

News Release

Remodeling project helps chart the course for ‘green’ home construction techniques, materials and features

From the curb, it looks like any other home remodeling project. But when its two-story transformation is complete in March, a south Minneapolis home will include many ecologically sound features that will not only set it apart from its neighbors, it will also leave the homeowner with the pride of being part of a cutting-edge “green” home renovation movement – as well as almost no monthly energy bills.

Heritage Builders Inc., based in St. Louis Park, began remodeling the home in September after the project was designated as part of the pilot program in the Minnesota GreenStar home building and remodeling certification program. Minnesota GreenStar is a new collaborative effort of the Green Remodelers Group, the Builders Association of the Twin Cities, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry-Minnesota, and the environmental nonprofit Green Institute. The program is funded in part by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

“The homeowner came to us even before we were involved in the earliest test phase of this program,” said Mark Benzell, designer for Heritage Builders and three-year term board member of Minnesota GreenStar. “The designation of this project in the pilot program means he can be involved in a ground-breaking effort.”

The homeowner inherited the 1916-built house from his parents. Before moving in, he wanted to enlarge and completely renovate the home – using sustainable and locally sourced materials and introducing energy efficient systems. To achieve Minnesota GreenStar certification, Heritage Builders follows a checklist of processes and materials, including: geothermal heating and cooling; cement-based siding and exterior trim; Energy Star-rated appliances and lighting fixtures; low-flow plumbing fixtures; reclaimed ceramic tile; 40-year shingles; recycled materials and salvaged fixtures; and rain barrels to collect water.

Benzell has been involved with the Minnesota GreenStar program from its initial testing stages, as setting groundwork for the current pilot program phase. When Minnesota GreenStar has completed its pilot phase, it will offer homeowners certification for new home construction and home remodeling projects that comply with a set of guidelines and standards. The certification is important for many environmentally minded homeowners and will hopefully bring them the added benefit of greater market appeal for their homes, Benzell said. Learn more at mngreenstar.org.

“This is a movement to do things that are going to make sense, create greater efficiency and be more ecologically wise,” said Benzell. “Right now, this is something special. In the future, we want it to be the norm.”

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Heritage Builders Inc. is a fully licensed Design/Build Remodeling firm located in Saint Louis Park. Learn more at heritagebldrs.com.