



Tim and Lucie Heins' home has a two-inch concrete floor in the dining room/living room area for additional mass heat gain in the front half of house.

ECO-SOLAR HOME TOUR 2016

The 17th edition of the annual Eco-Solar Home Tour takes place this weekend, June 4 and 5. Organized by volunteers who have a passion for the environment and sustainability, the tour allows them to share their passion, educate, and encourage others to consider sustainable choices in new technologies and building practices.

Details: There are 14 homes on this edition of the tour, located in Edmonton, Alberta Beach and St. Albert. Viewing hours are generally noon to 4 p.m. each day, though some sites may open early at 10 a.m. No tickets are required.

Not Just Homes: This year's tour also features Earth's General Store, which added 3.5 kilowatts of solar energy, and an example of the new community solar trend at the Evansdale Community League, where the league installed 14 kilowatts of solar. On June 4, the NAIT Alternative Energy Lab is the place to go to learn how energy efficient technologies work.

Saturday Sites: Alberta Beach (opens early at 10 a.m.), Chappelle, Kernohan, Laurel Green, St. Albert, Westmount (two different locations), NAIT's Alternative Energy Technology Lab, Earth's General Store.

Sunday Sites: Belgravia, Hazeldean, Holyrood, McKernan, Ottewell, Strathcona, Windsor Park, Evansdale Community League, Earth's General Store.

Bicycle Version: Held Sunday, June 5. Register online at www.eventbrite.ca/e/2015-egb-eco-solar-home-bike-tour-tickets-16319837072

For more information: Location, hours and details on each site at www.ecosolar.ca/open_houses or www.ecosolar.ca/mobile

Energy efficiency top goal

SOLAR FROM G1

Features that help get the 87 rating include basement slab insulation, a drainwater heat recovery system, a heat recovery ventilator, a tankless water heater, a 96-percent efficient furnace, and a two-kilowatt solar photovoltaic system with monitoring.

The two-kilowatt (eight panel) solar system is installed on each of the show homes and the system produces approximately 2,500 kilowatt-hours of electricity each year, said Rumak, which should offset almost 30 per cent of the electricity needs of an average family of four.

"We want to show people that the incremental cost of taking a single-family home to EnerGuide 87 isn't

as expensive as they may think," added Rumak.

ALBERTA BEACH

Six years of work and research on improving their home energy footprint has paid off for Tim and Lucie Heins.

Last year, the effort they put into their new Alberta Beach house paid unexpected dividends, being named as the 2015 Green Home award winner from the Canadian Home Builders' Association — Alberta.

The former Edmonton couple did their research before settling on an energy efficient home in a rural location.

The end result gives them an opportunity to develop a sustainable lifestyle while

minimizing their impact on the environment. "We chose an energy efficient home because we wanted to demonstrate that you could have a modern home with pretty much every convenience, and you could do it in a responsible manner," said Tim.

"We started thinking, 'what does energy efficiency mean and what would that look like for us?' We went from the unconventional to the conventional in homes. We looked at people talking about geothermal, trying to understand hay-built homes or mud and straw," added Tim.

"As we went through the process, when it comes to energy efficiency we found there are a lot of niche markets and not a lot of suppliers. We were not a couple that were go-

ing to build their own home."

Along the way they recognized two things. First, passive solar, an ancient technology that takes advantage of the sun to distribute heat in the winter and reject solar in the summer, would be one of the key elements of their home. Solar generation would also play an important role.

They also decided they would not rely on natural gas, propane, or any other additional power source except electric.

"An electric home would be passive," said Tim. "We would use the solar one day to ultimately achieve net zero."

The Heins teamed up with Effect Home Builders and haven't looked back.

SEE SOLAR ON G5

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- Ice cream treats at Stage 4 show homes,
- WIN one of six Dream sport bags,
- FREE Dream frisbees and footballs, and
- Adult & Kid's exercise circuits.

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