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Building zero energy homes



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SARASOTA COUNTY - It's the new buzz in build, going green. Now, one local homebuilder says he's using new technology to build zero energy homes, a house that produces its own power.

"We were surprised when we ran the numbers how simple it is to do," says Schroeders Homes President David Schroeders. "We are going zero energy across the board. Because of the rebates from the state of Florida and the federal government we've basically been able to take our homes to zero energy without increasing any of our cost."

The local builder is currently building dozens of Z.E.H's, or zero energy homes. They're using the help of Subrato Chandra and the Florida Solar Energy Center from the University of Central Florida to keep it affordable and practical "The concept is you want to make the home very energy efficient so that even without solar power you will use 50-percent of the power a normal home would use."

Including those recognizable solar panels on the roof. They say during the night the home uses electricity from the utility company but in the sunny times it uses its own and sells back the excess." The net usage at the end of the year should be pretty close to zero depending on how the occupant lives," says Schroeders.

They say current rebates and tax breaks from the State and Federal government can save you nearly 25-thousand dollars on the system. Your cost about 20-thousand dollars. "You actually save more on your electric bill then your monthly mortgage bill increases," says Schroeders.

After all we are in the sunshine state. "It's simple to do, it's not that difficult. The technology has finally got affordable and with the state and federal rebates it's a no-brainer."

Shroeders Homes is also working with the Florida Solar Energy Center to try and retrofit existing homes.

If you want to find out more information on zero energy homes -- just log onto their website at www.dschoeders.com.

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