

'Eco Plus Home' closer to reality

BY JAMES MALLORY
NORTHERN LIGHT STAFF

A project for an energy efficient home came closer to reality last week with a groundbreaking ceremony.

The 'Eco Plus Home', formerly known as the 'No Energy House', is currently being prefabricated by Maple Leaf Homes. The structure will then be shipped to the Squire Green subdivision in Bathurst later this month.

In the meantime, the property at Squire Green has been cleared and ground work for water and sewage has begun. Axel Lerche of Tight Line Productions, the company spearheading the project, said a basement will be constructed in the coming weeks and the house will be delivered on Aug. 31.

"We will have two cranes here in the subdivision," explained Mr. Lerche.

The Kenny family - father Bryan, mother Renee and their children Tyler (14), Grayson

(13), Shane (9) and Olivia (6) - plan to move into the house on September 13. The idea is to show how a family of six can live comfortably using less energy.

"It's an experiment that we feel is very important to do and we want to really show that if a family of six can do without fossil energies, it can be achieved by every one," said Renee Kenny.

Energy balances will regularly be published on www.ecoplushome.com. A webcam and weekly video blogs in English, German and French will document the construction progress up to completion of the Eco Plus Home.

The building technology consists of an electric heat pump, a solar thermal system and a photovoltaic system. The solar thermal system will generate heat and hot water from free solar radiation, and the heat pump uses geothermal energy. While the heat pump needs electricity to run, the photovoltaic system will generate much

more CO2-free electricity in the course of the year than the heat pump will consume.

It is expected CO2 emissions from the Eco Plus Home will be close to zero, whereas a conventional home produces an average of eight tons of CO2 per year.

The project is being spearheaded by Tight Lines Productions Ltd., Canada, in partnership with Maple Leaf Homes, a Canadian manufacturer of prefabricated homes, and project developers Kenny Group (no relation to the Kenny family who will live in the house). Bosch Thermotechnology will provide the energy saving equipment.

Once the experiment is over, the aim is to offer the house in the US and Canadian markets at a price similar to a conventional home.

"The goal is to use that house to reach the entire North American market and go direct to the consumer in the entire North American continent," said Mr. Lerche.



James Mallory/Northern Light Photo

Keith Kenny, Axel Lerche and Brian Kenny (from left) pose for a ground-breaking photo on the Squire Green subdivision property where the Eco Plus Home will be built. Keith Kenny is with the Kenny Group, which owns the land where the house is located. Mr. Lerche is with Tight Line Productions, the project organizers and Brian Kenny is the Liberal MLA for Bathurst. The same shovel was used for an opening ceremony when the Squire Green subdivision was established back in 1989.