Atlanta Green Home Lights the Way

Energy efficient homes that go easy on the environment are turning heads in Georgia with their low-maintenance appeal, cost efficiency and natural good looks. With Georgia Tech's recent success in the 2007 Solar Decathlon and world-class community projects like Atlantic Station, Metro Atlanta is well on its way to being a model of eco-building in the Southeast. Georgia's green power was most recently demonstrated by Georgia Tech at the 2007 Solar Decathlon. The innovative contest, sponsored by the US department of energy, is a green building competition with an emphasis on solar energy. Twenty teams from universities all over the world were handed the task of building the most attractive and energy-efficient solar-powered home they could imagine. Over the five day judging period, the Decathlon Homes had to demonstrate the ability to use nothing but solar energy to power a washer dryer, oven, TV, computer and generate hot water. The homes also had to be architecturally sound, marketable and they had to look good. Though it was their first year to participate in the contest, the Georgia Tech team won 6th place for their innovative light-house, a completely off-the-grid solar powered home. First place went to a team from Darmstadt Tech in Germany. Though the Georgia Tech team didn't take home first place this year, the house is part of the significant contribution that that Atlanta's architects and engineers are making to what we know about building smart. "Many of the advances that are demonstrated in this house will come to the mainstream," said associate professor Russell Gentry of the Georgia Tech house, "they will have to come to the mainstream if we're going to save the energy that we promised to." The innovations in the Georgia Tech house set a new standard for energy efficiency and eco- friendliness for Atlanta homes. Atlanta already has a number of model solar projects like the EcoManor, the Southern Living Idea House, and the Brookhaven Zero Energy Home. "35% of the energy consumed in the US is consumed in buildings. It's important for us to develop technologies that save that energy," Hose Bros Inc says *Hose Bros hose assemblies* Gentry. "Everything we do here is about making buildings more energy efficient and smarter."The Georgia Tech Light House is steel and wood construction with a modern open floor plan, hardwood flooring, and a semi-transparent solar roof that subtly lets lights into every room in the house while it insulates and generates power. Designed to be easy to build, expandable and accessible, the plans accommodate from one to three bedrooms and up to two baths. The cost of the prototype is $280K.

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