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Arcosanti: a lesson in sustainability

by **Rick DeBruhl** - Jun. 26, 2008 04:46 PM

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The idea of "going green" is nothing new. The concepts have been out there for years. All you have to do is drive about 70 miles north of Phoenix to find a community that has been living "green" for more than three decades.

It's called Arcosanti. Originally built as an experiment in 1970 by Italian architect Paolo Soleri, it was designed to bring people together while eliminating the need for cars and using less energy. Right now about 75 people live in the collection of odd shaped buildings. But there is method the madness of their construction. They're designed to control temperature. Windows and natural ventilation maximize the amount of cooling they get during the summer and warmth in the winter.

Arcosanti uses solar power and wind turbines to heat water and light the walkways. Rainwater is collected and used for irrigation. An organic garden supplies food to residents and trees are used for shade and food. The people who live there recycle all types of materials and compost their food waste.

The community has been described as both a tremendous failure, and a great success at the same time. The 75 people living there are a far cry from the 5,000 it was expected to contain. On the other hand thousands of people have lived in the small community since it was created, learning the lessons and taking them back to their homes all over the world.

You can tour Arcosanti and even spend a week living the community. To learn more go to www.arcosanti.org. <http://www.arcosanti.org/>