



HOMESOURCE

Your weekly guide
to land, commercial
and residential real estate
in Eastern Connecticut

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2006 • THE DAY • NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT

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East Lyme home built with
fuel-efficiency in mind

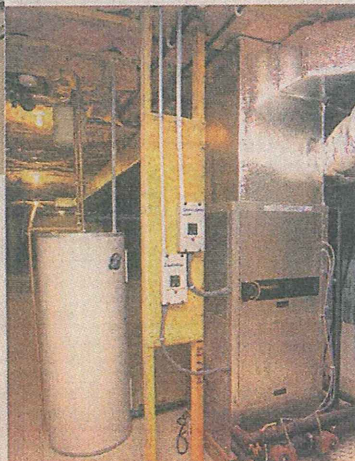


HYBRID HOUSE

STORY ON PAGE 15



■ This energy-efficient home in East Lyme features, at top, a spacious kitchen that's filled with Energy Star-rated appliances. Above, the LG dishwasher has an option that allows the owners to use only the top or bottom part of the appliance, saving on heating costs and water use. At right is one of two geothermal heaters located in the basement.

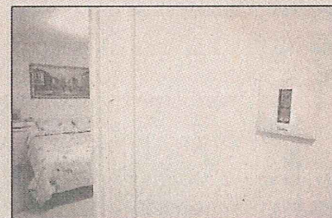
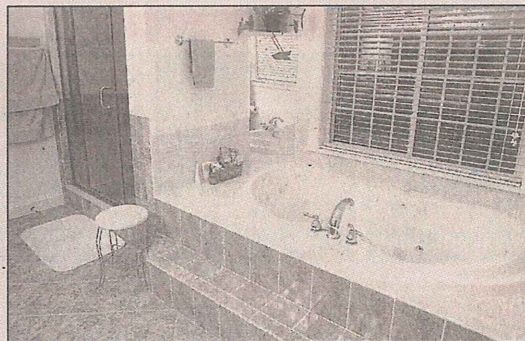
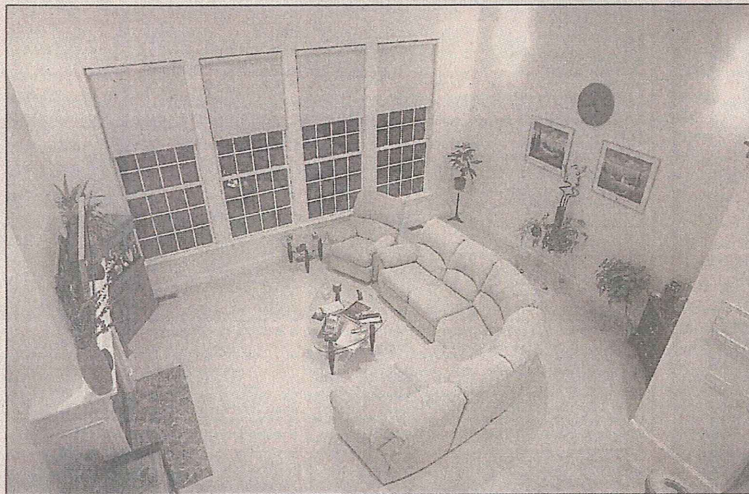


photos by KATE GARDINER / The Day

■ At right is the energy-saving thermometer for the refrigerator.

■ Below, low-energy lighting is used in the warm and inviting living room.

KATE GARDINER / The Day



■ Above is the master bath that features a heated floor.

■ At left is the digital thermometer in the second-floor hallway.

Home turns up the heat, not the heating bills

By **LEE HOWARD**
Day Staff Writer

When Deborah gets up to take a shower in the morning, the tiles below her feet automatically have been heated to a comfortable temperature. When her husband, Ken, takes his shower later that day after getting home from work, heating elements beneath the tile already have been turned on by the same timed thermostat.

Lights blaze away half the night from the hundreds of fixtures located throughout the new 3,500-square-foot home, which contains another 2,000 square feet in the unfinished basement.

"I'm big on lighting," says Deborah. "The builder (Erik Kudlis of Erik's Design-Build Associates in Lisbon) said this was the second most number of lights of any house they've built." (The most lights, they say, was in the home of Skip Hayward, former leader of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council.)

Despite all the lights, all the modern appliances, all the conveniences and the impressive size, the home on Joshua Valley Road in East Lyme is one of the most fuel-efficient houses built anywhere. The home doesn't cost more in energy bills than many ranches, averaging about \$239 a month since its completion in March. That's because when Deborah, Ken and Ken's mother, Geri, decided to build the home, they invested in the future (last names are being withheld at their request due to security concerns).

"We always wanted something energy-efficient," says Ken.

"We should try to conserve so we're not so dependent on other countries' oil," adds Geri.

The home includes low-energy light fixtures, water-conserving toilets, highly insulated win-

dows, Energy Star-rated appliance and even energy-efficient television sets. But the major investment, some \$40,000 to \$50,000 above the normal cost, involves the geothermal heating and cooling systems in the basement. In the winter, the two systems extract heat by pumping water into the warm ground; in summer, heat is extracted from the home and cooled by the ground.

"In the long run, it's cheaper than oil," says Deborah. "Of course, it takes seven to eight years to pay off."

"We use absolutely no oil," says Ken. "All we have to do is change the filter once every nine months."

The home is in a subdivision built by Erik's Design-Build on Joshua Valley Road, and all of the homes feature energy-saving appliance and smart-home technology. This was only the second home in the neighborhood, however, built using geothermal heating.

"It's just like a hybrid car," says Geri. "Years ago, automakers were not spending money to design hybrid cars — who would buy them? But when oil went to \$3 a gallon, they were willing to take the chance."

In addition to being efficient, Ken and Deborah say the geothermal system provides a steady heat without any hot or cool spots, and the home heats up fast. Geri adds that two people taking showers at the same time is never a problem as in her last house in Griswold, which also was built by Erik's Design-Build.

Other features of the home include a Dacor stove with a convection oven so efficient that Geri says she has to refigure recipe times and temperatures (reducing both). In addition, the energy-efficient LG dishwasher has an option that allows the owners to use only the top or bottom part of the appliance, saving on heating costs and water use.

Sharing a house between a couple and the man of the house's mom could be considered another efficiency, especially since Geri doesn't have her own separate apartment or even an extra kitchen to call her own. In fact, the home has two master bedrooms on the first floor, a bow to Geri's age and to Ken's health concerns, but they are far enough away to provide everyone plenty of privacy.

The four-bedroom home was revised from a basic plan provided by the builder; the couple adding a few square feet here and there and reconfiguring the roof line along the way. During construction, after the area had already been framed, Deborah decided to move a window in the bathroom down some, affording a clearer view from the bathtub of the manmade pond in their back yard.

Perhaps the only efficiency not employed in the house relates to the westward positioning of most of the glass in the house, to take in the water view, rather than the southerly exposure best suited to passive solar heating. Still, this time of year, the setting sun helps heat up the home quite nicely in the late afternoon.

And, as Deborah notes, "We get the most gorgeous sunsets this time of year."

THE DAY MAKES HOUSE CALLS

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If your home has features of architectural interest, if you have put on an addition or if you have done major remodeling work, please contact us.

We especially like homes on which the owners have done much of the work themselves. Homes currently for sale are not eligible. Telephone Ed Murphy at 701-4323 or e-mail homesource@theday.com