

SEED House

Adrian, MI, USA



“Insulspan® engineers are paying attention” to building science advancements.

Roger Bowser, the manager of Energy Programs and Services at Midwest Energy Cooperative, is as passionate about energy efficiency as he is about serving his customers, who number around 35,000 throughout southern Michigan, northern Indiana, and Ohio. When they call him about high energy bills, and are looking for tips on making a cold, drafty house less so, “I take those questions seriously.”

With that kind of commitment already in mind, Roger jumped at the opportunity for the public utility to join forces with the Lenawee Intermediate School District (LISD) in southwestern Michigan to build a home on their Adrian, MI campus, and alongside groups of vocational high school students learning the residential construction trades. After a year of design work, the Sustainable Energy Efficient Demonstration (SEED) house took shape as legions of professional contractors worked shoulder to shoulder with students. The house, Roger explained, is a state-of-the-art “permanent classroom” with cut-a-ways to teach not only students about energy efficiency, but consumers, contractors, appraisers, and architects – “anyone who wants to see what the future of energy efficiency looks like.”

To stay true to the mission of providing an education in optimum energy efficiency, it was important to incorporate as many available types of building technology as possible.



Plasti-Fab’s Insulspan Structural Insulating Panel (SIP) System was selected as a SEED house preferred materials for three key reasons.

First, innovation. SIPs, he points out, are a product of advancements in building science and “proof Insulspan’s engineers are paying attention and applying that knowledge.” Second, industry leadership. In Roger’s view, this is secured by the fact that walls built with SIPs are energy efficient, durable, and sustainable. Faster to install, too. Students put up the SIP garage walls in considerably less time versus hand-framing. Finally, with another nod to sustainability, the SEED house needed to be as ‘local’ as possible. Given that the SIP manufacturing facility is about 20 minutes away, “why wouldn’t we partner with an industry leader in our backyard?” The compelling benefits of SIPs were solidified after a day of working with the Insulspan team who showed the students “how to build it *right* – not just *almost* right,” says Roger.

Expanding on that idea, Temira Kaser, Director of Digital Marketing for Plasti-Fab said continuously educating audiences about what the product can do is essential. “That means reaching not just the consumers and professionals who walk through the SEED house, but the students who built it – the future of the industry.”

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