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Business

Rockville Bank opens first 'green' branch

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ROCKVILLE — For one Connecticut community bank, “green” means much more than money. Rockville Bank – whose environmental conscience includes the construction of the state’s first “all-green” bank branch — is partnering with a local builder on a model of cutting-edge, low-energy technology in residential home construction.

Projected for completion this summer, the 4,950-square-foot single-family house at 35 West Hills Drive in Avon, is designed and being built by Bill Ferrigno and Sunlight Construction, Inc. of Avon, his custom home company. The five-bedroom, three-story, high-end traditional home incorporates a wide variety of sophisticated, new cost-effective technology and techniques that conserve energy or utilize alternate energy strategies. The result will be dramatically less energy consumption than the average American home.

“Rockville Bank has a strong track record of supporting ‘green’ products and initiatives,” explained Mark Kucia, Senior Vice President and Commercial Banking Officer for Rockville Bank. “And Sunlight Construction has been a solid customer of ours for years. So when they offered us the chance to become involved with a residential prototype that is good for the environment and very appealing to the eye, we jumped at the opportunity to provide financing for the project.”

“The science behind our energy-efficient prototype is as much common sense as it is sophisticated technology,” said Bill Ferrigno, President of Sunlight Construction and a builder for 30 years. “It proves that a complex energy-efficient house can also be architecturally attractive.” Ferrigno added that this home will be virtually indistinguishable from the 13 other conventionally constructed residences he is building in the West Hills of Avon luxury subdivision off West Avon Road (Route 167).

With advanced framing techniques and state-of-the-art insulation and sealing, the entire house is being “enveloped” to prevent air leakage to prevent warm air from escaping and keep cold air from seeping inside.

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"This construction ensures that less energy for heating/cooling is needed to begin with, and will be climate-controlled with a sophisticated new geothermal underground heating and cooling horizontal loop system to maximize energy efficiency," said Ferrigno, the Immediate Past President of the Home Builders Association of Connecticut.

Located on a lot selected for its southern exposure, the house's solar photovoltaic energy-producing cells will help to run the electrical infrastructure and the majority of the lighting will be energy-efficient LED fixtures. Domestic hot water will be provided by a 95 percent efficient tankless hot water heater and all appliances will be Energy Star rated. The subdivision is served by natural gas.

In fact, Sunlight Construction's gray clapboard house is part of the current CT Zero Energy Challenge, a statewide design and build competition. The program is designed to educate and demonstrate that constructing a super high efficiency (near zero energy) home is achievable today, while informing on the technology and techniques it takes to get there. Sunlight Construction was one of only 18 participants chosen to build a home in Connecticut between May 2009 and Dec. 1, 2010. Participants compete for cash prizes, while gaining various forms of technical assistance provided by the Challenge sponsors.

"Designing this house actually changed my thinking about how to plan and market the rest of the subdivision," adds Ferrigno. While constructing the new house, Sunlight Construction became a certified geothermal and photovoltaic installer. "We now know how to integrate this technology into future construction, and customers who are aware that we are doing this are already asking about it as they work with us to design their homes."

For years, Sunlight Construction has worked with Rockville Bank for the financing of construction and development that includes Phillips Farm, a 66-home active adult residential development in East Hartford, Conn., as well as Cambridge Crossing and Devonshire Lane in Avon, and the current West Hills of Avon project.

"It has been exciting for Rockville Bank be part of this particular project as it has developed from the ground up," adds Kucia. "Hopefully, the energy-technologies and techniques employed on this prototype will be integrated into more new homes, as our society becomes even more eco-friendly. This kind of residential construction is good for the environment, good for business, and good for our communities."

Rockville Bank made history in 2009 when its newest Manchester branch became Connecticut's first bank to be built with the entire property utilizing "green" technology and engineering. It was constructed with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles, incorporating the latest techniques of energy efficient design.

Rockville Bank is a 21½ -branch community bank serving Tolland, Hartford and New London counties in Connecticut. It provides a convenient banking lifestyle for Colchester, Coventry, East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Glastonbury, Manchester, Rockville, Somers, South Glastonbury, South Windsor, Suffield, Vernon, seven days a week in Tolland, and three Big Y supermarket locations. For more information about Rockville Bank's services and products, call (860) 291-3600 or visit www.rockvillebank.com.

Sunlight Construction, Inc. was founded in 1977 by builder Bill Ferrigno and specializes in single-family homes in Connecticut's Farmington Valley and Greater Hartford. The Avon resident grew up in West Hartford, Conn. and is a third generation builder. His grandfather, Joseph Ferrigno, emigrated from Sicily in the early part of the 20th century and

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worked as a builder in the Hartford area; his father, Joseph Ferrigno, Jr., continued the tradition as a Hartford County home builder for many years. The company has been recognized with many awards for development and construction and is involved in local Habitat for Humanity projects. For more information about Sunlight Construction, call (860) 677-7040 or visit www.sunlightconstruction.com.

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