

Canada Weekly

Ottawa
Canada

Volume 10, No. 13
March 31, 1982

Saskatchewan's energy-saving house
draws visitors, 1

Oil and gas act proclaimed, 2

Paper work cut eases exports, 2

Central American countries to receive
more Canadian development aid, 3

Firm awarded U.S. contracts, 3

PM's Commonwealth Day idea now an
institution, 3

Clearinghouse on violence set up, 4

Business travel increases, 4

Computers make learning easier, 4

Funds combat piracy, 4

Bike rack saves space, 5

University promotes human rights, 5

Canadian skaters improve standings at
world championships, 6

Teenager wins top award in science
competition, 6

Baseball museum slated for Montreal, 6

News of the arts — exhibition, music, arts
centre, 7

News briefs, 8

Saskatchewan's energy-saving house draws visitors

Conservation House, an energy-efficient house built by the Saskatchewan Research Council, has attracted visitors from many parts of the world because of its extraordinary thermal performance under severe winter conditions.

The house, built two years ago, is described as super-insulated, super-efficient, solar-heated and has reduced home energy consumption by 85 per cent.

Conservation House was built in the shape of a cube, which exposed a minimum amount of exterior surface relative to its floor space. There is no basement.

Energy waster discarded

"In line with what is now known as the whole-systems approach we took a look at every bit of energy used in a house from electric tooth brushes to snow-blowers," said David Eyre, a scientist with the council. "What wasn't essential was thrown out."

Almost every known energy-saving technique was incorporated into the house and its equipment. Constant tem-

perature taps were put in the bathroom. The toilet is a water conservation model and the thermostat has an automatic night set-back. Exterior paint is dark-coloured to absorb heat.

Deciduous trees shelter the south-oriented windows in summer and permit sunlight through in winter. The windows are double-glazed and equipped with night-time shutters with an insulation value of up to R-22. Window overhangs keep out the sun except in winter. The house has insulated steel thermal doors and protective porches. Waste bath water and dishwasher flow through a heat exchanger before discharge, preheating incoming cold water.

Highly insulated

To eliminate major heat loss, Conservation House is wrapped in a giant sleeping bag of insulation. The ceiling is insulated to R-60 and the floors and walls to R-40, which is double the current standards and triple the amount in most homes.

The house is virtually sealed with a 6



Saskatchewan house is a heavily insulated, solar heated dwelling.



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