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Local Home Builder offers Renewable Energy Technologies

Waukesha, WI – Rising energy costs and concern for the environment are driving forces for Waukesha-based home builder, Tim O'Brien Homes to use technology that turns energy produced by the sun and earth into low-cost sources of heat and electricity for new home buyers.

"Since we already include certified and tested Energy Star® and Green Built™ standard features in every one of our homes, this was the next step to enhance our product for those home buyers that would like to invest in additional energy-saving amenities," said Tim O'Brien, President of Tim O'Brien Homes. "We are now offering Renewable Energy features - Geothermal and Solar Electric Power - to help conserve and generate energy, save homebuyers money, and preserve the environment."

The goal with these technologies is for homeowners to live comfortably in a modern home powered mostly by renewable energy and have it easily integrated into any lifestyle and budget, added O'Brien

Renewable energy technologies utilize the natural resources of the environment, such as solar energy provided by the sun and geothermal heating and cooling supplied by the earth. These clean, sources of energy do not need to be replenished again and again; produce no by-products harmful to the environment, and are not dependent on limited resources like coal or oil.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a geothermal system is the most energy-efficient, environmentally clean, and cost-effective space conditioning system available today. Geothermal systems transfer heat from a home to the earth in the cooling mode, or from the earth to a home in the heating mode tapping into the constant, moderate temperatures found seven-to-eight-feet below the earth's surface. In fact, a geothermal heat pump only uses electricity to move heat, not produce it.

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"The idea is that everyone's backyard contains a vast reservoir of thermal energy that is typically ten times the amount of energy required over an entire heating season," said O'Brien.

A geothermal system operates more efficiently than ordinary heating and air conditioning systems because it delivers four units of energy for every one unit of electrical energy used. This is an efficiency rating of 400 percent compared to the most efficient gas furnace which rates only 96 percent.

"The low operating costs — a savings up to 70% on monthly utility bills — is the main reason homeowners install a geothermal heating and cooling system," said O'Brien. "The system doesn't burn natural gas, propane or fuel oil, so they avoid the skyrocketing costs of fossil fuels.

The other renewable energy feature now offered by Tim O'Brien Homes is Solar Electric Power. This process uses the sun's solar energy and directly converts it to electricity with photovoltaic (PV) cells. Solar energy systems create an electrical potential when light strikes the PV cells then generates a current of electricity. There are several distinct benefits of solar energy systems over utility power. First, solar is a fixed cost and hedged against rising energy costs. They are highly reliable and have low maintenance costs. Plus, solar is the only 100% clean, completely silent energy generation technology.

Other benefits of Renewable Energy include tax incentives by the United States government and State Solar Buy-Back programs. There is a Five-Year Accelerated Depreciation incentive allowing the owner to write off the installed cost of the system over five years. Homeowners seeking energy incentives are advised to consult with a tax professional to determine their eligibility. In addition, WE Energies® offers a Buy-Back rate where homeowners can sell back excess power that is produced by their solar powered system. Rates and terms are established by each energy company.

For a traditional 2,200 square foot two-story Tim O'Brien built home, the investment range for an average geothermal system can cost around $26,000 to $28,000 and an average Solar Electric Power System may cost around $28,000. A certified expert will determine the investment and best system for each particular home.

"Most buyers want to know the pay back on investing in these renewable energy features," said O'Brien. "The geothermal pay back is three to eight years as a fuel source and can be an immediate pay back when the system is financed with the home's mortgage."

Tim O'Brien Homes is offering educational workshops to help homebuyers learn more about renewable energy systems and the savings advantages when installed in the home they build.

Tim O'Brien Homes is a semi-custom, single-family home builder focusing on energy-efficiency, innovative designs, and environmentally conscience building practices. With over 13 years of homebuilding experience in Southeastern Wisconsin, their team of industry professionals have provided over 800 new homes to satisfied customers. A Tim O'Brien high-performance home can be built on a homebuyer's pre-owned lot or in one of Tim O'Brien Homes' neighborhoods with home and lot packages available in Waukesha, Mukwonago, Milwaukee, Brown Deer, and Milwaukee.

Tim O'Brien, President of Tim O'Brien Homes, is an active member of the Metropolitan Builders Association, the National Association of Home Builders, and is the volunteer general contractor for the Wisconsin Trend Home, a joint project with the Wisconsin Builders Association Foundation to build an environmentally friendly home with the technologies and features that will be prevalent in homes in the year 2020. Proceeds from the sale of the home will benefit La Casa De Esperanza in Waukesha and provide scholarships for students seeking construction trades. www.WITrendHome.com for more information.

For more information on Tim O'Brien Homes, please contact Tim O'Brien at (262) 542-5750 or visit our website at www.TimOBrienHomes.com.

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