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Design Fair goes 'green'

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By Kevin Kirkland, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The second annual Pittsburgh Design Fair is going "green" this year just about the time when everything else is turning fall colors.

The event run by the Community Design Center of Pittsburgh will be 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 28 at the Priory's Grand Hall in the North Side. Like last year, the fair will take place at the same time as the Deutschtown House Tour, and combined tickets for both events are available.

More than 40 exhibitors will offer products, services and information on all aspects of home and landscape design, with an emphasis on a sustainable, Earth-friendly approach. Visitors can see flooring, windows, kitchens, baths and many other house components made using less energy, fewer resources and fewer toxic materials than ever before.

They also can learn household practices and techniques that will reduce their impact on the environment and make their homes more healthful and more energy-efficient. For example, the Pennsylvania Resources Council will demonstrate the benefits of rain barrels and composting in the Blumengarten across the street from The Priory, 614 Pressley St. Even the house tour is getting into the act, featuring seven restored houses including an 1890s Victorian retrofitted with geothermal heating and cooling. The tour is a fundraiser for East Allegheny Community Council.

The fair, which drew more than 1,000 homeowners from Pittsburgh and surrounding suburbs in its first year, also includes lectures and demonstrations by experts in green building, gardening, restoration, architecture and many other topics. Experts from the Pittsburgh Design Center and the local chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers also will offer free consultations on use of color and design. The Pittsburgh Design Center is a fair sponsor, along with the Post-Gazette, Chatham University, WDUQ-FM, PNC and Home and Design magazine.

"This year's event builds on the success of our first year," said Tara Nelson, fair producer and program director of the Community Design Center's RenPlan. The nonprofit's program offers homeowners the chance to meet with architects and landscape designers to discuss home projects.

Fair tickets are \$5 in advance and \$7 at the door. Deutschtown House Tour tickets are \$12 (\$5 for students), \$15 at the door. Combination tickets for the fair and tour are \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door. To purchase tickets online or for more information, go to www.pittsburghdesignfair.org or www.deutschtown.org, or call 412-391-4144.

Kevin Kirkland can be reached at kkirkland@post-gazette.com or 412-263-1978.

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