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Musician finds thirst for lip balm
 Moisturizer receiving high praise from industry pros

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IBJ Photo/Robin Jerstad
 Dan Gosling's lip balm is designed to help reduce swelling.

Dan Gosling's failure to nail a position with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra may have been a blessing in disguise; for if he had, he would not have had time to create his ChopSaver lip balm he's marketing to musicians.

"It was disappointing to say the least," Gosling said--while harboring no bitterness--of his tryout in May in which he advanced all the way to the final round. He had played trumpet for ISO in a full-time, temporary capacity the previous three years and still fills in when necessary.

But two weeks after the audition, the slender, 42-year-old Elkhart native had the proverbial light bulb go off in his head while talking with a former student. After earning a master's degree in music performance from Northwestern University in 1985, Gosling moved to Indianapolis and gave music lessons for a time.

His idea to develop an all-natural lip moisturizer began in his kitchen eight months ago and is drawing a standing ovation from fellow musicians and music store owners who are stocking the product in their shops.

Chapped or irritated lips can hamper the performance of musicians who play brass or woodwind instruments. Dawson, a trombone player, prefers ChopSaver to similar products on the market because it moisturizes without the waxy buildup, he said.

Ingredients include the herbs calendula for inflammation, comfrey for treating wounds, arnica for bruising, and white willow, often referred to as an "herbal aspirin." Mix in a little aloe, vitamin E, shea and mango butters, and the oils of citrus fruits and you have the patented ChopSaver recipe.

"Some of the first things I came up with were pretty awful," he said. "I couldn't get anything to hold together." A colleague at the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, for which Gosling serves as personnel manager, recommended he try shea butter, whose main ingredient is extracted from a type of tree in West Africa. It became the base for the balm.

"Time was right"

Gosling since has formed his own company, Good for the Goose Products LLC. The entrepreneurial experience so far has been fun for Gosling, who in the process has reconnected with old friends and colleagues. It's also placed him in the same circles as prominent trumpet players Wayne Bergeron and Manuel Laureano, who are using ChopSaver, Gosling said. He recently attended the National Association of Musical Merchandisers trade show in Anaheim, Calif., and has been contacted by a company in England that is interested in becoming a ChopSaver distributor.

On that note, the trumpet player who grew up in Elkhart, once informally known as the "Band Instrument Capital of the World," because of the manufacturers there, thinks he can make his own mark on the industry.

"Musicians are always looking for an edge to play better," he said. "I just knew this was an idea whose time was right."