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THINK FUTURE THE GREEN ISSUE

SRQ: SARASOTA'S PREMIER MAGAZINE

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JULY, 2007

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GREEN ROUNDTABLE

Consumers are hearing a lot about green practices, carbon credits and global warming. But what's on everyone's mind is how to cut through the chatter and start getting involved. This month *SRQ* talked with local businesses who are embracing green in creative and practical ways. Find out how you can contribute—whether it's buying in bulk, building a home, changing a light bulb or cleaning the bathroom. **BY HEATHER FIELD** PHOTOGRAPHY BY SALVATORE BRANCIFORT

A SPECIAL PROMOTIONAL SECTION / JULY 2007

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SARASOTA'S
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MYGREENBUILDINGS



STEVE ELLIS AND GRANT CASTILOW, CO-FOUNDERS

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Building sustainable homes for
 Sarasota's future

WHAT TYPES OF OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE FOR GREEN PRODUCTS OR SERVICES?

We see Sarasota as a fabulous place to reuse 1940s, '50s and '60s homes. There are whole neighborhoods full of homes that have been previously looked at as "scrapers." We're using the best available technologies and choosing safe, durable, healthy and resource-efficient products to build homes. In our Goldenrod project, we deconstructed the home in a way that allowed us to reuse and recycle materials—or donate to organizations like Habitat for Humanity. We get subcontractors to understand that it's a change in par-

adigm: its "deconstruction" not demolition; "retrofitting" not remodeling. We're all in debt to the environment and this is a way to pay off that debt.

Consumers are hearing a lot about green initiatives, but when it comes down to it, many don't understand how they can play a role. Steve Ellis and Grant Castilow, co-founders of MyGreenBuildings, say educating the public and potential clients on "green" is a core focus. "We want to do something for the environment and make the right choices, and building green is a part of that," says Ellis. "People want to know, other than buying light bulbs, what they can do to be green." Last fall, the company partnered with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens to offer green building seminars to homeowners and continues to educate through lectures, marketing and other initiatives.

Founded in 2006, MyGreenBuildings completed its first project, a "refitting" of a 1946 home, in just three months. The project doubled the size of the original structure from 1,000 to 2,100-square feet. Ellis and Castilow note that the nominal extra cost of building green will give the homeowner a 20% return on investment in energy and water savings, and say they wanted to prove with their prototype that it was possible to retrofit an old house and make it healthy, durable and energy efficient. They proved more than that—the Goldenrod Project received a Florida Green Building Coalition rating of 303, making it the second highest FGBC-rated green home in Florida (and the first re-built FGBC green-certified home in the state).

One of the company's latest projects is in the final stages of design and will include gutting, refitting and adding on to a home that was originally slated for demolition. Because of mold, they'll have to gut it to its original frame. While keeping the original frame may not seem an important detail, Ellis and Grant have another way of looking at it: "You have to think about how much embedded energy is in that frame," they explain. "The lumber, transportation and energy it took to build it. There's a lot of value in it." The alternative: tear it down and send it to a landfill—an all too familiar ending.

"We want people to know that you can build the coolest house on the block and still have it be green."

In our prototype, we looked to reduce, reuse and recycle. Some of the green practices included using reclaimed pavers, which were leftovers from other jobs and would have likely ended up in a landfill. We recycled all of our old concrete tiles; (we did not use steel framing) bought manufactured wall systems and engineered trusses; incorporated salvaged antique doors and hardware. In addition, we made cabinets from old pallets—our cabinet maker

literally went to the back of industrial buildings to collect his raw material. Other green features include engineered wall systems, Eco-flush toilets, Energy Star appliances, zero and low VOC paints, soy-based sprayed-in insulation, efficient windows, sustainable materials, Forest Stewardship Council certified doors, paperless drywall.

We're using and suggesting a lot of green products for the structure as well as the interior of a home - but most importantly, we want people to know that you can build the coolest house on the block and still have it be green.