

Ruff Tools for the working dog

Dover man develops new line of canine chew toys

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DOVER — For Brent Beckett of Dover, a trip to Home Depot turned into the launch of a line of dog chew toys.

Last summer, Beckett made several trips to Home Depot when he was remodeling his home. While taking sometimes two trips a day, he noticed many dogs sitting in construction, plumbing and utility trucks.

Beckett realized these dogs are going to work with their owners but without the proper equipment. By September, he created Ruff Tools, a line of chew toys shaped like hammers, wrenches, bolts and paintbrushes, for large dogs. And Beckett says the toys are virtually indestructible.

"I have had dogs all my 33 years, and there are very few products for big dogs," said Beckett. "These dogs think they are working."

Beckett and his 3-year-old English setter, Slim, are traveling to New Orleans in three weeks to launch and display Ruff Tools at the annual Pet Products Trade Show sponsored by the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association. He hopes his product will draw some attention from leading corporations, such as Petco, PETsMart but especially home improvement stores — a market he feels is underdeveloped for dog toys.

Beckett created the company Workin' Dog last year from his marketing company Slim Famous to market dog products. He has used Slim as a guinea pig for the Ruff Tools, and Beckett said he loved them.



BRENT BECKETT, right, founder of Workin' Dog in Dover, poses with his English setter, Slim, clenching in his mouth one of the durable Ruff Tools dog toys designed for the hard-chewing canine. Above, Slim demonstrates his "drop the hammer" face.

Beckett said too many of the chew toys on the market are destroyed the day he brings them home for Slim. Ruff Tools are built to last at least two months. The toys strengthen dogs' teeth, gums and jaw muscles. They are more dense and elastic than other products so they last and dogs don't choke on bitten off pieces.

"I took it to doggy day cares, and Slim tried it. It stood up really well," he said. "They have been a big hit."

According to the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association,

\$31 billion was spent in 2005 on pet services and products.

Beckett said his dog toys would probably sell for \$7 to \$12 per toy. He is also manufacturing a "tool box," a bin for a dog's Ruff Tools.

"I don't want to be just another chew toy," he said. "It's going to be affordable."

He is also looking into promotional toys that would have the name of the company on them. For example, Sherwin-Williams could sell the red paintbrush chew toy with its name

across the top.

Beckett is still working with a rubber manufacturer on improving the consistency of the rubber. He wants to make sure the final product cannot be punctured by dogs' teeth and cannot be broken into pieces for the dog to choke on.

"I am very excited and proud of the opportunity to showcase the Workin' Dog products at the show," Beckett said. "It will be an opportunity for me to put the Ruff Tool products against the best pet products in the world, and



there will be no better assessment of how they will perform within the market than that."