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Modular home goes super-green State-of-art, budget-friendly abode will be open to public

By BILL POWER Business Reporter, p. B1

The designers of a 1,500-square-foot bungalow that literally appeared Tuesday on Lakecrest Drive in Dartmouth claim it is the most energy-efficient home in the province.



Photo: Workers prepare to lift a second section of a modular home on to its foundation at Lakecrest Drive in Dartmouth. (Eric Wynne / Staff)

There will be lots of time for everybody interested in lower heating and electricity bills to come and inspect the modular marvel that was placed on its foundation as part of a unique partnership promoting energy-efficient housing, Duncan Cann, with Patterson Sales & Service Ltd., said in an interview at the scene.

"The point of this project is to demonstrate what can be accomplished on a budget with technology that exists today," Cann said. "People are getting tired of hearing about energy-efficient homes that cost \$800,000 and more."

A crew was securing the two principal pieces of the modular home to commence a month-long installation process.

Some energy conservation organizations believe bungalows such as the one installed by Patterson Sales & Service at the Lakecrest Drive location will eventually become so energy efficient they will start supplying electricity to the regional power grid.

After the installation is completed in about 30 days, the house will become a public education centre, with tours and presentations on energy conservation systems held on a regular basis for about three months before the house is sold.

"Then we're going to put this house on the market and offer it at a very good price to an average family that will live (in it) and report regularly on the efficiency of the design of the building and its energy conservation systems," said Cann.

Although a final cost of the home was not yet available, Cann estimated the three-bedroom bungalow will be worth about \$350,000 — but, of course, it will feature almost-free heat and electricity.

There are a multitude of energy-saving features built in to the modular home built by Maple Leaf Homes Ltd. in Fredericton.

A state-of-the-art geothermal heating and cooling system, photovoltaic panels for electricity and a solar thermal system for hot water are part of the technology deployed in the EcoPlusHome designed by Axel Lerche, an energy-efficient housing entrepreneur from northern New Brunswick. Many of the energy conservation components in the home are manufactured by Bosch Thermotechnik of Germany.

The first EcoPlusHome built in Bathurst in 2009 won a lot of praise from energy conservation experts. A family of six moved into the home and promoted its features on the Internet and bragged about their \$19 per month energy bill.

"Oil and electricity are not going to get any cheaper and the prebuilt home is the best way to maximize the various energy conservation features that will eventually become standard features of all new homes," said Cann.

(bpower@herald.ca)