

House & Home

Green Home: Building an eco-friendly house in Parkville

Rick Robson is green at home, at work and everywhere in between.

He and his wife, Kelly Parker, spent three years building their passive solar home outside Parkville. The 2,500-square-foot, all-electric home has an average monthly energy bill of \$67. Their highest energy bill ever was \$94.

“Everybody thought we were nutty to take as long as we did to build a house, then we tell them what our utility bills are and their jaws drop,” Parker says. “We smile at each other every day and say, ‘Do we live here?’ We’re tickled every day that this is ours.”

It took three years to build the house because the couple had to research the correct windows, their ground source heat pump and the structural insulated panels. The energy-efficient panels are manufactured in a factory and custom designed for homes. Robson described them as fitting together like Legos.

Robson’s job is also “green.” An environmental scientist for Hallmark Cards Inc., Robson is in charge of sustainability and green issues. One big change is a food waste composting program. The company composts 150 tons of food waste each year, he says. He gives credit to the many volunteers at Hallmark who work on that and other green initiatives.

The environment has been a passion of his for many years. He was involved in environmental building during the housing slump of the 1980s, but interest in green subsided when oil prices dropped, he says.

This time he believes green is here to stay. “It’s coming back and it’s coming back a lot stronger,” he says.

Parker and Robson like to talk about their green home and their green lifestyle. Their home is an example to other people interested in energy-efficient building.

“It’s in our blood,” Parker says. “It isn’t something we have to think about.”

Jan Landon, Special to The Star Send ideas for Green Home to home@kcstar.com or House + Home, FYI, The Kansas City Star, 1729 Grand Blvd., Kansas City, Mo. 64108.

<http://www.kansascity.com/living/home/story/778459.html>



Rick Robson and Kelly Parker pay an average \$67 a month to heat and cool their passive solar home.