

## UI team hoping to pile up points in national energy contest

By Paul Wood

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URBANA – Would you like a house you could heat with a hair dryer? University of Illinois students are putting one together for a competition to be held in Washington.

In October, the U.S. Department of Energy will host the Solar Decathlon, and the UI is one of 20 universities to compete. A house students designed was moved here Monday from Homeway Homes in Deer Creek, which is between Peoria and Bloomington-Normal.

Architecture graduate student Cam Greenlee watched as a crane slowly dropped the house onto the piers. After a little trouble aligning the modular home with its temporary piers – each 400 pounds of steel and concrete – the house is in its temporary home at the Turner Hall greenhouses on Dorner Drive.

Greenlee said the idea of the passive house was not to generate energy as much as it was to conserve energy.

"You could heat the house on the equivalent of a hair dryer running for an hour," he said.

Mark S. Taylor, an assistant professor of architecture, said the house, a bit more than 600 square feet plus porch, is built of renewable materials, including bamboo plywood, with almost a foot of insulation. The house also uses some wood from an old barn.

"The windows are triple-paned, with three kinds of wood, including cork," Taylor said.

A roof will be installed on June 24, followed by solar panels on the south side.

This is the fourth Solar Decathlon event and the second time the University of Illinois will be involved, according to the project Web site, [www.solardecathlon.uiuc.edu/about.html](http://www.solardecathlon.uiuc.edu/about.html). The decathlon gets its name from the 10 specific areas of competition: architecture, engineering, market viability, communications, comfort, appliances, hot water, lighting, energy balance and transportation.

Steve Venden of Homeway Homes said the building cost about \$130 per square foot, about 10 percent more than its standard modular of that size.

"The payoff is in low energy bills," he said. The house is also exceptionally quiet, he added.

Taylor said money for the project has largely come from donors, who are listed at the Web site.

He said the team plans to have an open house as a fundraising event, perhaps based on a dinner party theme with input from the UI culinary students at the Spice Box in Bevier Hall.

The house will have its rooftop removed and will be shipped to Washington in early October. When set up on the National Mall, the house will be in a neighborhood of four houses, and the UI has been selected to host a neighborhood dinner party as part of the competition.

Each semester for a year and a half, about 15 to 30 students in engineering and architecture work on the project, Taylor said.



Heather Coit

Workers from Homeway Homes of Deer Creek mount one of their homes outside Turner Greenhouses in Urbana on Monday. A team of about 200 University of Illinois students with the Illinois Solar Decathlon plan to build a 100 percent solar powered house as part of the Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon competition.

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