

NEWS

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Homeowners complete net zero energy home, monitor energy use

BLACK RIVER FALLS, WIS., April 16 – Homeowners Tom and Verona Chambers celebrated the completion of their net zero energy home (NZEH), the first owner-designed and inhabited home of its kind in the region, during a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony on Thursday, April 16. In honor of Earth Week, the event recognized the homeowners’ commitment to the efficient use of energy.

A NZEH is one that produces at least as much energy as it consumes. Through WPPI Energy’s GreenMax Home initiative, the Chambers have designed and constructed a NZEH that can be reasonably and affordably replicated in a cold climate. The Chambers’ NZEH combines state of the art energy efficient construction and appliances with renewable energy systems.

“WPPI Energy’s GreenMax Home initiative encourages the adoption of new energy efficient and renewable energy products and technology,” said Vice President of Customer Services and Administration Tom Paque. “This innovative building project will serve as a model for the future of ‘green’ home design, educating the general public about home energy use. We are working with the Chambers to demonstrate that anyone can take steps to save energy at home.”

Through careful planning and research, the Chambers worked to refine their home’s design to control energy use, ultimately advancing the home’s status from “highly efficient” to “net zero.” With the completion of their NZEH, the Chambers will work with WPPI Energy to monitor and fine-tune their energy use and behavior to ensure they meet their net zero energy goal.

“We are eager to monitor the success of our efforts as we begin the pursuit of net zero energy use in our house,” said Verona Chambers. “Having the privilege to work with some of the leading consultants in residential construction and renewable energy has had a huge impact in how we go about everyday life.”

WPPI Energy's GreenMax Home initiative encourages residents to incorporate energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies in the design and construction of their new and existing homes.

“Helping customers will lower utility bills, help defer the need to build expensive new power plants, and lower greenhouse gas emissions,” said Paque. “We applaud the Chambers for taking their commitment a step further, becoming more efficient energy users and choosing renewable energy.”

Key design features of the home include:

- Simple design – 3,100 square feet of conditioned space and 1,800 square feet of finished space
- All electric home
- Ground source heat pump that extracts heat from the ground and uses it to heat the home
- 5.76 kW solar photovoltaic system
- Highly efficient insulation for the exterior walls, attic and basement
- Structural plumbing to reduce hot water demands and water waste
- Advanced air sealing which conserves energy and improves occupant comfort
- ENERGY STAR® rated windows

“The best part of this process is certainly how much we have learned,” said Verona Chambers. “We have already begun to share our experiences, showing our house and discussing it with others. We are excited for tours and open houses to continue, as we hope to educate many people about this project.”

WPPI Energy established the GreenMax Home program as part of its ongoing commitment to encourage public and community support for renewable energy, energy conservation and energy efficiency. For more information visit <http://www.greenmaxhome.com>.

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WPPI Energy is a regional power company serving 50 customer-owned electric utilities. Through WPPI Energy, these public power utilities share resources and own generation facilities to provide reliable, affordable electricity to more than 190,000 homes and businesses in Wisconsin, Upper Michigan and Iowa.