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Area home designer touts new efficient home

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For the Journal*

Bill Yudchitz, owner of the architecture firm Revelations Corp., likes to think of the homes he designs as "the Priuses of houses." A Revelations home may be compact --Yudchitz's most recent house is only 22 feet wide -- but it's energy efficient.

"The good of what's happening is how it's at least forcing people to think," he said. "It's forcing people to size down their lifestyle."

The house, which was a stop on the 2008 Parade of Homes tour, is part of Revelations' Schmeckle Trails development on the east side of Stevens Point. The house is outfitted with rainwater collection tank, double flush toilets and the latest energy efficient appliances.

Yudchitz says he aims to integrate green features into the building's design so that the energy-efficient technologies are invisible.

"A lot of times (the technology) shows so much, (the owners) don't feel comfortable in their home," he said.

Hidden in the most recent home's design, photovoltaic solar panels run across the south side of the house like an awning and geothermal heating coils are buried in the backyard to power the house's radiant-heating and air-conditioning systems.

Yudchitz admits that some of his designs may take some getting used to because his homes do not look like a typical colonial or ranch. For one, Yudchitz concentrated the Parade of Homes house's windows on the rear of the house facing south to catch sunlight, rather than on the front of the house looking out on the road.

"You need to have an alternative lifestyle to be green," he said. "You can't be green and have an eco-hummer."

Jackie Meyers and Steve Faber have lived in three Revelations homes including their current home in Schmeckle Trails, which has a geothermal heating and air-conditioning system and a passive solar design.

"The description and what Bill had in mind really captured our imagination," Meyers said. "We love everything about it."

In its 30 years in Stevens Point, Revelations also has designed many area churches and more conventional homes. More recently Yudchitz also has designed a pavilion for the Green Circle Trail and been active in the Downtown Mural Project.

Yudchitz said he hopes to continue to focus on building sustainable homes.

"If we don't step up to the plate and start being good stewards, there will be nothing left."