

Setting a green example

Southern Living home at Furman will show consumers how to blend eco-friendly elements, stylish design

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The welcome mat is coming out at the Cliffs Cottage at Furman University.

And more than likely, that mat will be made of sustainable bamboo fibers, or recycled products of some sort. That's because the 3,400-square-foot Cliffs Cottage at Furman was built to be a model of environmentally responsible design, sustainable building techniques and materials, and energy-saving systems.

The Southern Living Showcase Home, with 110 manufacturer and supplier partners, opens to visitors June 14 with daily tours Tuesdays through Sundays. Tours will give visitors a view of the future — and the present.

"We want them to come here and learn," said Edward Marshall, Furman's director of special projects. "This is the wildest home they'll ever be in."

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On the outside, the home resembles a mountain chalet. But it's one with solar panels sprinkled throughout the property and built with exclusively renewable materials.

On the inside is where visitors can really be wowed.

There's a heating and cooling system that is "one of the most efficient in the state of South Carolina"; bamboo flooring; cabinets made of fast-growing lyptus; recycled walnut wall panels; energy-efficient appliances; concrete countertops; and much, much more to get visitors thinking.

"We have 'green' options in every price point," Marshall said. "This project explores all of the

many opportunities you can easily do in a new, or pre-existing home."

Not only that, it's stylish, too.

"It's all sustainable, but it's livable at the same time," said Greg Carroll, Furman's vice president for marketing and public relations. "With the way energy is, the house and its features are so important. But your lifestyle doesn't have to change dramatically."

A stroll through the home proves the point. Stylishly decorated by Greenville's Postcards from Paris, the

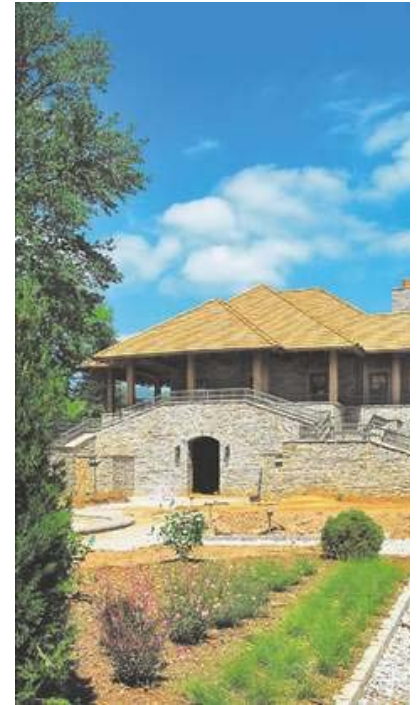
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Cliffs Cottage, above, utilizes sustainable features. The living room, below, features reclaimed wood bookshelves and walls.

ALAN DEVORSEY / STAFF

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home is comfortable and casual. A lounge chair covered with bamboo fabric looks chic, and Milliken's recycled content wallpaper blends seamlessly with the rest of the home's Japanese-inspired accents.

The house will be open for one year and then be retrofitted as the university's Center for Sustainability, which will provide office and meeting space for a growing array of campus sustainability initiatives.

Key features of Cliffs Cottage

Here are some of the innovative features in the Cliffs Cottage at Furman University:

Design: The home features a passive solar design, which integrates an assortment of building features to reduce the need for cooling and heating and daytime artificial lighting. The home is situated along an east/west axis to maximize solar heat gain in the winter and minimize it in the summer. On the south side of the cottage, a long roof overhang shades the house in summer and allows the sun to heat it in winter.

Exterior: The home uses an energy-efficient, pre-cast foundation, natural stone and two types of insulation to seal the home and preserve its thermal mass. The exterior stone absorbs heat that is released slowly after the sun goes down. The spray-foam insulation, free of toxic formaldehyde, seals air leakage, moisture, airborne allergens and noise. Fiberglass insulation is environmentally sound, with a minimum certified recycled glass content of 25 percent. Clay-paved parking areas and the main walkways allow storm water to filter back into the soil instead of draining into streams and rivers.

Geothermal: The Cliffs Cottage has a geothermal heating and cooling system, which is the most environmentally responsible and energy-efficient system available. The ground source heat pump uses the Earth's constant underground temperatures to heat the home in the winter and cool it in the summer. Ground source heat pumps can reduce heating and cooling costs by as much as 50 percent, and usually last three times longer than air-source systems.

Solar: The Cliffs Cottage has two solar technologies. The solar thermal system heats water and the solar electric (photovoltaic) technology generates electrical power.

Heat from the sun is captured through two roof-mounted collectors, and is transferred to an 80-gallon water storage tank. The solar thermal technology can provide up to 80 percent of domestic hot water needs.

Photovoltaic technology is when sunlight is converted to electricity. Two modules on the garage roof can power the entire house. Another pole-mounted PV tracks the sun as it moves east to west on one axis and north and south on another. The solar features in the house are tied together by GridPoint, a computer-operated battery system that stores additional power and maximizes energy usage throughout the house. The solar technology actually produces more power than the house needs. Excess electricity is funneled to Furman's utility grid.

Design: The house is furnished with environmentally sustainable and locally sourced products including bamboo floors, kitchen cabinets and tile made from recycled glass. The furniture is constructed from reclaimed wood or trees removed for real-estate development, and fabrics are made without toxic dyes. The bathrooms contain low flow showerheads and faucets.

Landscape: The formal and organic gardens surrounding the Cliffs Cottage are an important part of the project. The gardens feature native plants that tolerate the region's climate and soil conditions, as well as typical ornamental plantings that are drought-tolerant and easy to maintain. Most water needs for the gardens are supplied by six, 2,000-gallon cisterns that collected rainwater from the roof.

YOU CAN GO?

What: The grand opening of Cliffs Cottage, a Southern Living showcase home at Furman University.

When: June 14. The cottage will remain open through June 14, 2009.

Tour hours are: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Thursdays from 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturdays from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; and Sundays from 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. The home is closed on Mondays.

How much: Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for senior citizens (62 and older), and \$5 for children (ages 6-11). Children 5 and under get free admittance. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

More: To schedule a visit, register and pay online at: www.furmancliffscottage.com/register