, especially African American women who were often overlooked in their creative contributions. I happen to be one of four children raised by a single mother, and through her struggles I have become very sensitive to the struggles of women and their contributions that often go unnoticed.

It is understandable that much of the technology we use has become second nature in our daily lives. It is unfortunate that so many people today have no idea that great African American men and women inventors created astonishing products and have made life-changing contributions in the areas of science, agriculture, railroads, marine, automotive, clothing and electronics, just to name a few.

My contribution is modest in comparison to them, but I am extremely proud that, because of them, I found the courage to try to make my own contribution to our way of life.

MSR: You have 10 new products, including the Heads Up Braking system (HUB system), one of the most advanced wireless braking systems for motorcycles, ATVs and snowmobiles. What are the products and how does the HUB system surpass the other products in its sophistication?

JJH: I can't really talk about the other products at this time, since as of right now we have not released them. What I can tell you is my line of new products crosses into areas such as automotive, marine, aeronautics, military, delivery services, security and much more. Our focus currently is, of course, on the Heads Up Braking System [HUB] for motorcycles, snowmobiles, and ATVs.

MSR: Can you say anything else about them?

JJH: The HUB System surpasses other products with a wealth of innovative features.

MSR: Such as?

JJH: Nighttime dimming, which automatically, through the Kelatronics system, turns the LEDs' brightness down or up based on the surrounding light or time of day. [Also] kelatronics deceleration technology. [It] automatically activates the brake light on the helmet — like the third brake light on a car — as well as the factory motorcycle brake light when you decelerate over a certain threshold.

The Heads Up Braking System, is a wireless safety accessory for motorcycles, snowmobiles and ATV helmets.

This provides visibility to other drivers that you are in fact slowing down without physically applying the brakes. This patented technology belongs exclusively to Innervision by Henry, Inc.

[And the] kelatronics proximity system — it detects when a rider is away from the vehicle. When the rider approaches the pre-set threshold, it automatically begins flashing the helmet light to provide visibility to passing motorists of the location of the rider.

Often motorists will see the vehicle but not see the rider. This feature is completely automatic and absolutely essential in safety. In snowmobiling it is even more important when operating in sub-zero temperatures.

MSR: Do you get a sense of satisfaction from inventing products?

JJH: I have a tremendous sense of satisfaction to be able to take an idea in my mind and follow it through completion. It is much more difficult and far more satisfying than I could have ever imagined. And knowing that the HUB System can prevent accidents and deaths is my goal.

My focus right now is bringing visibility of the HUB system to motorcyclists, snowmobilers, and other off-

road riders. The Heads Up Braking system can and will save lives, and that is by far the most important thing to me.

MSR: What's next?

JJH: As hard as it is to believe, creating the product is easy compared to the next critical steps, which are effectively positioning, marketing, and building the infrastructure of my organization. With the number of additional products that Innervision has to offer now and in the future, my focus will be on bringing those products to market slowly and strategically.

The Heads Up Braking system is available at www.headsupbraking.com or Larson Cycle in Cambridge, MN and Dr. Mudspringer in Spring Lake Park, MN. John J. Henry will be showing the HUB system at Larsen Cycle's open house on May 1 or at Mr. Mudspringer's open house on May 2.

Dwight Hobbes welcomes reader responses to P.O. Box 50357, Mpls., 55403.