

Modular home goes solar for power savings

BY ROGER BUTTON
BUSINESS COLUMNIST

Venice resident Philip Myers and local businessman Tom Harriman are creating Florida's first solar energy-efficient modular home in the Harbor Lights community.

A retired Dayton, Ohio, custom builder, Myers has for many years been interested in all forms of energy conservation.

Harriman, owner of a local solar installation company and past president of Florida's Solar Energy Industries Association, is enthusiastic to encourage the use of energy-saving equipment.

This week a new photovoltaic solar electricity system was installed at Myer's Harbor Lights home, a modular home specially manufactured to high energy-saving standards by Palm Harbor Construction.

Built to his specifications, it has very high-density insulation in the roof and maximum insulation under the floor. Specially insulated windows are covered in a film that reduces 95 percent of UV light entering the

building, reducing the cooling load and not allowing radiant heat inside. All appliances are high efficiency.

Harriman is installing 15 200-watt solar modular panels with a 20-year warranty to generate the electricity. A 40-gallon solar water heating collector on the roof will be the primary source of hot water with a little input from an existing standard water heater.

"We believe this is unique," said Harriman. "It's the first modular constructed home in Florida to be fitted out with this type of application."

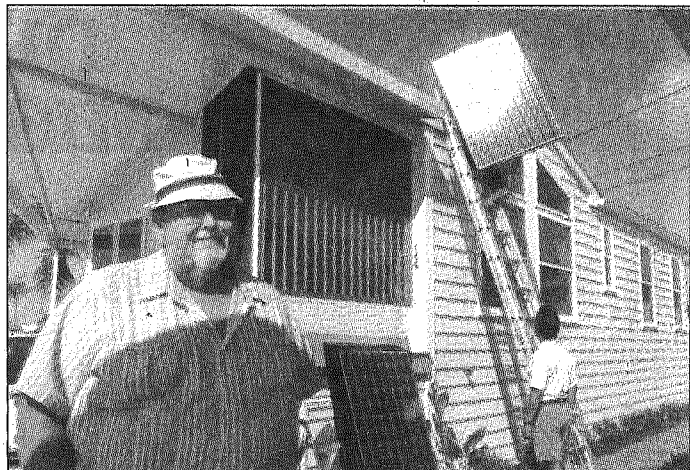
Common sense

Myers anticipates that his \$30,000 investment will reduce his electricity costs by 50-75 percent.

"I will be generating almost all my home electricity usage by utilizing the power of the sun, and selling the excess to Florida Power & Light, for which I get credit," said Myers.

Myers will have two meters fitted to measure consumption and credit.

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SUN PHOTO BY JEFF TAVARES, jtavares@venicegondolier.com

Philip Myers stands in front of his modular home in the Harbor Lights community in Venice as Tom Harriman watches Kevin Bennett carry a solar panel onto the roof. Harriman's company is installing a \$30,000 photovoltaic solar electricity system on Myers' home.

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The initial cost may appear high, but Myers receives a state rebate of 40 percent — around \$12,000 cash — plus a federal tax credit anticipated at a further 10 percent.

The payback, according to Myers, is a little elusive because it has to be assumed FPL and other sup-

pliers' charges will inevitably increase.

"It appears at today's rate structure it will take 12-14 years," he said. "If the rules change to Net Metering payback, it will be earlier."

To achieve maximum savings, Myers believes a change of lifestyle is necessary.

"I invite people to investigate electricity-saving measures, as there is so much which can be done inexpensively to reduce consumption," he said. "It's common sense for the common man."

business@comcast.net