

# HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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Partly cloudy: High 96, Low 77

## WORLD

### Ebola declared a global crisis

Facing the worst known outbreak of the Ebola virus, the World Health Organization declared an international public health emergency Friday, demanding an "extraordinary" response. **Page A10**

## NATION



Associated Press

**A boogie boarder barrels over a wave Friday off Oahu.**

### Hawaii storm doesn't keep surfers away

Tropical Storm Iselle buffeted Hawaii's Big Island and Maui Friday, bringing heavy rains and power outages as the state braced for a second storm on Sunday. **Page A3**

## BUSINESS

### Tanker remains idle as standoff is dragging on

A tanker remains anchored off the Galveston coast nearly two weeks after it arrived carrying oil claimed both by Iraq and its Kurdish region. **Page D1**

## SPORTS

### Judge rules college players can sell images

In a decision that could reshape the world of college sports, a federal judge rules that the NCAA rules barring payments to college

## Ratings good, bad for area schools

By Ericka Mellon

More HISD schools met the state's academic standards this year than last, while every campus in several of the area's large suburban districts hit the mark.

The school ratings, released Friday by the Texas Education Agency, give parents and taxpayers a snapshot of a school's performance, though some have criticized the standards as being too easy, too harsh or too complex.

Across Texas, about 9 percent of public schools fell short of the targets. The Houston Independent School District, despite its progress compared to last year, had nearly twice the rate of low-performing schools as the state average.

*Cy-Fair continues on A11*

## U.S. pay helps fuel cycle of migrants

Cash transfers back home keep families afloat

By Kevin Diaz

WASHINGTON — Jose Luis Zelaya trekked to a Western Union office inside a Houston Fiesta Food Market last week with one of his family's regular \$100 money transfers. It was for the ailing grandmother who had helped him flee Honduras when he was 13 to find his mother working in Texas.

"She helped me get here," said Zelaya, an undocumented student who recently was granted a temporary stay in the United States while he pursues a doctorate at Texas A&M University. "It would be inhumane if I didn't."

To Zelaya, the money is a small sacrifice for a diabetic grandmother who needs *Remittance continues on A13*

## U.S. jets return to Iraqi skies, launch attacks on militants

By Patrick McDonnell and David Cloud

LOS ANGELES TIMES

IRBIL, Iraq — U.S. warplanes and drones struck artillery and military vehicles of a militant Islamist group Friday in an effort to halt its advance toward this

booming northern Iraqi oil center, now clogged with displaced people sheltering at churches, factories and construction sites.

The first U.S. military action in Iraq in the nearly three years since the last American combat troops left the country came just

### U.S. strategy

» Obama guided by specter of Benghazi. **Page A4**

hours after it was authorized by President Barack Obama, and appeared to reassure people in the capital of the semiautonomous

Kurdistan region.

Residents described a sense of panic in recent days as fighters of the Islamic State, an offshoot of al-Qaida that now controls large stretches of Iraq and neighboring Syria, pushed to within about 25 miles of *U.S. continues on A15*

## In building for tomorrow, green home saves for today



Mayra Beltrán photos / Houston Chronicle

**This 3,500-square-foot home will likely be the first in the inner city to produce net zero energy and water.**

Heights house skimps on energy use but not luxuries, as local architect hopes more follow 'conscious' trend

By Erin Mulvaney

The bright yellow bungalow is flanked with two rainwater tanks and topped with a solar-panel system. Its reflective roof deflects the sun. Deep porches with overhangs create shade. An entry doubles as a breezeway, and carefully placed windows allow for breezes and minimize direct sunlight.

All this, said architect Larverne Williams, makes the custom-built house nearing completion in the Heights



**The solar panels on the roof facing the backyard will produce more electricity than the house will need.**

"A/C optional" and likely the first net zero water and energy house in Houston's inner city, meaning it will emit more electricity than it uses and its owners will not need to use any city water.

"We are in a crisis in the world," said Williams, a local pioneer of the green building movement whose firm is called Environment Associates Architects and Consultants. "There are way too many people and we've polluted our nest ... The home should be a place where people can recoup and recover from all the toxins in the environment. This is the direction that *Home continues on A13*

# Home's orientation helps to cool, heat it

Home from page A1

everyone is going in. People are doing their homework and are concerned about the future.”

The home's owners, attorney Ken Anderson and his wife Andreeanne Vachon, now live in a larger house in Spring on two acres. They had become concerned about global warming and worried about the efficiency of their current home. Once his four children moved away, Anderson said, he wanted to build a home that would make “as small a carbon footprint as possible.”

“We certainly aren't martyrs. We are not going to live uncomfortably,” Anderson said. “We're excited to live in it and experience how it works.”

He and his wife like to entertain and plan to spend much of their time outside. Outside, the home's landscaping is either edible or native. Inside, the cabinets, rafters, trimmings and doorways and exposed beams came from the trees chopped down to make way for the 3,500-square foot home on East 27th Street.

