

GOING GREEN Bob Deeks, president of RDC Fine Homes, stands before the net zero energy house at Rainbow.



Rainbow home to showcase green building during Games

2010 NET ZERO HOUSE PART OF EMPLOYEE HOUSING INVENTORY IN THE FUTURE

By Allison Taylor
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At first glance the house high on the hill in the new Rainbow subdivision looks like all the others under construction on the busy site.

It's roughly the same size, has some similar design features and, once complete, it will be an employee- and price-restricted unit just like its neighbours on the street.

But this is no ordinary house. In fact, upon closer inspection, this is a wholly extraordinary home.

It is called the 2010 Net Zero House, designed to produce more energy than it uses. And during the 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, when the world is watching Whistler, the house will be a showcase for the green technology used throughout its construction.

"Everything that's gone into this house, we've chosen for a reason," said new homeowner Richard Wyne, who currently lives in a Whistler Housing Authority (WHA) condo.

Though he is not specifically involved in the construction of his new home, that job falling to local builder Bob Deeks of RDC Fine Homes, Wyne is intricately involved in this process, spending hours bringing companies to the table to participate in this unique project.

He is actively pursuing partnerships with various companies to use and showcase their green technologies, their premium services and products, in exchange for some deals to build the home. It is, he said,

a collaboration of partners making this green dream come true.

Come 2010, before, during and after the Olympics, the home will be open for all to see.

"We are going to showcase their products and explain to Whistler, to B.C., to Canada, to the world, why their products or their services work so well to build this kind of home," said Wyne.

"My job is to work with our partners to make sure they get branding out of it."

"Everything that's gone into this house, we've chosen for a reason."

—RICHARD WYNE

Some of those partners are local companies such as Living Edge Design, Corona Excavations, Sea to Sky Fire Protection Services, Cardinal Concrete, RS Heating & Sheet Metal, Red Mechanical, Alpine West Systems and Alpine Lock & Safe. Others are well known brands like Kohler and Electrolux.

Some will be using the house as a hospitality and demonstration home to network with their clients during the Games.

In May 2010 Richard and Jennifer Wyne will finally move in.

In the meantime, however, it's full steam head for Deeks's crew on site at Rainbow.

Though the company has been honing its green building knowledge over the past decade, Deeks has never built a house like this — one that will produce the heat it will consume. And more. It has several features to help it meet this goal.

"The most important thing is your building envelope and that's what creates your energy efficiency," Deeks explained in his office this week.

"It's air leakage that results in your heat loss.

panels are filled with molded expanded polystyrene, all with the goal of creating a strong and secure building envelope.

Perhaps the most obvious green design feature of the home, to the untrained eye, is the slanted south-facing roof, created to support Photovoltaic panels.

This solar roof will create more energy in the warm summer months than the home uses. B.C. Hydro will then create a credit for the Wynes, which they can draw down in the winter.

If there's leftover credit, that will be swallowed by Hydro.

But one neighbouring homeowner may reap the benefits of this net zero house too.

RDC Fine Homes has installed a heated water line between two homes in the new Rainbow subdivision with the expectation that the net zero house will produce enough energy to heat the domestic hot water for the second residence.

That could save that second homeowner about \$50 per month in hot water bills.

Another feature making the home more energy efficient are the concrete floors.

Deeks explained that concrete acts like a rock in the desert, retaining heat more so

SEE NEXT PAGE >

THIS SECTION

43 MOUNTAIN NEWS Aspen swarmed by bears

45 ALTA STATES More valley views

46 THE SOURCE What's going on in the community this week?

49 PIQUE N YER INTEREST Music under siege

Mountain News: Aspen swarmed by bears this summer

compiled by **Alison Hunt**

ASPEN, Colo. – A half-century ago, it was considered high entertainment to feed the bears in Yellowstone National Park. People stopped their cars, rolled down their windows and fed black bears. At the landfills — which were then called “dumps” — bleachers were erected so that visitors could watch the bears as they arrived at dusk.

No bleachers have been erected at the Pitkin County Landfill but bears are common enough. *The Aspen Daily News* reports that as many as 15 black bears feast nightly on trash.

The Colorado Division of Wildlife says it's OK with wildlife biologists — or at least it's the lesser of problems. “We've got so many other problems we're dealing with and so many other holes we're trying to plug up that the landfill is just not something we are going to deal with right now,” said Randy Hampton, an agency spokesman.

Pitkin County has not built a bear-proof fence around the landfill. But Larry Rather, who happens to be a fencing contractor, claims hypocrisy on the part of the county. A 2007 law mandates that garbage from home and businesses be kept in bear-proof containers. The ticket for a first offense is \$350.

“What bothers me is that they will harass me and ticket me for 350 bucks if I have an open trash can, but the dump is the biggest open trash can here — and it's owned by the county,” he said.

Wildlife and county officials argue that if the bears weren't at the landfill, they would be at Aspen Village, a nearby

subdivision. At least in this case, they say, the bears have not associated their food with housing.

