

## Housing Bulletin: A Double Dose of Green Building in Elmhurst

BY DENNIS RODKIN



Today's video features 2 Elmhurst green homes, this is the first with Linda Marick



This is the second home featuring Bill Styczynski

The builders of two new houses nearing completion about three blocks from each other in Elmhurst have the same goal—to build a more environmentally friendly house—but they took very different routes. "I'm glad there's so much flexibility [in green building]," says Bill Styczynski, the [architect and builder](#) behind a new house at 135 Oak Street, which was built for the family who lived in the former house on the lot. "It's not one cookie-cutter approach."

As you will see in the video, Styczynski's green features include an [open-loop geothermal system](#), which uses the temperature of belowground water to help heat or cool the house. He also installed motion detectors in the bathrooms that bring heated water to the faucets only when someone is in the room; that eliminates the waste of heating water that then recools while it waits in the pipes to be needed. (Styczynski rejected heat-saving tankless water heaters because they didn't interface well with the geothermal system.)

Over at 250 Myrtle Avenue, a house built for sale and priced at \$829,900, Linda Marick of Lindam Builders reused some wood flooring from the old house on the site and put reflective shingles on the roof to fend off the sun's summer heat. She also covered much of the house's exterior with an engineered wood siding called [LP](#), which reduces wood waste and can be installed in extended lengths. That minimizes the number of gaps through which heat and cold can move.

Both builders found innovative ways to maximize daylight in the interior spaces, and both did a good

*Deal Estate: The Blog* is the online extension of *Chicago* magazine's monthly "Deal Estate" column, which is written by Dennis Rodkin. On the blog, Rodkin—who has been covering the local housing scene for *Chicago* since 1991—provides timely updates on new homes to hit the market, recent high-end sales, and other residential real-estate news from the city and suburbs.

Got a hot housing tip? Contact Rodkin at [dennis@rodkin.com](mailto:dennis@rodkin.com).

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deal of research and strategizing to make the houses as green as was reasonable. Marick positioned the bathrooms, which have heated floors and few windows, on the house's north side, where they make a sort of buffer against cold north winds for the rest of the house. (Radiant subfloor heat stays at a more stable temperature than furnace heat.) Styczynski and his clients sought renewable materials for every use, but wound up with granite countertops in the kitchen when those made of recycled materials turned out to cost three times as much.

The Marick house is registered with the [U.S. Green Building Council's](#) LEED rating system, but doesn't yet have its full designation. The Styczynski house received the [National Association of Home Builders](#) gold certification for green building. Both builders have been using the homes for public demonstrations of the benefits of building green. The owners of the Styczynski house are moving in soon, so events will stop there, but the [Marick house is open](#) May 3rd and June 7th.

Marick—who had built about 20 conventional homes in Elmhurst, Naperville, St. Charles, and Lake Geneva before launching the green project on Myrtle Avenue—says that the move to green building has been rewarding for her, but that it came with a steep learning curve. "Finding the data and [doing] the homework on these [methods and materials] is the hardest part, the part that increases your construction time by 35 to 40 percent," she says. Some of that time was spent finding subcontractors who understood and could handle the new methods or materials.

Having learned what she has, Marick says, she will be able to complete future projects more quickly. But her hope is that more resources will become available in the future to help builders make the right green choices. "When I hear Washington talking about the [pending] boom in green-collar jobs," she says, "I think a lot of them are going to be in doing the analysis on these things, deciding which ones make sense on which projects." Until then, there are people like Marick and Styczynski willing to study it for themselves.

Posted at 10:54 AM in [Housing Bulletin](#) | [Permalink](#)

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**POSTED BY LESLIEJO**

APR 17, 2009 08:38 PM

Dennis,  
Very interesting! I found these videos of the homes in Elmhurst(plus one from 2008 about the house in Highland Park that the homeowner "greened") incredibly educational.  
Great job!  
Leslie

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