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# 'Green' house to open doors to show its attributes

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By Elizabeth Caldwell, USA TODAY

A Florida couple is building what they say will be the home of the future, one strong enough to withstand hurricanes yet gentle enough to blend in with the environment.

Non-nie Chrystal and her husband, Mark Baker, are calling the house in Indialantic, near Melbourne, "Florida's Showcase Green Envirohome."

It will be outfitted from top-to-bottom with "green" technology donated by about 40 companies. The couple has spent \$200,000 of their own money so far.

"It's quite a unique project," says Pete DeMarco, director of compliance engineering at American Standard, which will furnish EPA WaterSense-certified low-flow toilets and shower heads.

The couple plans to open their home to the public in January in hopes builders will use their work as a template for other such structures. They also will live in the home to "test-drive" the technologies.

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One of those technologies is "grey water" recycling. Grey water is any water in a home that is not used in a toilet. And the structure's metal roof is designed to capture more rainwater than conventional construction. Rain and grey waters will be collected and used in lawn maintenance and toilet flushing.

"It's a great project to demonstrate conservation of water," says Marty Wanielista, director of the University of Central Florida's Storm Water Management Academy, which designed the system.

Parts of the roof will be covered with soil and planted with native plants, such as heliotrope and lemon bacopa, to provide natural temperature control, Chrystal says.

Solar-powered air conditioning and recycled pavement made from used tires that allow water to drip through also will be used.

The six-bedroom, five-bath home was designed and contracted by Baker, a construction industry veteran.

He will use spray foam and structural insulated panels that lock together and are reinforced with steel. He plans to make the home resistant to 175-mph winds. Winds 155 mph and higher are characteristic of a Category 5 hurricane.

The idea for the house was born in 2004 when Baker's mother lost her home to water damage from Hurricane Frances.

When Baker and Chrystal decided to replace the destroyed house, the resources they tapped included consumer information provided by the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency.

To help defray costs, Chrystal and Baker have taken advantage of programs such as Florida Water Star and Florida Power and Light's Build Smart project. These programs offer incentives to home builders who following environmental guidelines designed to conserve water and power.

Their ultimate goal is to show people they can save money and the environment. "Missouri is the Show Me state, so when someone from Missouri comes through and says show me, we can," Chrystal says. "It's our passion."

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