

A tour with a mission



Fred Michel (left) explains to Jon and Susan Stahl the details of the solar system he installed at his home in Wooster. Michel's home is part of the Ohio Solar Tour, which continues today. Bobby Warren photo/www.buydrphotos.com

Event showcases cost, energy-saving measures local homeowners made

By **BOBBY WARREN**
Staff Writer

WOOSTER — Fred Michel is on a mission: He wants to reduce his family's carbon footprint by nearly 90 percent.

The Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center scientist calculated the amount of carbon used in a year, and it amounts to more than 29,000 kilograms annually.

Through the use of solar, fluorescent lighting, ethanol and other measures, the Michels carbon profile is down to about 18,000 kg, and he wants to eventually get it down to around 4,200.

Michel opened his 1031 Douglas Drive home to visitors of the Ohio Solar Tour on Saturday, and he will do so again today from 9 a.m.-noon.

Those stopping were treated to a PowerPoint presentation detailing what the

Michels have done and what is left to do. Among the visitors were Jon and Susan Stahl of Smithville.

The couple visited four stops on the tour because they want to build an energy-efficient home, Susan Stahl said.

The Stahls were interested in looking at solar systems and other ideas because they are frugal people who do not like to waste things.

"It's a waste to buy energy if you can produce it yourself," Susan Stahl said.

To build an energy-efficient home will take more of an investment from the couple, Jon Stahl said. Because they are customers of an electric cooperative, they are not eligible for certain state grant money, he said. However, they will qualify for a 30 percent federal tax credit, he said.

Michel's solar system cost \$31,000. He

received a state grant of around \$11,500 and a federal tax credit of nearly \$6,500, which brought his out-of-pocket cost of about \$13,000.

Over the next 10 years, Michel calculated he would have saved \$3,200 on his electric bill and received \$8,000 in renewable tax credits. Michel said his home's value will be about \$6,400 higher because of the changes he made. Had he just taken the \$13,000 and invested it at 3.5 percent interest, it would have earned about \$4,600 over the same 10-year period.

The tour continues today in: Holmes County — the Tillack residence, 15211 Township Road 12, Brinkhaven, energy efficient, photovoltaics, 1-4 p.m.

See Pg. B3 — MISSION

Mission

(Continued From Page B1)

Wayne County — Bielek residence, 1130 Kimber Road, Wooster, energy efficient, passive solar, open 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; Michel residence, 1031 Douglas Drive, Wooster, home, photovoltaics, 9 a.m.-noon; and the Nussbaum farm, 5290 Kister Road, Shreve, 1-4 p.m.

The tour is sponsored by the American Solar Energy

Society and in Ohio by Green Energy Ohio, the free event provides the opportunity for people to visit sites and talk with owners living and working with clean energy technologies. Visit www.wcsen.org/events for more information.

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