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Harold Bubil

Seminar will explain green construction

If you're a home builder and have been waiting to jump on the green bandwagon, you're too late.

The bandwagon has been replaced by a train.

More and more builders – and buyers – are realizing that building energy-efficient, durable, healthful and resource-conserving homes is essential for many reasons, not the least of which is fighting global warming. About 20 percent of greenhouse-gas emissions result from the construction and operation of houses.

It's also a good marketing strategy, because we are still at the stage where green builders can get publicity for their efforts. In a few short years, building green won't be news anymore. It will just be standard operating procedure. Johnny-come-latelys won't get a feature story or a TV segment.

All aboard!

Two builders who have jumped on the train while plenty of good seats remain are Oakhurst Enterprises and Eslinger Homes.

Inspired by the Florida House Learning Center, the Sarasota-based Oakhurst has built a green house, in Port Charlotte's South Gulf Cove, that it hopes will serve as a sustainable demonstration house for the Charlotte Harbor area. Called the Portofino, the model home is priced at \$499,900 for 2,362 square feet under air.

A seminar explaining the concepts of green construction and showcasing the home's features will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, May 19, at the house, 13474 Keystone Blvd. That's off Gasparilla Road (C.R. 771) just south of Rotonda Boulevard East in Charlotte County.

"It's a living, working model of what a green home can be, and look like," said Oakhurst principal Tom Silverstein. "We can show it in practice. When people think 'green house,' they starting thinking about domes and bubbles and weird-looking things. This

looks like every other house on the block, except it's not."

Matt Ross of Eco-\$mart will lead the seminar with Silverstein and his business partner, Dan Maxwell.

"It's healthy, efficient and disaster-resistant," said Ross of the house.

Meanwhile, Eslinger Homes has announced it will be all-green, all-the-time with its future developments and houses built on single lots.

All building by Eslinger will meet or exceed Florida Green Building Coalition standards, said Jim Eslinger, president of the company, which builds in Old Tampa Estates, Twin Rivers and Rye Wilderness in northeast Manatee County.

"Building green doesn't only help save the environment," said Eslinger. "It also contributes to healthy living."

"Many builders stayed away from green construction because of the increase in cost associated with building green," said Ken Lapierre, Eslinger's operations manager.

"Thanks to advances in technology ... that cost has become negligible."

For more, including items on next week's Florida Trust for Historic Preservation conference in Sarasota and a class on building affordable and durable houses offered by Home Front Homes, read Harold's blog at www.heraldtribune.com/realestate.

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