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## **High Performance Residential Challenge Helps Improve Energy Efficiency in Homes**

How much would it cost to build a green home? With numerous options available for green alternatives, where does a homeowner turn? Well, it should not cost much if the contractor knows what he or she is doing - and the homeowner should not be overwhelmed if the hired contracting firm is educated about green building.

This was the premise of a presentation given on Tuesday afternoon by Greg Pedrick, Project Manager, R&D Buildings Group, NYSERDA, of his experiment entitled, "Towards Net Zero Energy for Residential Buildings...Initial Efforts to Reduce Building Load and Raise Awareness."

At this workshop sponsored by Carrier and NYSERDA, the concept of energy efficient building envelopes was presented to an audience of international conference delegates and regional business leaders at the SyracuseCoE Opportunity Exchange at Healthy Buildings 2009. Pedrick expressed that the building envelope - an earth/home coupling connection that extends from the basement under slab to the roofs and attic - is always the first detail of green construction.

With eight houses completed and twelve houses under construction, the High Performance Residential Challenge was launched by Pedrick and NYSERDA for four building teams of experts throughout New York to build high performance, energy efficient residential homes with a Home Energy Rater Score (HER) of 93, while the Energy Star Standard HER score is 86. By simply eliminating the prevalent problems of 2x4 with R-11 wall cavity insulation and the use of fiberglass between joints, they were able to produce residential homes with the best possible energy savings.

Such problems need to be dealt with on the onset, Pedrick stated, rather than after. As a result, 2,500 square-foot homes were ready for consumer/home owner use, with three houses funded by Syracuse Center of Excellence.

The High Performance Residential Challenge built a slew of homes well above those standards set by the Energy Star Conservation Construction Code. Through attention to construction details, education in green constructions, and the much needed change in construction standards, the home building /retail industry is working to change so that a homeowner will not have to ask the indefinite question, 'How much would it cost to build a green home?'

As Pedrick stated, "this should not be a 'lost opportunity.'"

**-Darcy Balcarce, HB2009 Ground Reporter**

*Syracuse Center of Excellence ([syracusecoe.org](http://syracusecoe.org)) is a collaborative organization of more than 200 businesses and institutions that creates innovations for sustainable built and urban environments. SyracuseCoE members work on research, development, and educational projects relating to clean and renewable energy, indoor environmental quality, and water resources.*

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