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Purdue, Habitat for Humanity, Ford to build green home in BioTown, USA

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - An Indiana town that is pioneering an energy efficient and sustainable lifestyle is about to get its first "green" house.

Students in Purdue University's Engineering Projects in Community Service program, helped by a \$100,000 grant from the Ford Motor Co. Fund, will partner with Lafayette Habitat for Humanity to build a home in Reynolds, Ind., that uses standards for environmentally friendly and energy efficient buildings.

Reynolds, known as BioTown, USA, is attempting to become energy self-sufficient by converting agricultural products and byproducts into sustainable energy sources. The town also wants to develop housing that is affordable while being energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Ford's grant will help pay for the two-year project, during which students and Habitat personnel will identify and analyze green building strategies, build the home, and design training for other Habitat affiliates to use in building similar green homes. The design will use best practices for building a green home that can be followed by a volunteer

work force.

The engineering program, known as EPICS, creates teams of undergraduates who earn academic credit for multiyear, multidisciplinary projects that solve engineering- and technology-based problems for community service and educational organizations.

"The project with Habitat for Humanity and Ford is a perfect example of what EPICS excels at," said Leah H. Jamieson, the John A. Edwardson Dean of Engineering and EPICS co-founder. "And our students will work on a project that will prepare them for careers that will require skills dealing with environmental and energy issues."

The grant is one of five that Ford is awarding through its Ford College Community Challenge, a new initiative of the automaker's community relations arm. It challenges colleges and universities throughout the country to come up with innovative community projects inspired by the theme "Building Sustainable Communities." The projects address pressing local needs.

"At Ford, helping communities become more sustainable is as important as our own focus on becoming a more sustainable automotive company," said Marty Malloy, vice president of labor affairs. "With partners like Purdue University, we'll discover sustainable solutions for our communities we can all benefit from."

EPICS was founded at Purdue in 1995. The program now involves 20 departments at Purdue and 29 local and Purdue partnerships. EPICS programs also now operate at 17 universities in the United States and one in New Zealand.

Habitat for Humanity builds and rehabilitates houses with the help of homeowner families and volunteers. The houses are sold to the families at no profit and financed with affordable loans. The monthly mortgage payments are used to build more Habitat houses.

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