

Solar interest rising in U.S., abroad

By STEVE DODGE
Of the Emerald

As might be expected, the recent upsurge of interest in solar energy hasn't been limited to the West Coast or even the United States.

For instance, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), an experimental solar house has been equipped with materials that may revolutionize the solar industry, according to a recent Christian Science Monitor story.

The house, known as "Solar House 5," uses double-paned windows specially coated with a plastic called Heat Mirror, which MIT researchers say loses only one-quarter the heat lost by ordinary double-paned windows.

But more important, the house has been equipped with heat-storing ceiling tiles containing a liquid that melts at 73 degrees. The melting process stores heat, say MIT researchers, and when

the liquid freezes at less than 73 degrees, it releases heat. Hung in any room, the ceiling's 43 round, two-foot square tiles release heat for two days after a day's charging.

The house, which is expected to derive 85 percent of its heat from the sun, is also equipped with reflective venetian blinds in its southern windows, which can be adjusted to direct the sun's rays to tiles in the one-story building's eaves, or outward for summer cooling.

The house is a prime example of a "passive" solar energy system — a system that derives heat from the building's own design, including windows, heat absorbing materials, and roof overhangs — as opposed to "active" systems that use conventional flat plate solar collectors, pumps and blowers for heat.

As with most solar systems, cost is the one limiting factor. MIT Architect Timothy Johnson, who helped design the house, told the Monitor that all the

materials for the house would cost \$28,000 as opposed to \$5,000 for an equivalent flat plate system.

Johnson said, however, that the price is expected to go down when the materials go into mass production. He said even at current prices, the pay-back time in terms of energy saved is five to 10 years, as opposed to 30 years for conventional solar systems.

The 900-square-foot house is the result of five years of study and is financed by grants from the U.S. Department of Energy, the National Science Foundation and the MIT Godfrey Cabot Research in Solar Energy fund.

India and Australia are leading a growing array of countries with a deep interest in solar energy capabilities, Atlas magazine said in a recent issue.

In Australia, where research has been conducted continuously for two decades, a burgeoning solar industry already produces solar collectors to heat water in factories as well as homes and

hotels. Solar water heaters have been installed in all new government-built houses in the arid Northern Territories of the country.

India is concentrating its efforts on small local projects, although a hotel in New Delhi was recently fitted with solar equipment that provides 10,000 gallons of hot water daily.

Efforts of India's National Physical Laboratory have resulted in a variety of mechanical applications for solar power, including water pumps, room heating and solar dryers used in laundries and on farms.

Another Indian organization, the Central Arid Zone Research Institute, has concentrated on rural communities with a range of solar cookers, dryers, water heaters and "stills" for converting brackish water into fresh water.

Similar efforts are underway in France, Japan, China, the Soviet Union, Mexico, the Netherlands, West Germany and some African countries.

Black Festival events include gospel to disco

The Sixth Annual Black Arts Festival at the University opens today with a celebration march on campus beginning at the EMU Terrace at 12:20 p.m.

The week-long festival, sponsored by the Black Student Union and the Council for Minority Education, celebrates the cultural contributions of blacks in song, dance, music, poetry and other arts and promotes understanding of black people in the United States. The public is invited to all events.

Six church choirs will give a gospel concert at 3 p.m. Sunday in Room 167, EMU. John Corbett, a Baptist minister from South Carolina will talk Monday at 7 p.m. on the "The Black Church in Politics." Corbett will speak again Tuesday at 10 a.m. on the "History of Black Christian Experience." Both his talks will be in the EMU Forum Room.

"Black Odyssey," a comprehensive historical and arts exhibit by George Norman, a Black cultural arts specialist from Detroit, will be on display Monday through Thursday from 11 a.m. to

4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. and next Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will be in Room 167 EMU.

In conjunction with the festival, the Ethnic Studies Program is sponsoring a multi-media program on "The Role of Black Art in America" by Grance Hampton, University Assistant art professor.

The last in a series on "The Invisible Peoples," Hampton's display will be presented at 7:30 p.m. Monday at the Eugene Public Library.

Alex Poinsett, senior editor of Ebony magazine, will speak at 7 p.m. Wednesday in the EMU, room and topic to be announced.

Additional events include a beauty clinic Wednesday afternoon on the EMU terrace, a dinner at 6 p.m. Friday in the EMU Ballroom, a talent show in the ballroom Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and a disco dance Saturday at 9:30 p.m. in Room 167 EMU.

Tickets for the dinner go on sale today at the EMU Main Desk. The cost has not yet been determined. Tickets for the disco dance are \$1 and will be available at the door. All other events are free.



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