

# Inventor Aims to Leave Houses High and Dry

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Bending over, hunched on all fours while inspecting the darkened crawlspaces of his customers' homes, Jim Jackson (Crawl Space Door Systems Inc.) realized houses in Hampton Roads shared a common problem.

"One of the biggest problems in this area is that it's a low-lying area," Jackson said. "A lot of the houses are affected by that moisture and they start to decay."

Jackson soon realized that the key to fighting the moisture lies in the air flow under the house and getting it moved from one side of the house to the other.

After many prototype drawings, Jackson came up with a solution. The result was what Jackson refers to as a crawlspace ventilation system, which he patented in 1989.

Because his door lid is constructed of a solid-color, all-weather ABS/PVC plastic, Jackson said, there is no need to ever repaint it or replace it, since it will not rust or rot.

Another item Jackson patented is a crawlspace door. This plastic access door has a grid screen with half-inch holes that allow more air to flow through the crawlspace, compared to the mesh screens found on most homes. The increased airflow is essential, Jackson said, in getting the homes dried out.

"These louvers create a larger volume of air for the whole crawlspace, instead of just point air, which is what the vent does," he said.

Many of the people whose homes Jackson has already fitted with louvers are pleased with the results and the product's appearance.

Jackson has another patent. This one is for a crawlspace door that has a fan behind its slatted front exterior. When the wind passes through the louvered door, the fan is set into motion.

"We know the demand throughout the U.S. is there," he said. Jackson plans on distributing the products nationwide.

A combination of these products, he added, is probably what most homes will need to get their crawlspaces and homes rid of moisture and mildew.