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Healthy house, healthy planet

An arts-and-crafts bungalow in Black Mountain is the first house to be certified under the North Carolina HealthyBuilt Homes Program. Launched in 2003 by the North Carolina Solar Center (located on N.C. State University's campus) in collaboration with the State Energy Office and the N.C. Department of Administration, the program's purpose is to provide visibility and certification for residential builders who use sustainable "green" building practices.

The Black Mountain project was built by local builder **Rob Moody** and his company, The EcoBuilders, both as a home for himself and his wife, **Lindsay**, and as a model that showcases lots of environmentally friendly practices.

"We were in the right place at the right time to be the first [certified] house," says Moody, noting that there will be many others to follow.

To qualify as a certified N.C. HealthyBuilt home, Moody's house had to score at least 150 points (it scored more than 200) from a checklist covering nine different categories called "opportunities."

For example, under "site opportunities" Moody scored points for preserving as many trees as he could on the lot (and utilizing the trees he did fell), protecting the topsoil, using drought-resistant native plants in the landscaping and even locating the house near a bus stop.

He received more points under "water opportunities" for low-flow faucets and a rainwater catchment system; and points under "energy opportunities" for Energy Star-rated appliances (which use less energy than standard models), a natural gas furnace and water heater, control of air infiltration through "tight" construction, and framing the house in such a way that "you get the most insulation over the most area," explains Moody.

Some of the other environmentally friendly features the house incorporates include recycled building materials, nontoxic paint, timber not treated with arsenic, an efficient formaldehyde-free insulation, and a highly reflective roof to keep cooling bills down in the summer.

But Moody's house is not only Earth-friendly; it's well-crafted too, grabbing both a 2004 Parade of Homes Gold Award in the Affordability Price Range category and a Special Features Award for its concrete floors and salvaged stained-glass windows.

To learn more about the North Carolina HealthyBuilt Homes program, visit www.ncsc.ncsu.edu. For more information about The EcoBuilders, call 337-0623 or visit www.theecobuilders.com (where you can also see photos of Moody's house during different phases of construction).

– Lisa Watters

What should the next UNCA chancellor be like?

A series of public meetings on Wednesday, Jan. 26, marks one of the first steps in choosing a new UNCA chancellor.

A 15-member chancellor search committee was established earlier this month to seek a successor to Chancellor **Jim**