

## Energy Efficiency and Life Style

Our aim was a retirement home that could be termed 'age in place'. A novel idea for some but after helping our parents through the last stages of life, an important aspect for us. Our home is designed to have a minimal amount of yearly maintenance, the least amount of daily physical requirements and space that is open, cheerful and comfortable while being cozy and secure. We expect to spend our last years enjoying the comfort and view.

The foundation is a slab, no steps on the main floor. The front door is double for ease of moving an ambulance gurney in or a wheelchair out. There are levered door handles and plumbing fixtures. All of the main living activity is on the bottom floor and ADA accessible: kitchen, dining, master bedroom and bath, hot tub room, laundry room and attached garage. Natural lighting is generous with views of the exterior doors from inside. The shower in the master bath is walk in with appropriate safety railing.

There is a landing on the wide staircase to the upstairs with both lighting and natural light provided by a solar tube and a window. Upstairs there are two smaller bedrooms and a full bath for guests or a live in caretaker in years to come. Storage areas are in the eaves and fully insulated. No lifting is required to stash away the Christmas ornaments. A view porch is open on the upper level and four solar tubes keep the great room, bathroom and stairwell cheerful.

All lighting is LED. If the bulbs last as long as their guarantee, they won't need to be replaced in our lifetime.

Heat and cooling are provided by two ductless heat units, one upstairs and one down. The quiet, comfortable heat without dust blowing around is perfect for us. The Heat Recovery System operates noiselessly and we never have a stuffy feeling. The fact that we don't have to check propane tank levels or have oil or wood delivered in the fall is very relaxing. The units don't add to the dirt level as the old-fashioned wood burning stove did.

Our exception to energy efficient conveniences would be our hot tub and the insta hot dispenser in the kitchen. After having experienced burnt kettles and pots (left on the stove unattended) the insta hot is my favorite appliance! Tea whenever I want it! All other appliances in the home are Energy Star top rated. The hot tub is in an enclosed room with operable windows, outside of the SIP wall but with SIP roof so that we can be 'outside' without the annoyance of wind or mosquitoes.

Our choices of flooring were all in line with sustainable materials. The Trex decking was used on the upper porch and in the hot tub room. We chose cork for easy maintenance and comfort in the kitchen, even though I hate to stand around and cook. The rest of the house is in Timberlake laminate flooring with attached pad, guaranteed for 30 years. It has anilin locking system with no glue needed. The bathrooms and utility room have marmolean over Suntouch heat cable. The countertops are Wilsonart laminate with the exception of the farmer's sink in the utility room that had to be set in marble.

The insulation level of a SIP home is wonderful!! The ten inch walls and 12 inch ceiling makes the home quiet and comfortable. The winds blew in the winter storms and we didn't hear them. We did hear the Great Horned Owl one night when he was perched right outside our window. Otherwise, we have to go outside to hear the coyotes howl or owls calling. The sun took the