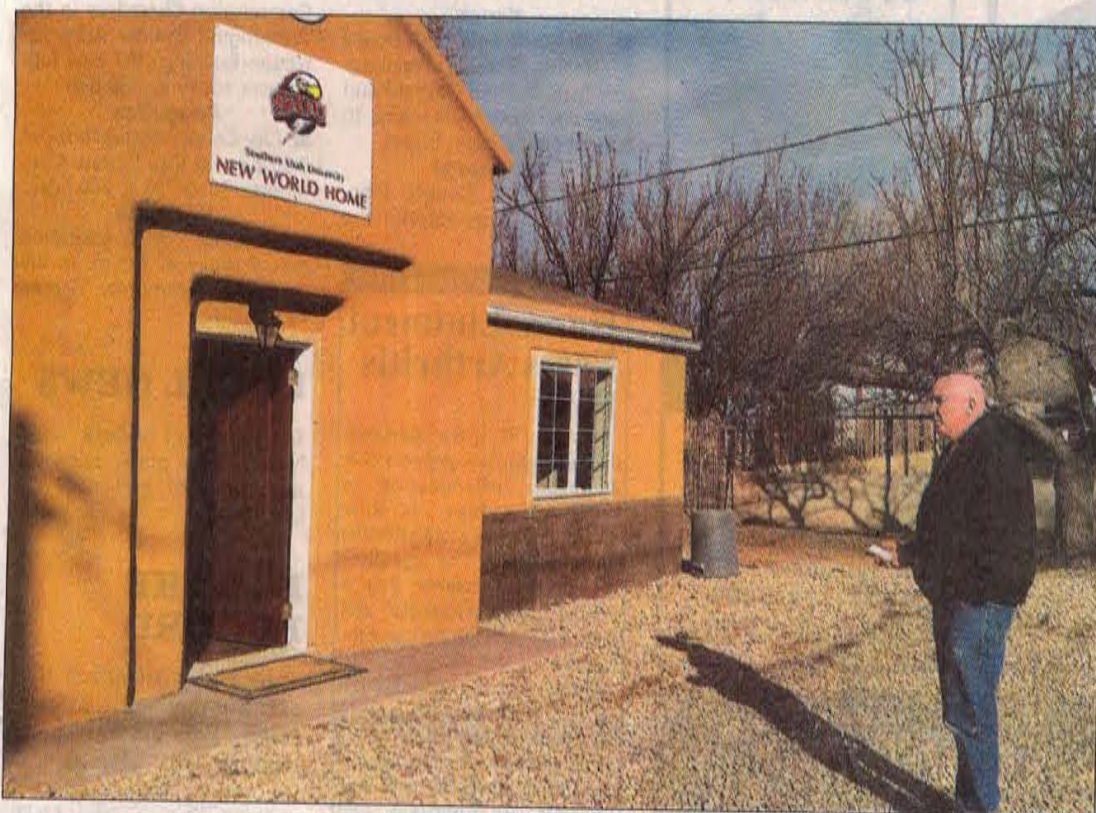


## A house of the future



**SUU Professional-in-residence Matt Edwards, pictured, describes his New World Home that is designed to be highly energy efficient and cost less than the average single-family home of the same size.**

NUR KAUSAR /  
DAILY NEWS

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**CEDAR CITY** — Quietly, a white dome expanded to peek just above a corner of University Avenue and 800 West late last year.

This dome, covered in concrete and built to mimic a modern residence inexpensively and with more energy efficiency, could create a “new world” in the house-building industry.

That’s one of Matt Edwards’ goals, anyway, with what he calls the New World Home.

As part of his doctoral studies, the Southern Utah University professional-in-residence has come up with what

he describes as a sustainable, affordable house to pitch to the Cedar City Housing Authority and, eventually, across the globe.

Meetings are scheduled in the next couple weeks with a USDA official on low-income housing options that Edwards wants to begin in Cedar City before the end of the year.

“When thinking about energy-efficient homes, one thing people forget is affordability,” Edwards said, discussing prior ideas from other companies and countries that would put out a \$500,000, fully sustainable house.

Edwards said his house materials cost only \$35,000 and he could

sell the completed house for less than \$100,000, which is why he is going to low-income housing first, with patents pending on the project.

The house foundation starts the same way as any other building, but then Edwards, with a team of hired laborers and skilled students, inflated an Airform dome and used concrete to complete the rest of the structure.

“I’d expect this home to last 500 years because of the nature of concrete,” Edwards said on how the house differs from new homes. The structure is also five times stronger than the

SEE HOUSE ON A3

### HOUSE

Continued from A1

average house, withstands hurricanes and 170 mph winds and is fireproof.

Stained concrete floors, stamped concrete exterior to look like brick and custom interior make an aesthetically pleasing Airform house not look mass produced.

“No one wants an egg on the property,” he said, noting the technology has been available for 30 years, but the beauty has been missing.

The first question from Cedar City Housing Authority Director Heidi Miller: “Is it a dome?”

Yes, onlookers can see the slight dome shape in the middle, but the majority of the house, with 13-foot ceilings, three bedrooms, two bathrooms and 1,300 square feet of living space, is anything but an igloo.

The entire home is currently fully heated with one small space heater. The house has a ceiling fan, but Edwards said he’s speaking with a St. George company that uses an evaporative cooling system using solar energy.

If all goes his way, Edwards also wants every one of these homes to have solar panels built on.

“I don’t think you’d opt

out of free electricity,” he said, smiling at the thought of builders wanting such options for homebuyers.

Lighting of the house is completely controlled with one, static-charged clicker that uses no batteries or wires and costs about \$800 to put in.

“We would be way excited and thrilled about it, if it is energy efficient and something low-income people can afford,” Miller said, noting she had yet to tour the model and was antsy to see it.

Miller said CCHA has worked with Edwards before, building three homes with him and SUU construction management students.

His end goal? Teach illiterate populations all over the world how to build this house without numbered, intricate plans.

Edwards is working with engineering and technology students on 3-D models, creating a simple, visual plan for anyone to build the house.

“I think we can change the economy with these set of plans,” he said, saying it could help impoverished people all over the globe to keep out malaria-carrying bugs or to collect clean water or just to make their own safe haven.