

On Kite Day in Stapleton, builder shows a new home that uses practically no energy

WHERE: Preview of Near-Zero-Energy Home, The Architect Collection at Stapleton by Harvard Communities, refreshments. Model 8747 E. 35th Ave., solar home 9126 E. 35th. From Quebec in Stapleton, take Martin Luther King east 2 blks to Central Park Blvd, then north 3 blocks to 35th, right.

PRICE: From high \$600s, Near Zero Home at \$759,000

WHEN: Today, 11 a.m. until 3 p.m.

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Has solar energy reached the point that solar homes are actually selling? The answer's yes--and builder John Keith will show you why today, in a soon-to-be-finished home near Stapleton's Central Park, that uses practically no energy at all.

Nobody would imagine 2008 to be better for builders than last year, but Harvard Community's Architect Collection increased its sales over 2007 as Keith added even more attention to his environmental package. That push reaches a climax this week when Harvard offers a 'dusty boots' preview of its latest Near-Zero-Energy Home, with a solar component so great that its carbon footprint will be around 50,000 pounds less-per-year than an average new home.

You can also stroll over to the World International Kite Fly (10 a.m.-4 p.m.) in Central Park, a short walk both from the solar home (still at drywall stage) and from Harvard's award winning model, with all of design pizzazz that obviously contributes to Harvard's success.

The buyer of the Near-Zero Energy home is likely to spend no more than a few hundred dollars a year on energy, cooling included, Keith says. But all of Architect Collection homes have energy features that save way beyond what average new houses get, including 2.7 kW of photovoltaic panels that turn sunlight into electricity.

On the Near-Zero Energy house, Harvard beefed up the PV component to 8.5 kW, and added a heat pump and a tank-less water heater that allow all of that solar to power components that generally burn expensive natural gas. Keith also took his typical sealing/insulation package, around twice as good as the average new builder, and more than doubled the tightness (.03 air changes/hour) while thickening the insulation to well better than R-20 on outside walls, R-54 in ceilings.

If you like what you see, you can buy a home and have Harvard create the energy efficiency you want. Remember, Harvard's standard package is already among the most energy efficient in the nation—around 40% more than typical new homes. Or, you may want Harvard to create your own "Near-Zero Energy" showplace.

Either way, you'll get this great new Stapleton Central Park neighborhood...and lots of other Harvard design features that have nothing to do with energy, but that are still bringing in new sales.