

NEWS

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Stoughton homeowners begin net zero energy pursuit, demonstrate energy savings

STOUGHTON, WIS., April 30 – Although unique in their pursuit of verified net zero energy status for their newly constructed home, Stoughton homeowners John and Rebecca Scheller are demonstrating how their home’s remarkable efficiency is largely attributable to simple steps anyone can take.

During a special dedication ceremony on Thursday, April 29 the Schellers celebrated the completion of what is anticipated to be Dane County’s first verified net zero energy home (NZEH) – a home that is capable of producing as much energy as consumed. The house, located in the WPPI Energy member service territory of Stoughton Utilities in the Town of Rutland, combines energy efficient construction methods and practices with onsite renewable energy technologies to achieve net zero energy use.

“WPPI Energy’s GreenMax Home initiative creates an opportunity for homeowners like John and Rebecca Scheller to become more conscious of their energy use and reduce their overall environmental impact by enhancing the efficiency of their home,” said Senior Vice President of Member and Customer Services Tom Paque. “The Schellers have invested in a better energy future and are demonstrating that anyone can make reasonable lifestyle changes and take additional steps to save energy at home.”

Many of the efficient methods and practices used by the Schellers could be easily replicated in average homes today. The Schellers designed and built a 4,000 square-foot home with ordinary materials and building practices while careful attention to energy-saving details such as insulation and air sealing demonstrate practical steps that anyone can take to build a highly efficient home. To achieve net zero energy use, the Schellers incorporated additional sustainable features, including two geothermal heat pumps to provide space conditioning and domestic hot water, structural plumbing, and an onsite solar photovoltaic system to harness energy from the sun.

“Energy efficiency isn’t just about installing solar panels – it’s a lifestyle choice that allows you to be more aware of your energy use, including electricity, water and natural gas,” said homeowner Rebecca Scheller. “Once you are aware of how much you’re using, you can make modifications to your home and the way you live to maximize your energy efficiency.”

Key features of the home include:

- Two ground source heat pumps that will extract heat from the ground and provide heating, cooling and hot water
- Two pole-mounted 2.88 kilowatt arrays of solar photovoltaic panels
- New England Saltbox design making the house easy to insulate and air seal
- Structural plumbing with advanced designs and controls to reduce hot water waste and energy use
- Building shell improvements, including ENERGY STAR® windows, special attention to air sealing, and increased insulation levels
- Certified Wisconsin ENERGY STAR and National Association of Home Builders Gold-certified home

One of the most important features of the home will be the Schellers' commitment to the efficient use of energy. Now that the home is complete, the couple will work with WPPI Energy and Stoughton Utilities to monitor their energy use and fine-tune the home's performance to ensure that its energy use is truly net zero.

“When individuals start to think about their own energy use, they can become more ‘energy aware’ and start making lifestyle choices that will help preserve our Earth’s resources,” said Scheller. “We are really looking forward to challenging ourselves to become even more energy efficient over the next year, and we’re hoping to set an example that it’s not only possible, but also our duty to preserve and respect the Earth’s resources.”

WPPI Energy will provide a total of \$42,000 in funding for the Schellers' project. To date, the Schellers have received \$36,000. The remaining \$6,000 will be awarded after the Schellers have demonstrated net zero energy use for one year.

Two GreenMax Homes have been completed in the WPPI Energy member service territories of Black River Falls, Wis. and Stoughton, Wis. In Black River Falls, homeowners Tom and Verona Chambers are 10 months into the one year testing period and are on track to achieve their net zero goal. The Schellers hope to accomplish the same. For more information visit www.greenmaxhome.com.

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WPPI Energy is a regional power company serving 51 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 195,000 homes and businesses in Wisconsin, Upper Michigan and Iowa.