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Local Multiple Listing Service search goes green

Mike Ivey — 4/08/2008 10:31 am

With the housing market facing some major headwinds, local real estate agents are looking to tap into buyers interested in "going green."

The South Central Wisconsin Multiple Listing Service has just launched a feature that allows homes to be screened for their environmentally-friendly features.

That could include searches for Green Built Homes, Wisconsin EnergyStar Homes or homes with other elements like EnergyStar appliances. Previously, there was no way to search the MLS for a home that was green built certified or energy efficient.

South Central Wisconsin is only the fourth MLS nationwide to add this type of green search category -- following Seattle, St. Louis and Portland, Ore.

"With all the negativity of the market right now, it is exciting to see such positive change and I think it was an important move by our local MLS to bring us to the front lines of the green movement," said Sara Alvarado, Broker/Owner of Alvarado Realty Estate Group.

Alvarado has been active in a group called Madison's Green Agents that urged the MLS board of directors to approve a new searchable category for "Environmentally Friendly Features and Green Homes." She said the interest in protecting the environment is a lifestyle that many people want reflected in their home choices.

"If we don't set the standards for what a green home really is, then we can't properly market one or help a buyer purchase one," she said.

The South Central Wisconsin MLS works as a clearinghouse through which more than 500 local real estate firms exchange information on properties they have listed for sale. It covers Dane, Columbia, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette, Rock and Sauk counties plus parts of Adams, Crawford, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Jefferson, Juneau, Marquette, Monroe, Richland, Vernon, Walworth and Waushara counties.

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File photo

A solar panel gets installed during a green-built makeover remodeling project by the Madison Area Builders Association and Project Home at 714 E. Dayton Street in this 2007 file photo. Now the area MLS service will allow searches for environmentally-friendly homes.

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