

Green Builder[®]

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Photos: Highland Craftsmen Inc.

The Greenest Option Yet? Bark Siding



Searching for that really rustic look? It could be a tough up-sell, but Highland Craftsmen™ Inc. claims it has developed a commercial siding product, Bark House, that not only provides decades of maintenance-free living, but is truly all natural. That's because Bark House siding is made of tulip poplar bark. Highland's president Marty McCurry says the cost of Bark House rivals premium siding products, but notes that the earliest poplar bark homes he's found have siding that's going strong after 80 years—without painting, staining, or maintenance. More info: Highlandcraftsmen.com.

—Deborah R. Huso

BASF Project Showcases Affordability of Green Building



The chemical company BASF recently sponsored the construction of a Near-Zero-Energy Home in Paterson, New Jersey, using Zero-Energy-Housing concepts from Oak Ridge National Laboratory (Ornl.gov) and

PATH/Build America architect Steve Winter (Pathnet.org). BASF hopes this home—designed for superior energy efficiency, strength, and safety—will show builders that building sustainably can be affordable and result in a more comfortable, stronger home. The basement and first floor use American PolySteel's insulating concrete forms, the second floor uses Insulspan's structural insulated panels (SIPs), and the home is roofed with an Englert Ultra-Cool metal roof. The home is essentially a highly insulated bunker, even though it looks like any ordinary American home from the outside. "The whole building envelope is encased in foam," explains Jack Armstrong, director of the building and construction industry for BASF, "so we have a well-designed building envelope that alone will save 70% on energy."

The home also produces some of its own electricity (10-12 kilowatt-hours per day), using Ovonix Solar photovoltaic laminates on the roof. Domestic hot water comes from Dawn Solar Thermal System; the home uses radiant floor heating.



BASF

For this Near-Zero-Energy Home in Paterson, New Jersey, BASF claims that the ICFs and SIPs in the building envelope cut household energy consumption by 70%. Though this home costs up to 8% more in materials to build, savings can be found in labor costs because of the building systems approach.

Armstrong says it costs between 6% and 8% more to build a home like this, but that using ICF and SIP foundation and wall systems cuts down on labor costs. More info:

Betterhomebetterplanet.com. —Deborah R. Huso

One machine can do the work of fifty men.
No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man.

Elbert Hubbard