

Proactive Solutions

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Tech House Meets Green Standards

Vision Homes, Sarasota, Fla., teamed up with the Home Builders Association of Sarasota County to build its futuristic "Tech House," which has been certified by the Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC) to educate the public on the benefits of green building to one's health and overall lifestyle.

Both the HBA of Sarasota County and Vision Homes hope to not only educate the public on the benefits of green building, but also to address concerns for safety and structural integrity by creating this house filled with new and advanced technologies in the home building industry.

This tech house achieves its green building status by including various features, such as block walls injected with expanding foam, which raises the exterior walls' R-factor to resist heat and cold weather. All windows in the house are impact resistant, double-pane insulated with low-emissivity (Low-e) ratings to reduce the load on air and heating systems. Two air-conditioning systems were installed, one on each floor, with 20 SEER (seasonal energy efficiency rating) compared to the current 12 SEER average.

Indoor air quality filtration systems control everything from microscopic

dust mites and mold spores to infectious bacteria and viruses. Closed-cell foam insulation throughout the attic provides the house with a 30-degree average temperature reduction. Insulated hot water pressure lines under the foundation increase heat efficiency and lower both

water and electrical costs while a re-circulating hot water pump transfers hot water within seconds anywhere in the house.

On the exterior, the use of water-wise landscaping with Florida-friendly plants provide efficient irrigation to enhance the property while using a fraction of the water normally required in conventional landscaping. For the pool area, cutting-edge pool features include a self-cleaning technology.

The Tech House opened to the public among the Parade of Homes in Sarasota, Fla. in February. A portion of the profits will be designated for local charities upon sale.

THE TECH HOUSE while still under construction.



Illuminating Tips

ONE OF THE COMPONENTS often overlooked in a builder's model, yet one that is vital to its success, is pre-planning a lighting design, says Judith Sisler Johnston, president of Sisler Johnston Interior Design in Jacksonville, Fla. Professional interior designers will often work together with a lighting specialist to ensure that floor outlets are included when plans call for furniture to be "floated" in the center of a room or that unsightly cords will be eliminated.

Johnson also recommends that recessed lighting should be used in conjunction with decorative lighting in task and entertainment areas such as kitchens, great rooms and offices. Choose lighting fixtures after interior finishes and furniture are selected to ensure that they complement one another, she says. The right choice of lighting fixtures can add to a room's ambiance by setting a romantic mood or helping to fill up an expansive space.

Sisler Johnson Interior Design has won more than 50 awards from building industry associations.

