

New 'green home' grabbing attention

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INDIALANTIC -- The couple say it will be one of the state's and country's "greenest" homes.

Their dream project sprung up in the aftermath of damage caused to an existing house by Hurricane Frances in 2004.

Mark Baker and Nonnie Chrystal decided it was an opportunity they could not let go. They decided to turn their mother's 3,500-square-foot home on Indialantic's Coral Way into a showcase of new and green technology.

It will be a few months more before the family moves in, but Tuesday, County Commissioner Andy Anderson will express support for the project and the construction of similar houses through a resolution.

The resolution is part of a steady stream of attention the house had garnered from locals and public figures.

Titusville Mayor Jim Tulley visited Saturday. "I am impressed," he said.

Baker and Chrystal call it Florida's Showcase Green Envirohome.

"We would have moved in sooner but were delayed by Tropical Storm Fay," Chrystal said.

The two-story building will use wind and solar energy for power and the runoff water will not be allowed to pollute the Indian River Lagoon.

The project includes building materials that can withstand wind speeds of close to 175 mph and insulation that will keep the house cooler.

Most of the aluminum roof is made out of recycled material. Pathways and driveways are made out of a product called Flexi-Pave, a recycled rubber product that allows water to trickle to the ground.

"Our insurance costs will go down," said Baker, who has a background in construction.

The couple hopes builders will learn from them and adapt some of these new products and technologies when they embark on construction projects.

They have spent about \$200,000 of their money on the project, though they also have received help from more than 100 sponsors.

The hurricane-battered family said they are well-prepared for any future hurricanes.

"Bring it on," Baker said.

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Homeowner Mark Baker, right, shows the cistern of his Indialantic home to Titusville Mayor Jim Tulley on Saturday. cistern returns runoff to the ground and not the river. (Christ Stuart, FLORIDA TODAY)