

Engineer builds with sustainable living in mind

Wednesday, July 14, 2010

By [Jeff Kiger](#)

The Post-Bulletin, Rochester MN

LANESBORO — The puzzle of building an environmentally friendly home that is economically reasonable and still comfortable is a challenge.



"We looked around quite a bit," says Shalise Keating. "We're concerned about the environment and we want to do our piece."

In the end, Keating and her partner, Jill Kelly, turned to local engineer Christian Milaster and his Bel'cause Group to create a plan for their Fillmore County home.

"I think he does a better job

of putting all of the pieces of together than anyone else we've found," Keating says as their 4,200-square-foot, three-story house is being built in Fillmore County.

It will be heated by the sun, and all of its water will be provided from a 20,000-gallon cistern.

Creating such plans was not something Milaster ever imagined he'd be doing when he moved to the United States from Germany in 1998. However, looking back, he says it's not surprising that as an engineer he "stumbled" into the field.

After visiting DreamAcres, an organic farm in Wykoff, Milaster was fascinated by the completely sustainable, off-the-grid lifestyle.

"The idea of sustainable living appealed to my engineer mind," he says.

After two years of research, he built his own sustainable home in rural Lanesboro that he playfully named [Project Licht 'n Stein](#).

After moving into his solar-heated house, with its \$100 a year utility bills, Milaster started hosting open houses to share what he had learned building his rural homestead.

Read about it in Wednesday's print edition.

Open house

Christian Milaster is hosting another open house for his Project Licht 'n Stein home in rural Lanesboro from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

The house at 100 Hidden Valley Drive is about 45 minutes from Rochester.

For more information and directions, visit his [website](#).

