



Zero Energy America News

Fall 2010



Since our exciting groundbreaking event in June, the first Zero Energy America house - built by [Marc Rutenberg Homes](#) in the Palm Harbor's Hawk's Landing neighbor - is building its way up! Check out our progress with quarterly emails, or visit the job site at [2712 Deer Track Way, Palm Harbor](#) and see it for yourself. Just up the street, follow the signs to the award-winning Marc Rutenberg [Castaway Grand Model](#), where [Sally Niggli](#) can answer your questions about Zero Energy America and Marc Rutenberg Homes.



News

The Zero Energy America Project
Building the First Zero Energy America Home

The Zero Energy America Project

What's it all about?

Zero Energy America (ZEA) is a project of Marc Rutenberg Homes to build 4 Zero Energy homes - homes that will have no electric bill and provide the best examples of environmental stewardship available in the industry today. The ZEA project is the subject of the planned PBS documentary [Zero Energy America](#). This project marks an important step in creating today's generation of Marc Rutenberg homes - homes that demonstrate a commitment to sustainability and safe and healthy lifestyles, alongside the [Rutenberg Family's](#) 50-year commitment to quality and durability. The ZEA project is about examining our past choices and actions and making the changes that will lead to a better tomorrow. For us at Marc

Rutenberg Homes, this better tomorrow starts today with the way we build our homes.

To learn more about the Zero Energy America project, contact [Marc Rutenberg](#) or read on at www.zeroenergyamerica.com, our project website that is currently being redesigned.

To learn more about your builder's past and current houses, visit us at www.marcrutenberghomes.com.

Building the First Zero Energy America Home



What's that orange pipe sticking up?

Marc Rutenberg's first Zero Energy home is on its way up. Check out what's been going on!

The first ZEA home is designed to receive not only [Energy Star](#) rating as a zero energy home, but also three green building ratings at the highest levels of certification: [United States Green Building Council's LEED](#) Platinum, [National Green Building Standard](#) Emerald, and [Florida Green Building Coalition](#) Platinum.

It's amazing how much has gone into this house. Every material and every method is first questioned and analyzed for its performance and content before it is used. This means that new and better materials and methods are being implemented in almost every aspect of design and construction!

The first commercial application of [Blue World Crete](#) concrete - a concrete with NO [Portland cement](#) - has proved a success in our slab. Our masons from [Gallo](#) have learned how to use [Xella/Hebel Autoclaved Aerated Concrete](#) (AAC) to create a wall system that seems so similar to conventional concrete blocks, but has thermal, fire-resistance, and strength advantages that make a world of difference.

Why have we worked so hard to change these materials? The production of Portland cement alone is estimated to make up [5-8%](#) of the worldwide carbon footprint. Conventional concrete blocks ([CMU](#)), the principle building materials for houses in Florida, is an inefficient insulator for both air conditioning and heating. This is because CMU can result in a negative r-value, meaning that the temperature of the block is higher in summer and lower in winter than the outside air. This means that during the 5-7 month long sweltering summers we have in Florida, our walls are even hotter than the outside air, causing our AC units to work harder and harder; the inverse is true in winter, taxing HVAC equipment - and in turn, our wallets and our atmosphere - far more than necessary.

Not only is there extremely advanced technology going into the home but sometimes it's the obvious and the simple that we're doing better. For example, in the picture to the left, there's a bright orange pipe sticking out of the ground. This pipe will protect the home and its occupants from [radon buildup](#). While the home is already sited in a [low-risk area](#) for radon seepage, this pipe allows possible accumulation under the house to vent out the roof. During construction, the pipe is capped off to prevent clogging, but as soon as the roof goes on, it will extend all the way up and out.

All these firsts make for some very interesting learning curves, but we're proud to master each challenge and learn to build in a new and better way! Plus, you'll be able to watch and learn from our stumbles - and maybe get in a laugh - when the PBS documentary [Zero Energy America](#) is released at the completion of Marc Rutenberg's 4 Zero Energy homes.

By the way, did you know that Marc Rutenberg Homes is going green?

New Marc Rutenberg Homes will be built to green building standards for certification under the Florida Green Building Coalition! The [Florida Green Building Coalition](#) (FGBC) is one of three green building rating systems that will judge our "extreme green" Zero Energy America homes. The knowledge and experience that we gain from building our Zero Energy America homes will carry on and continue to be implemented in all our building practices.

There's no better time than now to learn about building green and Marc Rutenberg Homes. Keep track of our Zero Energy and green building adventures as we continue to build the Zero Energy America project and launch Marc Rutenberg Green.

Keeping it green