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## Hamptons Green Alliance attempts to achieve highest LEED certification

By Dawn Watson



As one of the more successful luxury home builders in the Hamptons, Roy Dalene wears a lot of hats: He's the senior vice president, chief operating officer and co-founder of Bridgehampton-based Telemark Inc. and its affiliated companies; he's the president and chief executive officer of Hamptons Luxury Home, Inc., the parent company of Telemark; and he is also a founding member of the Hamptons Green Alliance (HGA), a non-profit association of local building and related-service professionals organized to promote

green building and maintenance practices.

Over lobster and shrimp salads, Mr. Dalene discussed HGA and the group's big new project—rebuilding a Southampton home that had been destroyed by a fire into a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum-certified structure—over lunch at Pierre's in Bridgehampton last week.

Q: How did the Hamptons Green Alliance come about?

A: About two years ago, my brother Frank and I were very involved with working with the towns in creating their energy saving programs legislation. We were part of the Town of East Hampton's advisory board on Energy Star. Frank and I always had these conversations on "What is green? Is Energy Star truly green?" We were questioning how this legislation would impact our industry, not only in the short term but in the long term. If you legislate it, what about five or 10 years down the road, will the clients be maintaining it or will there be an indoor air quality issue down the line?

And we wanted to slow down the process and get these municipalities to really think out what green really meant. At that time we said, "Why don't we get a bunch of trades together that are leading this industry and form an alliance and discuss what green is. And that's what we did when we started the Hamptons Green Alliance. We started talking and we decided at that point what our main interest was, to educate the public about what green really is. We started a website specifically to educate about green products as they pertain to building.

Q: How many members does the Alliance have right now?

A: I think there's eight or nine.

Q: And this is a non-profit organization?

A: Yes, it is not-for-profit.

Q: What kinds of events have you participated in?

A: We did the Hamptons Home and Garden Show. We had a booth there and we had a good following from that show.

Q: Are you accepting other members?

A: We are, but they must be approved by the Alliance.

Q: The big thing on the horizon now is the Alliance's connection to the Dubins, whose house burned down right before Christmas last year. What's the story there?

A: Early last fall the Hamptons Green Alliance decided that we should put our knowledge to the test and that we would go out and look for an architect who had a project and a client interested in doing a green home with new technologies. We knew it would be cutting-edge and we were willing to do it on a cost basis and put in our resources, sort of like a research and development program. At the same time the Dubins' house caught fire and they had a huge tragedy. After the fire, they have two friends who are local architects here, Rick Stott and Craig Lee, so he [David Dubin] brought the two of them together to collaborate on the rebuilding of this project, so it just turned out that Rick received our inquiry about this project and it all came together.

Q: Were the Dubins interested in doing a Platinum LEED-certified home?

A: He was on board from day one, and they wanted to do this as green as possible. We brought in the LEED Platinum qualifications. We selected LEED because it is the leading qualification in the country when it comes to building green. We've never done a LEED home before...

Q: You set the bar very high for your first time out: Platinum is the highest level of LEED certification there is.

A: Yes we did, the whole Green Alliance set the bar very high. At the same time, our goal was to do zero net energy, which means that the energy you use from the grid balances out with what you're producing, it nets out at zero. The other criteria for us was the carbon neutral, which is a new avenue that really hasn't been done before. So as far as we know, it's one of a kind. In the entire country it hasn't been achieved.

Q: Is this going to be the first Platinum LEED-certified house out here?

A: I think there's only one other one on Long Island. I don't think there's another one out here yet.

Q: When is the house scheduled to be completed?

A: April.

Q: Ground was broken at what point?

A: Ground was broken, I think, the beginning of August.

Q: Are you dealing with any part of the original structure or are you starting from zero?

A: The interesting part of this is, the project is not just a restoration of the existing home; the architects proposed additions to the home. At the same time, they're dealing with the insurance companies on the remediation from the fire. The insurance companies did not total the whole house so we were faced with a decision of whether to tear it down or not, but the insurance company kind of made that decision since they didn't total the whole house. We had to look at the fire damage and what areas were affected by fire and smoke damage.