## 'Efficient and comfortable'

Yet, the house does not skimp on flourishes. It has an indoor movie theater that can seat more than eight people, a wine room that can hold 1,600 bottles and an outdoor hot tub and pool. And a spacious room near the entrance with high ceilings and large windows with backyard views will allow for parties to entertain high-end clients.

“The whole philosophy of the house was to make it as efficient and comfortable as possible without needing any technology at all,” said Richard Rivera, the project manager for Environment Associates.

Rivera said much of the design simply accounted for breezes and sun, which doesn't add to the cost. Some materials for green build-



Mayra Beltrán / Houston Chronicle

**This home on East 27th Street is “A/C optional,” even for Houston's balmy, humid summers.**

ing can cost between 10 percent or 100 percent more, he said, but in the long-run will make the home more durable and produce lower energy bills.

“Homes are sold on the basis of views, the layout and size of the house,” Rivera said. “Those are important factors. But you can still design a house and take advantage of the beauty around you and use the natural cooling power. In addition to the square footage and view, people are starting to add house orientation and energy efficiency when buying or building a new house.”

Environment Associates, which specializes in building healthy homes, particularly for southern climates, designed three Houston-area houses now under construction and two others that were recently completed in Pearland and Conroe.

Williams and his team of architects work out of a townhome in northwest Houston.

Williams lives upstairs and proudly shows off home photos, including Houston's first passive Solar Demonstration Home from 1979, a house made from straw bale in Montgomery, a micro-climate home built in 1982 in Kemah and a Magnolia home twice featured on the National Solar Home Tour.

A display shows off some of the materials used in the design and construction of homes: wood chips, compressed soil blocks, steel studs for walls, straw bail and a material made from recycled wood fiber and plastic.

## Trend's ebb and flow

Williams, 71, started Environment Associates in 1975. He said the public's interest in “green” building has ebbed and flowed over the years. With green building in vogue now, Williams said he fears green-washing, or misrepresenting or overstating healthy building for marketing purposes.

Williams moved from Kansas to Houston to attend the University of Houston in 1963. The son of a grocer in a rural area, he spent much of his time outdoors. He said he was drawn to eco-friendly building because he always had a reverence for nature. He studied green architecture throughout his life, looking for how other cultures build in similar climates.

“Anybody that was building

## For a healthy home

The design features of the Heights home now under construction limit need for energy and create “healthy” environment.

### Passive design:

- » Cross ventilation throughout
- » L-shape facing southeast to capture prevailing breezes
- » Entry doubles as breezeway to facilitate porch ventilation
- » Maximized windows on the South and North
- » Low windows on the South, high windows on the North

### Design for climate, neighborhood and health:

- » Shading with deep porches and overhangs
- » Air sealed and well insulated
- » Reflective roofing and solar panel shading to protect from the summer sun
- » The roof pitch determined by optimum solar collection angle
- » Bungalow style suited for neighborhood and climate
- » Single story with wheelchair access
- » All interior trim, trusses and cabinet faces made from solid wood. Other finishes made from natural products.

without air conditioning was ahead of Houston. We forgot about what to do without air conditioning,” he said.

Rice University professor Rick Wilson and local artist Therese Coucher have lived in one of Williams' projects for about six years. It's a warehouse-style house using natural and nontoxic materials and has an open floor plan and sits on two acres of wooded land in south Houston. The couple said they lived in the house without air conditioning for four years comfortably. They recently installed a solar system and now use their air conditioning on occasion and during the summer months.

Features that make the house's temperature and natural cooling

work are the small windows on the south and no windows on the west. The exposed concrete slab as the foundation moderates the temperature and fans keep the air moving during the day and night. Wisteria growing on their outdoor awning will eventually cover everything and prevent the direct sun from coming in. The vents that can open and close on the second floor are a major part of the design of the house.

## A 'conscious' vision

“It's like air conditioning,” Coucher said. “When you open and stand there you can just feel the air swooshing in.”

At another project in Pearland, engineers Brenda and Nathan Weber recently moved in with their two young children. Nathan said the first few energy bills he received showed that his electric company owed him money thanks to his solar system and the design of the home.

Williams said there are more and more clients that want to build healthy homes for themselves in Houston. In the Heights home, he points to the front corner of the home, where there will be a small park around one of the rain-water tanks, the fence nearby juts out at an angle to accommodate for a saved tree. His hope is that it will be a space where the community can gather and will encourage others to realize the importance of lowering their own footprint.

“We're finally reaching the point,” Williams said, “where people are becoming a lot more conscious about how much their home's design and construction directly affects their personal health.” He added: “Folks are beginning to understand how our homes affect the overall health of their family and that of the planet as well.”

[erin.mulvaney@chron.com](mailto:erin.mulvaney@chron.com)  
[twitter.com/erinmulvaney](https://twitter.com/erinmulvaney)