

## NORTH CAROLINA SPOTLIGHT BUILDING ON RESOURCES

# GOING GREEN

Fire station is latest Outer Banks facility to become Earth-friendly

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THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

KITTY HAWK, N.C. — Fire Station 13 is all shiny and new.

It has stainless steel appliances, cushy recliners and flat-screen TVs. It has six bunk rooms, four drive-through bays and a fully-equipped gym.

But the things you don't notice right away — a system that can filter 34,000 gallons of rain and a permeable, unpaved parking lot made from layers of sand and stone — are the building's real gems.

### NEXT

Jockey's Ridge State Park intends to erect two windmills among its sand dunes by next year.

These features represent one of the biggest green projects to date on the Outer Banks, said Nancy White, director of the University of North Carolina's Coastal Studies Institute in Manteo and an advocate of green building. Her own home gets its heat from the sun and water from the rain.

Green building isn't new. But there's been an emphasis on it here, with towns and tourist attractions tapping into the area's most basic and abundant resources: sun, wind and water.

When Nags Head replaced its Harvey Sound Access last year, it incorporated cisterns and solar panels. A new Kill Devil Hills bathhouse that doubles as the town's

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A canal at Kitty Hawk's new Earth-friendly fire station connects to wetlands and helps curb flooding.

# GOING GREEN

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ocean rescue headquarters did the same. The North Carolina Aquarium at Roanoke Island also uses cisterns.

A 70-foot-high windmill powers the Coquina Beach Access at the northern end of Cape Hatteras National Seashore, sending excess energy back into the state's electricity grid. Jockey's Ridge State Park intends to erect two windmills among its sand dunes by next year.

A new Coastal Studies Institute campus in the works on Roanoke Island and a proposed Outer Banks Visitors Bureau convention center in Nags Head are calling for lots of green features.

Rising fuel costs have contributed to the emphasis on being Earth-friendly, White said. "It takes a crisis to get people thinking in the other direction," she said.

State and local officials started talking about "storm water management" three summers ago when heavy rains severely flooded yards and roads. Development had shifted the landscape and slowed nature's ability to soak up a whole lot of rain.

Before the new 15,260-square-foot fire station was built, the nearby road tended to flood in rainstorms, Fire Chief Lowell Spivey said.

So when the building went up, three vast tanks were installed underground. Rain travels from gutters to tanks to fill fire engines, water lawns



and help flush toilets. The only impermeable pavement is the bay driveway, and trench drains catch and filter runoff.

By joining two pockets of wetlands — which eventually empty into the sound — water doesn't stand on the property as long, Spivey said.

The project's cost: \$3.4 million. (The fire department's volunteer organization provided the TVs and recliners and other extras.)

"They've improved the site from before they built," White said. "That's very rare."

The station replaces the one built in 1974. The old station is being recycled as a home for Kitty Hawk's public works department.

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