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Green Building Conference

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COMMUNITY - OCTOBER 29, 2003

Green Building Conference

Last August, Tom and Anne Woiwode hired an architect to plant pink, green and white flowers on the roof of their home in Okemos. Six hundred square feet of the couple's roof is now inhabited by plants, making it the first "green roof" in mid-Michigan. Grass roofs cool the interior of a building by absorbing the sun's energy, which reduces the cost of air conditioning by about five percent. They also retain up to 60 percent of rainwater.

Technologies like the Woiwode's roof will be featured in an upcoming Green Building conference and expo. The event is organized by the Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council, and will show how green building technologies can create environmentally friendly homes. The event will take place on Oct. 30, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Hannah Community Center in East Lansing.

According to a 2001 study by Professional Builder Magazine, eight in 10 consumers now say that new homes being built today do not meet their demands for sustaining the environment.

The conference's keynote speaker, Paul Majka, will explain how to balance energy efficiency and indoor air quality, while still controlling moisture in your home. Majka is a Building Performance Trainer from Shelter Source, a building diagnostics and research company in Minneapolis.

Breakout sessions will include presentations on how to market energy-efficient, healthy homes, Energy Star ratings for homes, the American Lung Association's Healthy House Program, and on other challenges facing Michigan builders such as mold, sound and energy. The expo area will feature vendors of energy-efficient and environmentally friendly building products, materials and service trades.

The registration fee of \$35 (\$20 for students) includes entrance to all sessions, conference materials, continental breakfast and a buffet lunch. For registration, contact the Greater Lansing Home Builders Association, at (517) 323 3254 or go to www.glhba.org.

□ Daniel Sturm

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