

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Whirlpool and Kohler Commit to Net-Zero Research Project

Whirlpool Corp. and Kohler Co. have announced that they will join together on a project known as the ReNEWW House, a retrofitted, net-zero energy, water, and waste research home located near the Purdue University campus in West Lafayette, Ind.

Whirlpool's global sustainability director, Ron Voglewede, says that the goal of the ReNEWW House is to drive collaboration between industries, academia, and the public. "We did this by creating

a unique environment via a live-in research lab that allows each company to research and develop system approaches to solving and making the home more sustainable, healthy, and efficient," Voglewede says.

"Our goal at the ReNEWW House is to measure water use at every application point—fixtures, faucets, appliances, and landscape—to gain insights into consumption, available supply for reuse, and usage patterns throughout the day and over the course of the year," Kohler's sustainability senior channel manager, Rob Zimmerman, adds when discussing the goals of the ReNEWW House.



Improvements in the water efficiency of plumbing fixtures and appliances in the last 20 years have led to a decrease in water use by Americans. "Both Kohler and Whirlpool believe that getting to the next tier of water efficiency

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will only happen through systemic water use solutions,” Zimmerman says.

Research for the ReNEWW House started with baseline data and research modeling in 2013 before the completion

of the home’s deep energy retrofit in 2014. The retrofit achieved a Home Energy Rating Score (HERS) reduction from 177 to 1, and the home now generates more energy than it uses.

To further increase the home’s efficiency, another retrofit began in June with completion expected in September. “[This part of the project includes] adding rainwater collection and purification for potable use and graywater systems for water recapture and use, driving to net zero water,” Voglewede says. “We will have UV and ozone purification systems along with water sharing and thermal storage and reuse in the home.”

Additional technologies that the two companies plan to use at Purdue University’s ReNEWW House include on-site water treatment, rainwater storage, WaterSense-labeled plumbing fixtures, Energy Star appliances, automated metering, and heat recovery. Zimmerman adds that newer technologies “with the potential to reduce water and energy use even further may be included as they are developed.”

The project and associated research are slated to last through 2018. **PB**

SUSTAINABILITY

GBCI Launches Rating System for Sustainable Landscapes

A rating system that grades the sustainability of landscapes, including those of single-family homes and commercial properties as well as streetscapes and national parks, was recently launched by Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI).

Through sustainable landscape design and management, the system, called Sites, works to address global concerns including climate change, loss of biodiversity, and resource depletion. Builders can apply the rating system to homes for enhancing built landscapes.

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The rating system was originally modeled after LEED and includes best practices in landscape architecture, ecological restoration and related fields, and knowledge gained through peer-reviewed literature, case-study precedents, and projects registered in the Sites pilot program.

“Sustainable landscapes are critical in their ability to reduce water demand, filter and reduce storm water runoff, provide wildlife habitat, reduce energy consumption, improve air quality, improve human health, and increase outdoor recreation opportunities,” GBCI CEO Rick Fedrizzi said in a press release. “Sites is an important addition to our tool kit, and GBCI appreciates this opportunity to support this additional contribution to healthy,

thriving communities and neighborhoods.”

Sites was developed through a collaborative effort by the American Society of Landscape Architects, The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center of the University of Texas at Austin, and the U.S. Botanic Garden. Years of development and field-testing created the grading system, which uses progressive industry standards for landscape design and includes other recommendations from technical experts in the fields of soil science, botany, horticulture, hydrology, materials, and human health and well-being.

More than 100 projects were part of a two-year pilot program that tested the



viability of the Sites system. Of those projects, 46 achieved certification, some of which were landscape projects for private homes. The rating system includes 18 prerequisites and 48 credits that total 200 points to reach four certification levels. In addition to the prerequisites and credits, projects that use innovative strategies and show exemplary performance

can receive bonus points in Sites ranking. The American Society of Landscape Architects and the Wildflower Center will help GBCI create and implement Sites credentialing and certification offerings, including training project reviewers as well as educational opportunities for pursuing Sites certification. **PB**

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