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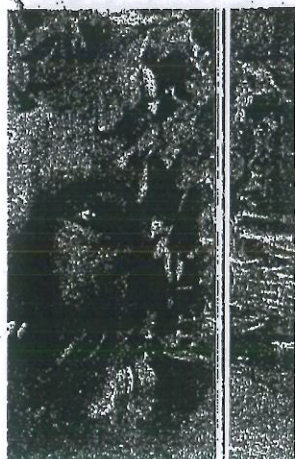
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Builder touts efficiency of 'high-performance home'

Schreiner Custom Homes will offer tours of its eco-friendly house on Mountain Island Lake this spring.

Just don't label the 4,200-square-foot, \$800,000 luxury home as "green," says builder Steve Schreiner.

"I can't stand it," he says. "There's a lot of green-washing going on out there."



GOING GREEN

Susan Stabley

We've tried to eliminate the word 'green' as much as we can. It's been cheapened by suppliers who shouldn't use that word at all."

Instead, Schreiner prefers the term "high-performance home."

His six-year-old company — which he owns with his brother, Shawn — has projects under way from Lake Norman to Weddington. Many fol-

low green-building guidelines, including those from the Environmental Protection Agency's EnergyStar and the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association's Earth Craft House programs.

However, Schreiner's custom-home project in The Overlook community at Mountain Island Lake is his most ambitious. It has been registered with the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program for houses.

The USGBC Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system is considered the toughest among green-building programs.

A project earns points based on design and construction to achieve one of four levels, from certified to platinum. Schreiner is striving for gold, the second-highest category.

"You have to certify, justify and authenticate anything and everything you do," he says of LEED.

His company is installing the drywall in the home and hopes to have it ready for the series of tours slated for April 23 through May 10 (daily except Mondays).

Tickets are available at the door. Prices have been cut to \$5 from \$10 because of sensitivity to economic concerns, Schreiner says. For more information, go to HighPerformanceHomeNC.com.

The green-building arm of the Lake Norman Home Builders Association will help host the tours.

Schreiner stresses this won't be a typical HomeArama-style event. The house has already been sold to a client.

Instead, he says the emphasis is on education — for both buyers and builders — on the benefits of going "high-performance."

Schreiner's home tour will double as a fund-raiser to benefit Our Towns Habitat for Humanity.

The green theme fits the efforts of the local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity, which plans to build 20 houses this year using energy-efficient guidelines.

Our Towns Habitat for Humanity serves Mooresville, Davidson, Cornelius

and Huntersville. The nonprofit has been dedicated to building environmentally friendly houses since 2004. Thus far, the nonprofit has built 65 homes to EnergyStar and other green-building standards.

"We are far ahead of the curve," says Christine Boone, Our Towns Habitat for Humanity's director of resource development. "The construction staff is committed to saving resources — for our homeowners and for the planet."

The nonprofit considers the entire process of construction — from site selection to landscaping — in its efforts to produce affordable and sustainable homes.

That includes sealing crawl spaces and seams, using native plants in landscaping, and recycling cardboard, plastic and aluminum waste.

During the framing of a house, workers use a computerized process to cut wood to maintain efficiency. Even the home's termite treatment has to muster a green seal of approval.

The homes are stocked with appliances rated under the EnergyStar program. Each detail, Boone says, adds up to reduced utility bills for the homeowner.

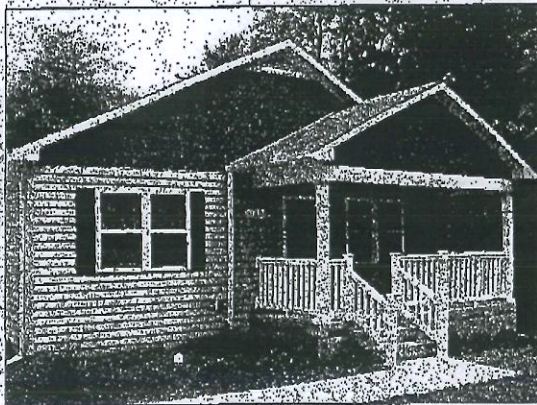


photo courtesy OUR TOWNS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

This Habitat for Humanity home on Elm Street in Mooresville is among those built here with a range of energy-efficient features.

Boone says her group is proving that going green doesn't have to be cost-prohibitive. "And the technology is improving every day. It doesn't have to be more expensive."

Greening local government

The city of Kannapolis has formed a committee to figure out how it can best "green" its governmental functions.

Representatives from each city department are to start meeting on the environmental initiative by the end of the month, says Renee Goodnight, Kannapolis community outreach coordinator.

City officials came up with the idea after signing up for the North Carolina League of Municipalities' green challenge, she says.

GREEN CALENDAR

Mecklenburg County will host a series of four-hour classes on composting, starting Feb. 14.

Also available: a four-hour master composter course that begins Monday.

The classes are available through the county's Piedmont Landscape and Naturescape Training program.

For details, go to wipeoutwaste.com.

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