

KEYSTONE BUILDER

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TURNING GREEN

Inside: Real-life stories on how green building is surging across Pennsylvania

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Hundredfold Farm, near Gettysburg, Adams County, now consists of seven homes on an 80-acre tract that includes a greenhouse and a Christmas tree farm.



Hundredfold Farm: A drastic green-build community

by Ken Mueller

New homes continue to become more energy efficient and eco-friendly, through new technology and in response to consumer needs.

Near Gettysburg, the Hundredfold Farm community is an intriguing example of extreme green building.

Hundredfold Farm was originally envisioned in 1998 by a group of people who wanted to create an environmentally friendly cohousing community.

At a glance the homes appear to be nothing more than standard two-story colonials, but closer inspection reveals numerous features that make them different.

These modular homes can be installed in about two days, but the “green” customizations take a bit longer. There are rooftop solar panels, solar hot water (with gas backup), a passive solar layout (allowing the sun to be the primary source of heat), open floor plans and extra insulation.

Additionally, the community draws its water from wells and wastewater is pumped through an on-site greenhouse filtration system, allowing much of it to be reused for non-potable purposes.

Resident Leonard Mazza says his utility bills are drastically lower than those of a traditional home, with electric about one-fifth of what most people pay in the region.



Workers guide a home onto its foundation at Hundredfold Farm.

General contractor Bill Hartzell, one of the founding members of the community, says that while the homes are still tied into the electric grid, his house generates about three times more electricity than it uses. What's not to like about a \$13 monthly electric bill ... year round?

The community currently consists of seven homes, with seven more to be built over the next few years. But even

then, the entire cluster of homes will sit on only six acres of the 80-acre tract of land, with most of the remaining land being cultivated as a working Christmas tree farm.

While living and investing in such a planned community would be a major lifestyle commitment for most of us, Hartzell says builders and homeowners can learn from Hundredfold Farm, including features that can easily and cheaply be built into traditional homes.

Hartzell says builders should rotate homes on a property to take advantage of southern exposures and spend more time focusing on the proper placement of windows. Tighter insulation, proper attic ventilation and being selective about the color of siding and roofing material can also provide great energy saving benefits.

If you are interested in going the extra mile and would like to start a community similar to Hundredfold Farm, Hartzell has some simple advice: “Don't reinvent the wheel, and do your homework,” as there are nearly 100 such communities throughout the United States, all of which would be more than eager to share their knowledge.

For more information about the Adams County community, visit www.hundredfoldfarm.org. ▲