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Color-coated For Health, Durability

Bluwood Treatment Protects Wood From Moisture And Destructive Insects And Fungus.

Wisconsin State Journal :: HOMES :: J1

Sunday, February 4, 2007

PAMELA COTANT For the State Journal

Something else blue has popped up under the distinctive blue town of Windsor water tower off Highway 51 near DeForest.

A home framed with blue-colored wood is going up in the Wolf Hollow subdivision, nestled under the water tower off Windsor Road.

While the home at 4312 Grosbeak Glen is not in a well-traveled spot, it's still getting plenty of attention from builders and other subcontractors working on homes nearby.

"It's surprising how many people say, Hey, what's up with that blue house?" said Mike Vilstrup, who is building the home.

Vilstrup, president of TimberLane Builders, Cross Plains, is the second builder in Wisconsin to construct a home using BluWood -- a factory-applied coating developed by WoodSmart Solutions based in Boca Raton, Fla. A dye gives the wood a teal color.

Vilstrup's home will be on display in the Madison Area Builders Association Parade of Homes from June 9 through 24.

"One of the goals of the association is to offer new and unique products," Vilstrup said.

He plans to leave a portion of the garage wall and part of a ceiling open during the parade so the BluWood will be visible.

It is only the second house in Wisconsin to use the product, which was featured on a fall episode of ABC's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" in a Michigan home .

\ Carries lifetime warranty

BluWood is a two-part treatment called the Perfect Barrier System, which is applied to all sides of framing lumber, trusses and sheathing. One part is the infusion film -- a water-repellent, vapor permeable film that resists moisture from seeping into the wood while allowing water vapor to escape.

The second part is the wood preservative -- a fungicide and insecticide that resists decay, destruction by and infestation of fungus and wood-destroying insects such as termites and carpenter ants.

"This protects everything that you can't see in the house that you don't know about," Vilstrup said. "It should offer a little extra security and peace of mind for the homeowner."

The product's effectiveness also comes from its ability to protect the wood during shipment and while the home is being erected. BluWood carries a lifetime warranty.

BluWood usually does not require priming before applying paints, stains or sealers.

Lumber for Vilstrup's home was shipped to Chippewa Falls where it was treated at the Northern Crossarm Co. plant and shipped back.

\ Building a healthy home

Before Vilstrup decided to use BluWood, he did a fair amount of research.

"It offers the builder a chance to protect his house in a different way," said Vilstrup, who worked for 21 years as the general manager for a building supply store. "I've had lots of opportunities over the years to see the new products as they came out."

Robin Pharo of Healthy Home Reports of Mount Horeb has been hired by Vilstrup to advise him when choosing particular products for the panelized home from Windsor Building Systems of Madison.

Pharo spoke to a company representative and to BluWood's inventor to find out what chemicals are in the product. She discovered it uses no heavy metals and no carcinogens, which include those regulated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and those that are not.

"We are very careful about the products that are put on the houses we work on," said Pharo, whose company analyzes product safety.

Pharo said she works with a builder to reduce chemicals, to control moisture and microbial growth and to ensure that the house is durable. The goal is to end up with a home that is more comfortable and has better air quality, she said.

To maximize a home's health, it should be designed for the particular occupants, she said.

In addition to trying to build a healthy home, Vilstrup also is building one that will be certified by Green Built Home, a program of the Wisconsin Environmental Initiative and implemented in partnership with the Madison Area Builders Association. Vilstrup has been involved in creating the checklist for Green Built Home certification and is a builder member in the program.

The BluWood treatment adds about \$1.50 to \$2.50 for each square foot of the house, Vilstrup said. The cost within that range depends on factors such as how much basement is exposed, the pitch of the roof and the size of the garage because of the amount of wood used.

Vilstrup estimates his parade home will cost about \$475,000 for 4,002 finished square feet.

He has been convinced of the value of BluWood since his last three clients have expressed health concerns. Two had children with respiratory problems and the other had general concerns about air quality.

"I'm going to offer it as an option to all my customers," Vilstrup said. "I think we will find this whole healthy home concept will be the next wave in the building industry."

[Return to story](#)

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