

ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES

VOICE OF THE MOUNTAINS • CITIZEN-TIMES.com

LIVING

Southern Living goes green for WNC idea house

By [Paul Clark, PCLARK@CITIZEN-TIMES.COM](mailto:PCLARK@CITIZEN-TIMES.COM), January 4, 2008 12:15 am



Copyright 2007

credit: JOHN FLETCHER, JFLETCHER@CITIZEN-TIMES.COM

Martin Stebbins, left, helps set the walls on the Southern Living eco-friendly 2008 Idea House in the Whisper Mountain development near Sandy Mush.

Whisper Mountain - Cold and clear, cold and cloudy — the weather will make no difference at the Idea House Southern Living magazine is building near Sandy Mush. Solar-powered, there will be plenty of warmth.

Surrounded by trees made bare by winter, crews are framing a farmhouse-style home that by summer will blossom with “green” technologies. Solar water, heat and electricity will warm (and cool) the home at Whisper Mountain, a 450-acre gated community under development off Leicester Highway.

Southern Living picks three Southeast locations every year for its Idea Houses. “This was a good year to tell the story of ‘green,’ and Asheville was a good place to do it,” said Frank Craige, the magazine’s Idea House manager.

Partnering with developers Whisper Mountain Ltd. and EcoBuilders Inc., an Asheville green builder, Southern Living is creating a home with detached garage and cistern “pump house.” The home’s eco-friendly features will include solar thermal and photovoltaic panels, radiant heated floors, a rainwater catchment and gray water system and other features.

“The idea is to use all the latest, greatest green building technologies of the day,” Craige said.

EcoBuilders president Rob Moody sees the project as a way to demo green technology. “I want more and more people globally to go green,” said Moody, an environmental science educator in Haywood County. “If we can help show more of this stuff to the country, all the better.”

The details

Construction began in October. When completed and outfitted in June, the house will look like someone lives there, “right down to the toothbrushes and shampoo in the shower,” Craige said.

The LEED-certified house will have two floors with a loft and full, unfinished basement. The master bedroom will be downstairs, and three bedrooms will be upstairs. There will be full and “powder” bathrooms downstairs and two full bathrooms upstairs. A studio apartment will sit above the stand-alone garage, which will also have solar heat, off-the-grid power and a full water-catchment system (used to divert rainwater for use in sprinklers and toilets).

The home will be “green” in five ways, Moody said — site work, resources use, indoor air quality, durability and energy efficiency. The idea is to disturb the site as little as possible, to be conscious of waste and use non-toxic and locally produced materials. Optimum air quality will be achieved with an energy recovery ventilator that pulls in fresh, filtered air and removes humidity. Extensive flashing will make sure no water gets in, and other “durability” concepts include a 100-year roof made of recycled metal and bluewood-coated lumber that goes into the framing.

Energy efficiency is the green category most people are familiar with. The Sandy Mush house will have solar panels for electricity, hot water and heat (the house will have propane for a backup when solar isn’t enough). A tankless water heater will lead to lower water bills, Moody said. There will be lots of compact LED, fluorescent and low-voltage lighting. The 22-percent vegetable-based spray-in open-celled foam insulation has a 23 R value — 10 more than required, Moody said.

A story and photo package on the house will be featured as part of a 20-page Idea House spread in Southern Living’s August edition (which comes out in July).

The house will be open for touring in June through the end of September. Visitors will receive a resource guide for all three houses. The guide, which will also be online, will list where readers can go to get anything they see in the house, green or otherwise.

When finished, the house will be sold on the market at “whatever price the market bears,” Craige said. Moody estimated that that would be about \$1.2 million. “The idea is that people will walk away from touring the house and reading the story with tidbits of information that says ‘I can do this in my house,’” he said.

LOCAL HOUSE, LOCAL TALENT

Southern Living selected Asheville designers and builders for its Idea House near Sandy Mush, including:

Architect: Bill Allison of Allison Ramsey Architects.

Builders: Rob Moody and Jack Bebber of EcoBuilders Inc.

Interior: Traci Kearns of Alchemy Design Studio Inc.

Landscape: Jack LaQuatra of LaQuatra Bonci Associates.

MORE IDEAS

Would you like to see Idea Houses that Southern Living magazine has built in the past? Visit www.southernlivingideahouse.com.