



Media Contact:

Bethany Meccariello
Mason, Inc.
(203) 393-1101 x 166
bmeccariello@mason23.com

Top Participants from the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund's 2009-2010 Zero Energy Challenge Set the Bar for this Year's Challenge

NEW BRITAIN, CONN. (August 18, 2010) – Reducing environmental impact and saving on the rising cost of energy are two key factors that have become increasingly important for today's homebuilders. In pursuit of these goals, the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund is sponsoring the 2010-2011 Connecticut [Zero Energy Challenge](#) (ZEC) to demonstrate that building a high-efficiency home is achievable today. This year's participants can take several cues on how to achieve the lowest possible energy use throughout the construction of their new homes by learning from three currently top-ranking participants from the 2009-2010 Challenge.

[Jeremy and Karann Schaller](#), New Hartford homeowners and ZEC participants, had three goals for their eco-home: to lower their monthly maintenance costs, to become more self-sufficient and to demonstrate that it is possible to live in a more sustainable manner, using less energy and greener materials. With the help of the Connecticut Solar Leasing Program, the Schallers were able to keep the cost of building their house to \$125 per square foot, which enabled them to install a photovoltaic system without having to set aside a large amount of money.

"People who are looking to build an energy-efficient home need to embrace a solar lifestyle to take full advantage of the savings," said Karann Schaller. "It's not just about putting solar panels on your house; you have to be more conscious of not only when, but how you're using energy."



Above photo: **Jeremy & Karann Schaller**

[BPC Green Builders](#), ZEC participants in charge of constructing a new home in New Canaan, installed cutting-edge building features such as a super-insulated envelope, triple-glazed windows and advanced framing techniques that permitted the builders to insulate corners to a greater degree than usual. The home is powered by a 450 square-foot, 10.8 kW photovoltaic solar thermal system that enabled the residents to get through this past winter without a utility bill by sending excess power into the grid for which they received credits.

“This home demonstrates that energy efficiency isn’t limited to a particular style, shape or look in a home,” said Chris Trolle, Partner, BPC Green Builders. “Building a green house can provide high comfort levels and increased durability as well as lower operating costs.”



Above photo: **Chris Trolle, BPC Green Builders**

The final current top-ranking ZEC participants, [Consulting Engineering Services](#), set a goal of building a very attractive, traditional New England home that uses zero energy. The key to this project was achieving the lowest Home Energy Rating System (HERS) possible *prior* to adding any energy renewables, such as solar paneling. The company focused on ways to achieve passive solar heating gains along with superior environmental wall thickness and insulation.

“In addition to focusing on insulation, only the most energy-efficient appliances and lighting fixtures on the ENERGY STAR® scale were installed, and compact fluorescent lamps or LEDs were the sole types of lighting used throughout the house,” said George Keithan, President, Consulting Engineering Services. “All of these measures contributed to an HERS rating of 32 percent, which is less than a third of what the same home built in a conventional manner would consume.”



Above photo: **George Keithan, Consulting Engineering Services**

Competition winners of the 2009-2010 ZEC will be announced on December 8, 2010, and the winners will receive prizes as well as their well-earned recognition.

For more information on the Connecticut Zero Energy Challenge, please visit www.CTZeroEnergyChallenge.com.

About the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund

The Energy Efficiency Fund promotes efficient energy use, helps residents and businesses save on their electric and natural gas bills, advances economic development, reduces electric demand and helps to improve the environment. Energy Efficiency Fund programs serve residential customers, including limited- and fixed-income customers, as well as business and municipal customers. Connecticut's energy efficiency programs are funded by a charge on customers' utility bills and administered by the state's electric and gas utilities including: Connecticut Light and Power, The United Illuminating Company, Yankee Gas, Connecticut Natural Gas and Southern Connecticut Gas. Additional information on Connecticut's energy efficiency programs can be found at www.ctenergyinfo.com.

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