

# Family to test eco-friendly home

## Environment

Bathurst couple, four children moving into 'net-zero energy' house

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BATHURST — A Bathurst family is only weeks away from moving into an eco-friendly home that promises to produce as much energy as it consumes.

Bryan Kenny, his wife Renée and their four children plan to move into the "net-zero energy" home for a year beginning next month.

Kenny, who is not related to the Bathurst MLA of the same name, says the idea is to show how a family of six can live comfortably using less energy.

"We're just hoping to bring awareness," Kenny said Thursday. "We're looking to save the planet one house at a time."

The prefabricated home, built by Fredricton's Maple Leaf Homes, arrived in Bathurst this week and was being assembled Thursday.

Kenny, whose children range from age six to 14, says his family is excited about their new house.

He doesn't expect the eco-friendly home will present difficulties not found in a standard house — except that his family's life will be more public.

Kenny will be documenting their experience through weekly video blogs in English, French and German at [www.ecoplushome.com](http://www.ecoplushome.com).

The home, which overlooks the Squire Green golf course, will produce power from an electric heat pump that consumes geothermal energy.

It will also get electricity from photovoltaic panels on the roof, while a solar thermal system will heat domestic water and provide radiant warmth inside the home.

The home has extra insulation in the walls and attic to make it as airtight as possible.

It is expected CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the home will be close to zero, whereas a conventional home produces an average of eight tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year.

While the house will be hooked up to NB Power's grid, the idea is to buy only as much power as is sold to the system each year.

"It's the first affordable, net-zero energy home for the North American market and it's right here in Bathurst," said Axel



BENJAMIN SHINGLER/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Bryan Kenny and his family are only weeks away from moving into this 'net-zero energy' home in Bathurst. The prefabricated home was being assembled Thursday and is expected to be ready in October.

Lerche, of Tight Line Productions, the marketing firm organizing the project.

A group of engineers from Germany's Bosch Thermotechnology is slated to arrive in Bathurst shortly to help install the various components, but Lerche says local companies also stand to gain from the promotional project.

Novolux, an electrical firm based in Petit-Rocher, will do the home's wiring beginning next week.

Company owner Stéphane Haché says his firm has been doing an increasing number of eco-friendly projects.

"It's a new trend and we have to get ourselves more involved," he said.

Bathurst's winter is colder than the average in Canada, so the home's energy usage face the ultimate test of the net-

zero energy concept.

It remains unclear what market exists for energy efficient homes in Canada or how much the industry is projected to be worth in years to come.

According to the Canada Green Building Council, 46 per cent of the roughly 7,500 households the organization polled in July believe it is important to have their homes certified with a green label.

The survey also revealed that 82 per cent of Canadians interviewed said they would invest more in a home that was eco-friendly, with the majority saying they would pay one to five per cent more for such a home certification label.

According to Efficiency New Brunswick's senior energy adviser Ioe Waugh,

net-zero energy homes will eat up a larger market share once inevitable legislation aimed at limited carbon emissions comes into play.

"It's being staked out as the next big step," Waugh said recently.

He said the move for home builders will be toward pumping out homes ready to be made net-zero energy efficient with additional components.

Waugh believes that the national building code will change to force home builders to move toward green building, while federal legislation will make it cost effective for the average homeowner to live in a house that produces as much power as it consumes annually.

"They pay for themselves," he said of the net-zero energy homes.