Aspen has been swarmed by bears this summer, and gauging by the calls to police, far more so than in 2007, another year when the natural food selection was sparse. One bear last week climbed into a cottonwood tree on a pedestrian mall in downtown Aspen and stayed more than 12 hours. And on Monday, a bear crawled onto a deck where a woman was sleeping, put a hole into her leg, then fled — but not far enough. It crawled into a tree, and wildlife officials later killed it.

Wildlife officials estimate 20 to 30 bears have been breaking into houses, eating in restaurant trash containers and destroying cars in search of food. The situation has become such that state wildlife officials want local police and sheriff's deputies to have authority to kill bears in certain situations.

As for Yellowstone, decades ago wildlife officials realized that allowing bears to eat at the landfill resulted in bears becoming accustomed to eating human food. The bleachers were removed, the landfill fenced, and eventually the traffic jams that resulted as people stopped to feed the bears ended.

VAIL RECRUITING FEWER FOREIGN WORKERS

BROOMFIELD, Colo. – Vail Resorts expects to hire 70 per cent fewer workers from foreign countries this year. For a number of years it has arranged for H2B and other visas for workers to fill slots it can't otherwise fill at the offered wages. But with more U.S. citizens unemployed

SEE NEXT PAGE >

Net zero home

< FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

than other surfaces. As the sun heats up the home's floors over the course of the day, the concrete releases that heat slowly over time, like a rock in the desert that stays warm long after the sun goes down.

There is also a grey water heat recovery system in the home that sucks all heat out of all the hot water going down the drain and a state of the art heating and ventilation system.

Though it is not clear yet what the final building costs will be, the cost per square foot is expected to be higher than the nearby homes. Once that cost is finalized, it will become a price restricted WHA unit that will appreciate in value much more modestly than market housing.

The project would not have been possible, said Deeks, without the unique partnerships.

“It's been a great experience,” he said, of building the 2,200 square foot, four-bedroom home.

“Everybody is very excited about it.”

And, he added, this is the way of the future.

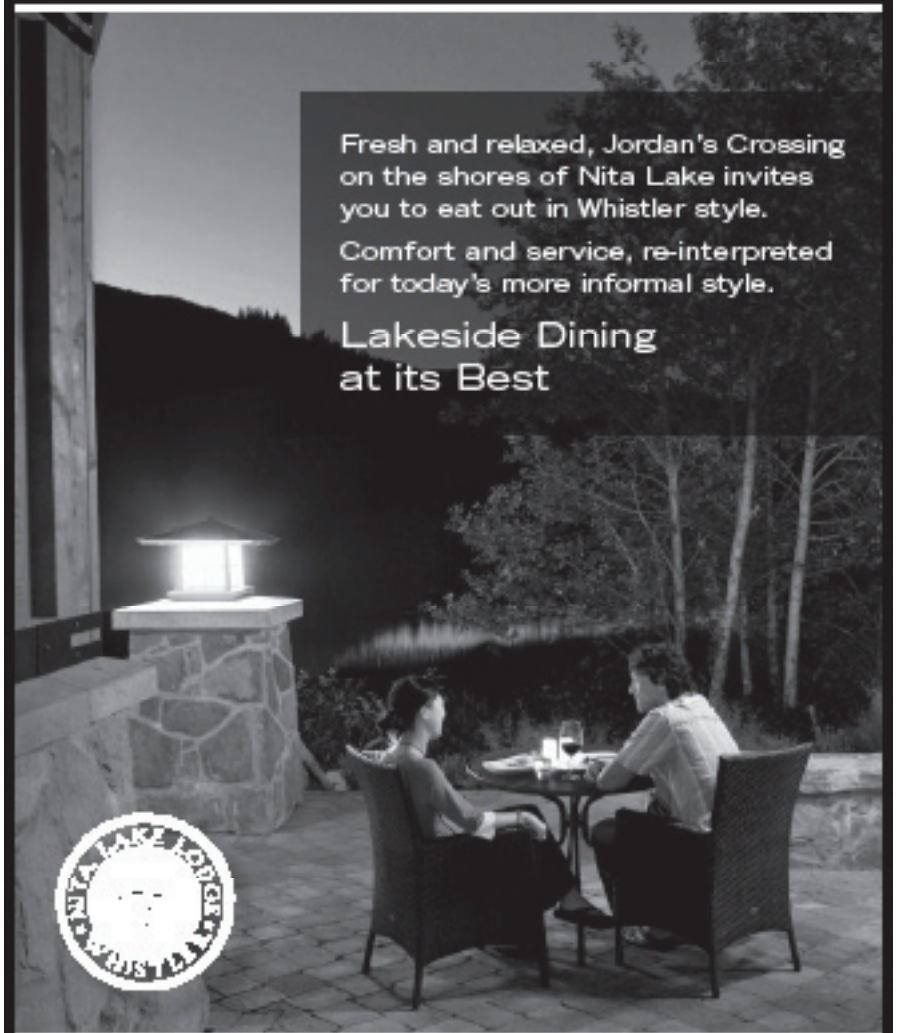
As the cost of energy rises, purchasers will become naturally savvier about their use of that energy and how to conserve it.

“We find that people are a lot more informed and a lot more interested (in green building),” he said.

To learn more about the project and to see its progress go to www.rdcfinehomes.com. ■

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