

HUNTINGTON BEACH INDEPENDENT

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Business

Stacked in a green way

Corporation hopes 'Net-Zero Energy' home helps other contractors see what sustainable building is capable of. By Michael Alexander

By Thanksgiving, 319 21st St. is expected to look just like the well-kept multi-story houses that populate the whole block. But most houses won't have solar panels integrated seamlessly into the roof, or use special concrete that allows water to drain through into the ground.

Local and federal officials gathered to celebrate the groundbreaking last week of a so-called "Net Zero Energy" home to be built by new Huntington Beach-based corporation Living Green Homes Construction and Development. Filled with the latest energy-efficient and low-pollution technologies, the home is meant as a demonstration of what green building is capable of, company president Jason Scheurer said.



The groundbreaking ceremony for a prototype "Net Zero Energy" single family home development in Huntington Beach. Christopher Wagner / Independent

The company will apply for Built it Green GreenPoint Rated status, a nonprofit group's set of standards for green building. In addition to including enough solar panels embedded in the roof to fully offset energy costs, builders will use nontoxic materials, energy-saving appliances, and better sealing techniques to cut energy use and pollutants in the home, Scheurer said.

"My goal and my vision is to help educate not only consumers but other contractors," he said. "My vision is to see these houses up and down the whole West Coast. We want to hit mainstream cities."

Mayor Debbie Cook called the project a good way to spread the message of green building.

“I applaud their efforts to raise the awareness of what they’re trying to do and encourage other people to follow that same path,” she said.

Scheurer said he started a new company spun off existing contractor Schannon Remodeling to focus on green building.

In addition to building new homes, the company will offer remodeling and energy auditing services for customers who want to convert their existing homes to something more environmentally friendly.

“Green building is something I’ve been studying for three to five years,” he said. “It’s just now coming into place in the mainstream market area. On technology and stuff, everybody’s trying to catch up.”

U.S. Rep. Dana Rohrabacher also attended. He praised the event as a step toward energy independence.

“I support trying to reduce pollution and make America more energy efficient,” he said. “I’m certainly for anything to make us less dependent on foreign oil.”

When the house is built, Scheurer won’t just showcase the new home — he’ll live in it, along with his wife.

“Our whole goal is to move into it,” he said.

“But we’re definitely going to keep this open to the public for 90 days and continually have tours on the weekends for at least a year.”

The home will feature:

Solar panels integrated directly into the roof

Energy Star-certified appliances

Forest Stewardship Council-certified wood, harvested from sustainable sources

Building materials low in unhealthy volatile organic compounds

A tankless water heater

Pervious concrete, which allows water to drain into the ground