

# Bryan man strikes gold with unconventional conceal-carry device

**Posted: Thursday, September 22, 2011 12:00 am**

Justin Sitz's house was destroyed in a fire last year, but the loss led to his creation of a new conceal-carry device.

Sitz, a 28-year-old Bryan resident, came up with the idea for the "VersaCarry" in January. A molded piece of kydex with a clip at the top and a barrel retention rod at the base, the VersaCarry is clipped at the waistband and worn inside clothing.

Because of a slight angle, the rod creates a clamping action when it's inserted into the barrel of a gun, Sitz said.

Sitz had gotten the slab built for a new home when he came up with the idea, but instead of finishing the house, decided to stay in an apartment and put the insurance money into his invention.

Costs to patent and trademark the product, along with attorney's fees, totaled about \$100,000, he said. The patent was about \$20,000.

"I just think it's kind of funny I chose a plastic clip instead of a new house," Sitz said.

After obtaining a patent, Sitz said he hired four employees, and the first VersaCarry order was shipped in late May. His company has the "very good problem" of not being able to keep up with the online orders.

"When we have one come off our line, it's already spoken for," he said.

Orders have grown from one or two a day to about 100 a day, Sitz said.

Richard Lesser, Texas A&M clinical associate professor and executive director of the Center for New Ventures and Entrepreneurship, said having so many orders is a good sign.

Lester said the key is to make something that is unique, and then make customers aware of it and convince them it's something they need to buy.

"It's got some unique attributes, so it's got some potential," Lester said.

**Born of necessity**

A firearms and hunting enthusiast, Sitz said VersaCarry was an idea that "came about from necessity."

Manufacturers produce new guns every year; then customers have to carry them in the wrong-sized holster until they find holsters that are the correct size, he said. But the barrel diameter never changes, so VersaCarry, which holds guns from .380 to .45 caliber, bypasses that problem, he said.

At about an ounce, it is also the smallest and lightest-weight conceal-carrying device Sitz said he's seen on the market. The goal is to cut down on as much bulk and pressure at the waistline as possible, making it more comfortable.

Those who conceal-carry also don't want people to notice they're carrying a weapon and cause panic, he noted.

Sitz said the device is used by law enforcement officers and ordinary citizens. Women typically don't like adding more clothing as typical holsters require, he said, so he's had several women customers, too.

"We really think we're on to something that's going to revolutionize things," he said.

The company recommends not carrying a gun with the chamber loaded in the device because it has to adopt policies to make it safe no matter who is using it, Sitz said. However, the device is designed so that if a gun is fired while in it, the device will be expelled and destroyed, but the gun won't explode and hurt the user, he said.

VersaCarry is the first invention for which Sitz sought a patent. He also invented a golf-related product when he was 18.

He said those were the only two inventions he felt were "solid," although he's had interest in entrepreneurship since he was a teen. He opened his pet shop, The Puppy Store, inside the Post Oak Mall in College Station about nine years ago.

Sitz said he's gotten several complaints about the VersaCarry device not having a trigger guard, but he said that's not a necessary feature.

A trigger guard is needed to carry a gun outside a person's hip, but since the VersaCarry is carried inside clothing, the wearer's belt and pants cover the trigger, he said.

A new device with a few additional features, VersaCarry Generation II, will come out in early November. New features will include an optional trigger guard that can be attached, and it will carry two additional gun sizes, .25 and .32.

The company will increase its production capabilities when the new mold comes out, and devices will be produced at a manufacturing plant in Jacksonville instead of at his Bryan shop, he said.

VersaCarry devices are sold on the company's website for \$19.99 each, and also in gun shops nationwide. Locally, it's sold at Burdett & Son Outdoor Adventure Shop in College Station. The suggested retail price is \$24.99. The Generation II product will be the same price.

More online:

[www.versacarry.com/](http://www.versacarry.com/)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=17ccZ\\_BzgUY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17ccZ_BzgUY)

[www.shootingillustrated.com/index.php/14422/versa-carry-handgun-concealment-system/](http://www.shootingillustrated.com/index.php/14422/versa-carry-handgun-concealment-system/)

[www.uspto.gov/](http://www.uspto.gov/)

[cnve.tamu.edu/](http://cnve.tamu.edu/)