Q: What's the footprint of the house originally?

A: About 2,500 square feet.

Q: Do you know what the projected square footage will be when all is said and done?

A: I think about 3,600 square feet.

Q: This is the first time you've kind of jumped in with this process. What kind of learning curve have you experienced to get up to speed and what's the hardest part of getting the job done? Was it the permits and bureaucracy?

A: The permits were relatively easy since the Town of Southampton is very proactive in their goals for energy-saving criteria. The difficult part was developing the systems that are going to reach our goals. We not only had the Hamptons Green Alliance goals but also to make green beautiful. It's an interesting dynamic on how to make green fit into the architects' aesthetic.

Q: Can you give me an example?

A: Rather than use photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roof to harness solar energy, the architects are looking to use thin film, which is more aesthetically pleasing. The issue with thin film is it changed our whole outlook on the project, because we thought we were going to use PV panels and we were going to combine that with hot water solar and most likely be able to zero out. The issue with thin film is you only get a percentage of the output you get from the panels, so it's maybe 40 percent. So the output is a bit reduced from the PV panels. We had to rethink how to get to net zero, because net zero was our goal. So now we're introducing two vertical access wind generators. Which are quite beautiful by the way. And they're going to sit on the roof of the house. Those technologies are very new. Now we have issues of a wind generator on a house, you have to deal with vibration and stuff like that. It's a unique challenge and we are solving them as we go along.

Q: Is there a backup plan if you don't make platinum?

A: There's no question we'll make platinum. We exceeded our point requirements. For platinum it's 100 points and at our preliminary meeting we had 108. If we reach 108 points it will be the highest LEED points ever awarded in the country.

Q: How many people from the Hamptons Green Alliance are working on the house?

A: All of them. We are all contributing to the technology of the house. We're putting all these systems together and also connecting all the systems and technologies to talk to each other to get even greater efficiency throughout the house. For instance, an alarm can be turned on when the owner leaves which can turn off the things that aren't needed when nobody's home. The house can go on a real sleep mode.

Q: So it's a real Smart house?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you see this becoming more and more of a traditional way to build and reduce fossil fuel dependence?

A: It is going to change the world and how we build. It's going to change the world of architecture and design. And we are going to be looking to reduce our fossil fuel usage as time goes by. Europe is way ahead of us when it comes to that. It's environmentally responsible to do so.

Q: Southampton Village is trying to pass a bill that all houses over 6,500 square feet need to achieve a 95 on the HERS scale. What do you think about that?

A: 95 is really huge, it's really hard to achieve. I think that's gotta be softened somewhat.

Q: Do you think it's a good thing to have this type of legislation?

A: Being concerned about our environment, I think it's very positive. As an entrepreneur, I think it's positive. We have to adapt to it. We first accept these changes reluctantly. We scratch and fight along the way but then we become accustomed to them over time. As an example, when they passed the 2004 building code, which changed the world for us because we had to build to 120-mile-an-hour winds, we were kicking and screaming about it.

Q: Some are still kicking and screaming about it.

A: But over a little bit of time it becomes sort of rote to us. Part of our everyday work life. So I think that's going to happen environmentally too. We'll adapt and change. I also think the next generation will be way more green than my generation. They're being taught this in schools.

Q: They're actually being taught in LEED certified schools?

A: Correct, and that's exactly right, so it's all just normal for them.

Q: This green technology is changing really rapidly.

A: Ten years ago, even five years ago, if a client came to me and asked, 'When I build my house, should I use propane or oil?' Our answer was, it's your choice, it's 50/50. Today it's entirely different, I don't recommend oil at all to a client. Now we're trying to reduce that more with renewable energy.

Q: So, what is your advice for the future?

A: When it comes to building a highly energy efficient home, you have to be educated both as a builder and a homeowner. Building science as a whole has changed, evolved. If we don't deal with them, we could have a pretty big disaster on your hands. Get it worked out, think about it. If we're going to legislate, we have to think about what's going to happen long-term. We have to think clearly and slowly about what we're doing to get it right.

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