



IN THE PRESS



Cape expo spotlights 'green building'

On a typical day in Woods Hole one can find visitors shopping, waiting for a ferry to Martha's Vineyard or exploring the harbor.

But those walking along Water Street did more than just enjoy the outdoors Tuesday, they learned how changes to their homes can help save it.

As part of the Green Building Expo, a special program of the 16th Woods Hole Film Festival, attendees saw displays on everything from solar energy systems to recycled countertops.

"I think everybody in the country is sort of getting together and realizing that we need to be waking up to this," Nicole Goldman, producer of the expo, said of the world's environmental problems.

Green building, or designing structures to be more environmentally friendly and energy efficient, has been on the rise across the nation.

Organizers estimated 200 to 300 people attended the one-day expo, which featured 24 companies and nonprofit organizations.

Goldman, an interior designer from Woods Hole, said she created the event to inform the public of the possibilities created by environmentally friendly homes.

"People are so anxious to get information about green building and they don't know where to start," she said.

When building her own green home last year, Goldman said she discovered a number of resources that she wanted to share with the public.

"I am an interior designer, I knew where the resources were," she said. "I wanted to make it easier for anybody to take advantage of these great products."

Her desire to increase awareness of green building resources has led her to open a store selling such products, many from vendors featured at the expo.

The store, 'g' Green Design Center, is set to open in Mashpee Commons in early October.

Vendors said events similar to the Green Building Expo are increasing in popularity.

"We're seeing events like this very well attended and seeing the idea of energy conservation really take off," said Liz Argo, regional sales manager for Solar Wrights, which installs solar and wind energy systems.

"People are asking questions and want to know what to do," she added.

Bart Bettencourt, president of Bettencourt Green Building Supplies of Brooklyn, N.Y., said the environment is becoming a key consideration in new building projects.

"We're starting to see interest from individual homeowners who want their new building projects to be addressed in an environmentally conscious way," Bettencourt said.

Argo said there is no better example of this than on Cape Cod.

"People on Cape Cod are extremely interested in making their homes an example of how motivated they are environmentally," she said.

Kim Robinson, project coordinator for John Todd Ecological Planning of Woods Hole, said the population on the Cape is in a special situation to be aware of environmental issues.

"Given the key estuary systems and the importance of the environment to life on the Cape, people here have almost had to become more environmentally aware," Robinson said.

Vendors said many people who attended the event asked how to improve their homes.

Karen Acton, a real estate agent with North Falmouth Real Estate, said the knowledge she gained at the expo will allow her to better serve customers.

"We're seeing such a evolution of people who are more environmentally aware," she said. "I am seeing a big change in what buyers are looking for."

Organizers said they were pleased with the variety of groups represented at the expo and the number of people in attendance.

"Everybody here is investing in this idea and we're all being part of the change," Goldman said. "And that's what it's really about."

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