

# LTU works sunup to sundown on solar house

BY PAT MURPHY  
STAFF WRITER

Anyone happening by Parking Lot C on the campus of Lawrence Technological University in Southfield will likely notice what appears to be a house under construction. Walls are up, the roof is on and windows are being installed by people in hard hats.

In less than three months — Oct. 12, to be exact — that house will be on display welcoming visitors at the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The house is LTU's entry in the National Solar Decathlon Competition, with 20 schools competing to build the best solar powered house.

"It's taken an incredible amount of time and dedication," said Phillip Plowright, assistant professor of architecture and faculty advisor for students who have been working on the house for more than 18 months.

After designing the house, ordering materials and bringing everything together, students began constructing the 800-square-foot structure last month. Their timetable calls for the house to be assembled by mid September, at the latest, then disassembled and transported by truck to the nation's capital by Oct. 3.

"We're behind schedule," acknowledges Plowright. "But most construction projects (at one point or another) are behind schedule," he said.

Please see **HOUSE, A4**



Students Larry Bukowski (left) and Sonia Tereszczenko install insulation on a house that will represent Lawrence Technological University in the National Solar Decathlon Competition in Washington, D.C. Working with them is Jeffrey Kruse of the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters and Millwrights.

## HOUSE

FROM PAGE A1

From the start, Plowright has cautioned students to expect the unexpected — "wake up calls," as he calls them. Glitches, delays and pop-up problems are part of the real world, he warned, and student have to make adjustments.

"Our students have never done anything like this before," he said. "But we're going to pick

up the pace. And we'll be there on time."

Students are getting help from the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters and Millwrights, whose members know a few things about construction schedules and building houses.

Students are fun to work with, said Jeffrey Kruse, project director for the council. "They are the future of the industry, and we're happy to be working with them," he said.

Larry Bukowski, a senior

majoring in construction management, said the project involves a seemingly endless amount of detail. "It's one thing to design a house," he said, "and another thing to construct it."

LTU's house — like those of MIT, Carnegie Mellon and other competitors — must collect and store enough solar energy to run air conditioning and other appliances and operate home computers. Extra power will power a lightweight vehicle.