

The Ultimate in Energy Monitoring

Montauk, N.Y. home system will notify owner when “green” building investment pays for itself

One of the great challenges of integrating environmentally friendly elements into new homes is justifying the initial investment. Reducing environmental impact is a perk in and of itself, but can sometimes be costly up-front. How does the homeowner ultimately know the net results of that investment?

The Montauk, N.Y., vacation home of developer Anthony Lauto is designed to provide exactly that data. Through an energy monitoring system integrated by Seaford, N.Y.-based CEDIA member company Sights-N-Sounds, the home is programmed to notify the occupants when the investment in efficient home features has paid for itself in reduced consumption costs.

“I wanted to build the home in a way that gives back and is environmentally conscious,” said Lauto. “I also wanted to make sure it was affordable to maintain.”

Toward that end, Lauto reached out to Joe Calise, president of Sights-N-Sounds, to design the electronic systems for his 7,800-square-foot, five-bedroom, four-bath vacation home. Along with a full range of home systems, Calise was enlisted to integrate energy monitoring technology in with the home’s mechanical systems to measure the home’s carbon footprint.



Every element in the 7,800-square-foot vacation home was designed and specified with an eye toward sustainability.

Through careful programming, the monitoring system will use the data it gathers to calculate the cost savings achieved through reduced energy and resource consumption, and will ultimately notify the homeowner when he has reached the break-even point on his initial investment in efficient building.

The energy monitoring system was designed in tandem with a host of other efficiency and sustainability measures throughout the home. Lauto meticulously researched every building material and

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design consideration in order to minimize the home's environmental impact. The home has been submitted for the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED certification and is currently under review. If successful, the home will be one of fewer than 30 in New York State to achieve the certification. In addition, the home is an Energy Star home, receiving a rating of 95.4 out of 100, and is the 9th home in the state of New York to achieve Gold Certification through the National Association of Home Builders' Green Building Program.

For Calise, whose team also provided the lighting, audio, video, security, and home automation on the project, coordinating the energy management system was new territory.

"I had seen [energy management systems] before at the trade shows and in trade magazines, but this was my first experience working with one of this magnitude," said Calise. "It was certainly a learning experience for us, and something I am sure will be beneficial to us and our future clients. This certainly seems to be

the direction things are going in."

At times, Lauto says, he and Calise were waiting for technology to catch up to them – eagerly anticipating the release of a



product they knew would be integral to the system. "From the time we broke ground to now, the advancements have been tremendous," Lauto said. "We would be sitting there thinking, 'wouldn't it be great if...,' and then the 'if' would come true."



In addition to the sophisticated energy management system, Calise says one thing that sets the home apart is its simplicity. Because the home is primarily a vacation residence, it was important to make the system easy to use for all occupants. The system also allows homeowners to adjust temperature settings from the web, and the lighting control system is automated to set certain scenes based on different input factors such as the alarm system status.

Both Calise and Lauto say collaboration was essential to ensuring the project's success. Early communication among the various partners and trades was key.

"Anything that has a wire attached to it, the trade that touches that wire needs to meet every other trade that touches every other wire," said Lauto. "I just listed all of these people and all of their contact

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information on a sheet of paper, printed ten copies, laminated it, handed it to each trade, and said 'don't lose it!'"

Calise, who first worked with Lauto more than 10 years ago, said his relationship with the developer led him to pay close attention to the progress of the project. "The distance of this house from where everyone lives made for a challenge in itself," said Calise. "I also became [Lauto's] eyes and ears when he was not there. At Sights-N-Sounds, we try to look at every project as if it were our own home."

Due to the high level of integration in the home, working with various contractors presented occasional challenges for Calise and his team. But in the end, communication and collaboration delivered a winning result.

"There were certainly some bumps along the way," said Calise, "but in the end, through incredible management by Mr. Lauto and the team he put together, the end result speaks for itself."

Joe Calise is president of Seaford, N.Y.-based Sights-N-Sounds. Learn more about Sights-N-Sounds at www.sights-n-sounds.com.

Anthony Lauto is a partner at Huntington, N.Y.-based Lauto Group Logic. Learn more about Lauto Group Logic at www.lautogroup.com.

Watch for an extended edition of this feature in CEDIA's Fall 2010 [Electronic Lifestyles® Magazine](#).

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