

Upstate Forever Builds Green

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Upstate Forever opened its latest project, promoting green renovation among small businesses and professionals, for public view.

About 30 people showed up for the tour of the new Upstate Forever office location – 507 Pettigru St. in the Pettigru Historic District – a gutted shell of a building under renovation. Later, they got a tour of a completed project at the “Upstate House,” 620 Pettigru St.

Just what will go into that bare-bones shell at 507 Pettigru will make all the difference since green renovation means more than the usual bells and whistles people expect such as solar and energy efficiency, said Scott Johnston, architect for the project.

There is also a focus on the health and well-being of the building’s occupants by using building materials that cut down on chemical exposure and the amount of mold in the cooling and heating systems. Heating and cooling systems will also send lot recirculating the old air.



NEW HEADQUARTERS: “Green” renovation work continues at the new Upstate Forever headquarters on Pettigru Street.

Aesthetics play a dual role in green renovation. The new Upstate Forever office will make great use of natural light, which is aesthetically pleasing, and an automatic lighting system that turns off electric lights as natural illumination becomes available through the day.

There will be active and passive solar power techniques incorporated into the renovated structure, too. Things that will help the building’s owner recoup the cost of incorporating green technology over time through reduced energy costs.

Johnston said there was a long design phase leading up to the start of work.

Brad Wyche, executive director of Upstate Forever, said the genesis of the new headquarters started with the 2005 launch of the Upstate House project. Upstate Forever’s former board chairman, Carlton Owen, had the idea of joining forces with the Home Builders Association (HBA) of Greenville to build the house seeking donated and discounted materials and services.

When the building was completed in 2006, Owen paid full fair market value and became its owner and full-time occupant.

Upstate House uses principles developed by Southface Energy Institute and EarthCraft. EarthCraft is a program developed by Southface Energy and the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association that provides specific and measurable standards for environmentally friendly and energy-efficient single-family residences.

Wyche said since its completion in spring 2006, Upstate House has inspired the construction of many EarthCraft homes in the Upstate. In fact, two local companies are now building EarthCraft homes exclusively.

Upstate House is available for scheduled tours by builders, developers, architects, contractors and interested citizens. Hundreds of people in the Upstate have seen it.

The builders and designers of the new Upstate Forever headquarters are: Johnston Design Group, architect; Southerland Construction Inc., builder; Simms Group, mechanical, electrical, plumbing; Fuller Engineering, structural; Earth Design, Inc., landscaping; Earth Artist Studios; Glenco Insulation, insulation provider and installer; Sunstore Solar, solar panel provider and installer; Sterling Video, video and documentation; and KLG Jones, LLC, building commissioning.

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