

Editorial: By 'building green,' everybody can win

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Building green is becoming easier in San Antonio — and it's worth the effort.

Building green means using the most environmentally sound techniques and materials in siting and constructing a home. That makes its maintenance and operation more cost-effective.

Build San Antonio Green, a venture between the Metropolitan Partnership for Energy and Greater San Antonio Builders Association, began less than a year ago.

Under the program, builders, architects and suppliers can be certified after training in green building techniques. By hiring them, people can make sure their homes are designed and built with these techniques. The Building San Antonio Green Web site at www.buildsagreen.org has a list of those certified for such work.

According to information from Build San Antonio Green, here are the factors involved:

Developing sites near public transportation and necessary amenities, with maximum solar and shade benefits and minimal land disturbance and erosion.

Using durable and reusable local materials that cause the least environmental impact.

Conserving water through low-flow shower heads, water-saving washers, xeriscaping and catching rainwater.

Using energy-efficiency design by employing solar, insulation and renewable energy, as well as efficient appliances, lighting, heating and cooling.

Preserving health by avoiding toxic compounds in all materials and ensuring proper ventilation to minimize molds.

San Antonio's first certified green home was a nearly 4,000-square-foot home costing \$574,000 in an upscale subdivision.

The current Parade of Affordable Homes at Arroyo Vista in the West Side has certified green homes in the \$89,000 price range.

Utility bills are lower with such homes, which last longer and have lower maintenance costs.

With no toxic ingredients, they also are healthier to live in.

Who can make this project work? The people of San Antonio who are building or buying new homes can seek out green builders. Even people who are remodeling their homes can apply green techniques.

With this focus, everyone wins.

