

Architects design sustainable doghouse

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STAFF WRITER

SARASOTA — When the Pinellas Animal Foundation launched the Bowser Abode Building Competition, a contest for doghouse design, it was meant to raise awareness about pet protection. But a unique entry called the Scrap-E House has also raised awareness about sustainable design, drawing thousands of votes in the process.

A product of the Carlson Studio Architecture in Sarasota, the Scrap-E House won first place in the contest's eco-friendly category and leads the popular vote for the People's Choice Award, which will be announced in October.

"They are in the lead by a significant amount," said Joan Marzi, executive director of the Pinellas Animal Foundation. She estimated 4,000 people would vote by the end of the contest.

Marzi emphasized that people should keep their dogs in the house and not in the backyard, however, adding the contest is somewhat tongue-in-cheek. "We want dogs to be part of the family," she said.

Jedd Heap, a project manager with Carlson Studio, worked with a team of five colleagues to assemble the progressive doghouse over the course of several weekends.

The team named the doghouse Scrap-E House for the recycled, reclaimed and reused material that accounted for about 90 percent of its composition.

"Some came from old fencing from one of the employee's house," said Heap. "The only thing we added that we paid for was metal roofing material."

Scrap-E House is a showcase for concepts of sustainable design. Its roof is equipped with a solar panel. The translucent wall panel allows light but reduces heat. A drain collects rainwater, which is filtered through a cistern to supply the water bowl.

An eco-friendly submission was a logical choice for Carlson Studio. Sustainable design is a "passion" of principal Michael Carlson and a value of the firm, said Heap.



Left to right Staci Villa, Phil Lenzen, Becky Johnson, Michael Carlson, Gaye Hukel, Jedd Heap

Photo courtesy of Carlson Studio Architecture

A full-service architecture firm, Carlson Studio specializes in sustainable design for its mostly commercial and high-end residential projects. "Most of [our work] is grouped around sustainability as a theme," said Heap.

Carlson Studio is a founding member of the U.S. Green Building Council Gulf Coast Chapter and a member of the Florida Green Building Coalition. Heap estimated that 60 to 70 percent of its projects are built for LEED certification.

"We try to push all the owners to make intelligent decisions," he said. "We will use a higher level of installation than is required by code."

The Scrap-E House has attracted fanfare at various shopping centers and public libraries around Pinellas County.