



ALICE BARRABO/SAN MEDIA

People exit an energy-free home at 9805 84 Ave. yesterday. The house has solar-heated floors and a movable solar PV wiring concept. The home's build, design and materials reduce heating by 65%, but actually

Family to free itself of electricity, gas bills

RICHARD LEBRECHT
San Media

An Edmonton family hungering for freedom from energy prices is set to move into an energy-free home.

"It's going to be pretty fun to have no electricity or gas bills," said Conrad Robert, 35.

He and his 38-year-old wife and their five-year-old and three-year-old sons will soon be living at the home at 9805 84 Ave.

The couple own a 50-year-old home two doors down. But after renovations, they felt they were still using too much energy.

"(North America) is running out of natural gas," Robert said. "At some point, there won't be any coming through the pipe."

He expects the home to be comfortable, and likes being an older homeowner.

The house still uses energy. But it is supposed to produce more electricity than it uses, said its builder.

The three-storey home was



"We can't pull resources out of the ground forever, but there's got to be a heck of a lot more changes" before green homes can take hold.

Ken Yeoman,
Story Plain home builder

opened for public viewing yesterday.

Built by Habitat Studio and Workshop, it features few high-tech gizmos aside from movable solar panels.

Instead, the three-storey home's 40-cm-thick walls, concrete floors and airtight

sealing make it easy and cheap to heat.

"The technology is dead-simple and reliable," said designer Peter Amerongen.

He said the home uses one quarter of the energy of a conventional home, including for heating, lighting, appliances and hot water.

It has no furnace — only electric floorboard heaters for occasional use. A wood stove is used most of the time.

The home is worth about \$550,000, including about \$60,000 worth of "green" modifications, said Amerongen.

Ken Yeoman, a home builder in Story Plain, toured the home and said he likes the direction, but is still skeptical.

"We can't pull resources out of the ground forever, but there's got to be a heck of a lot more changes" before green homes take hold, he said.

Yeoman said he expects masses of high-efficiency homes won't be built for at least another 10 years.

Richard Lebrecht/San Media Inc.