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## Carpenter uses 'green' building techniques

By ANDREW BROMAN  
The Daily Press  
Monday, May 08th, 2006 09:53:35 AM



Andrew Broman

Jim Steffenson seeks to use green building techniques on projects as a carpenter in the Bayfield area.

BAYFIELD — Jim Steffenson's carpentry career began at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, where he helped make sets.

Steffenson went to college, majoring in drama, but discovered he wasn't cut out for acting. "I realized I couldn't act, but I could put things together," he said.

He couldn't make enough money in theater, and so he branched out into other venues. He has worked on high rises and has built homes, but his favorite job is remodeling, he said, because every job is different.

He does everything from kitchens to bathrooms to stairs, and his goal is to do the work in an environmentally friendly way.

### Story Continues Below

He's a member of the Green Build Home Program, which promotes energy efficiency and resource conservation in building techniques.

Steffenson is also a sponsor of the Wisconsin Travel Green initiative for Bayfield. The program promotes businesses that adopt "sustainable business practices of reducing environmental and social impacts while delivering a marketing advantage for their businesses and state as a whole," according to the Bayfield Chamber of Commerce Web site.

A native of the Twin Cities area, Steffenson is a third-generation carpenter as both his grandfather and father were in the business. He started his carpentry apprenticeship in 1978 and went on his own in 1985. He moved to Bayfield in 2000.

He became interested in green building in 1991 when a client held Steffenson to strict standards on a project out of concern for indoor air quality. This meant Steffenson couldn't use plywood because of its formaldehyde content, and he used only hardwoods on the project.

Steffenson also adapts his philosophy to his own life. His house is equipped with an off-grid solar system, and he also advocates for using biodiesel.

"I just think there's too much waste in this country," he said.

WHO: Jim Steffenson

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