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# LifeStyle offers 'smart' living

New package features solar panels to save energy

BY ANNE STRAUB  
FOR FLORIDA TODAY

Henry and Constance Jackson didn't set out looking for a particularly energy efficient home. They knew they liked the Whispering Winds neighborhood in West Melbourne, and wanted a deal.

They made several offers on foreclosures and short sales — listings on which the seller owes more on the home than the asking price — but with no luck. They had trouble getting responses on their bids.

So when they visited LifeStyle Homes in the community and found a home that already had been started, they were interested. And when they learned that the home would include the builder's SunSmart package, that sealed the deal.

The Jacksons moved into the home in May, increasing their square footage by 150 square feet. At the same time, they slashed their power bill by 40 percent.

LifeStyle has sold 10 homes with the package, which the builder developed in conjunction with the Florida Solar Energy Center.

The company is the first builder in Brevard County, and the 41st in the country, to qualify for the U.S. Department of Energy's Builders Challenge program. The program focuses on energy efficiency, construction quality and indoor air quality.

The SunSmart package offers energy efficiency that's 60 percent better than the typical existing home and 40 percent better than



Christina Stuart, FLORIDA TODAY

**Solar energy.** Carl Gould, left, Jake Luhn and Paul Stradtner with LifeStyle Homes show the Capri model's energy efficient solar panel de-

signed to save on electricity bills. The home is about 2,000 square feet and will have four bedrooms, three bathrooms and a two-car garage.

the typical new home, the company says. They point to the state-chartered group that's backing them up for verification.

"This isn't LifeStyle telling people our homes are energy efficient," said Jake Luhn, LifeStyle sales and marketing manager. "We're letting the scientists break down our practices and tell us the maximum efficiency we can achieve with reasonable cost."

Results are verified by an independent, certified tester.

Solar features of the package include a solar-powered water heater and solar-powered attic ventilation fans.

The features come with financial incentives: Homeowners can receive \$2,000 in federal tax credits for using solar technology and

## We want your input

Developers, builders or real estate agents with information on new communities to feature or update can make suggestions to News Editor Eric Garwood via e-mail at [egarwood@floridatoday.com](mailto:egarwood@floridatoday.com) or 242-3759.

\$500 from the state for investing in a solar water heater.

Part of the builder's goal is to create a home that can be updated as additional energy-saving technology becomes more affordable.

"It's important to build a home where the shell is energy efficient and adaptable to those technolo-

gies," Luhn said.

LifeStyle is including the package as standard in homes it builds at two communities:

■ **Whispering Winds**, West Melbourne. LifeStyle has 20 home sites, measuring 75 by 120 feet, at the community. It's building homes ranging from 1,700 to 2,500 square feet under air conditioning at a price range from the low \$200,000s to the mid \$300,000s.

■ **Veranda Place**, Melbourne. LifeStyle is one of several builders able to build on the 113 remaining home sites. Sites measure one-third an acre, or more. LifeStyle models at the community vary from 1,800 to 3,200 square feet at a price range of the low \$300,000s to the mid \$400,000s. ■

## Need to know

■ **Builder:** LifeStyle Homes

■ **Featured package:** SunSmart energy efficiency

■ **Components:** Solar-powered water heater, solar-powered attic ventilation fans, pressure-tested air ducts, air handler mounted in conditioned space, double-paneled low e PGT windows, radiant barrier, R-38 ceiling insulation, compact fluorescent lighting, Energy Star appliances, computerized energy-use monitor

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