



Solid as a rock

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Madison builder makes unique use of concrete

Leada Gore/Madison Record

There are hundreds of homes currently under construction in Madison. But one home in Highland Lakes subdivision is a little different than the others.

John Allen and Bob Goff of Southern Construction and Design are building one of the few homes in the area that utilizes concrete forms in construction. The forms are manufactured by PolySteel and allow for what company officials say is greater wall strength and increased fire protection.

For Allen, the new way to build seemed like a good idea from the start.

"It is a neat way to build," he said.

Allen and Goff were introduced to the idea of building with insulated concrete forms at a home show. There are some 50 different manufacturers of the products, but they chose PolySteel.

Their first project was Allen's own garage.

They also worked as subcontractors at a PolySteel home in Muscle Shoals before beginning their current project.

The construction process uses forms braced with steel. The forms are filled with concrete, forming the exterior walls of the home. The walls can then be covered in brick, wood or siding with the average person not able to tell a difference from the concrete-filled homes and a typical one.

Homes using the concrete construction costs slightly more than typical houses, but Allen said owners see a reduction in utility benefits plus safety benefits. The concrete form homes often feature safe rooms or storm shelters strengthened by their unique construction.

The current construction is causing a bit of a stir in Highland Lakes, where there are numerous homes currently being built.

"We've had lots of people stop and ask about the house," Allen said.

Southern's current home will be included in the Spring Tour of Homes.