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Reuse popular with recyclers
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Like other Madisonians, Mark Shults and his wife, Nancy Vedder-Shults, are dutiful recyclers, making sure their household items such as cans, bottles and newspapers stay out of the trash and are taken away to be turned into other items.

But they are going well beyond that. They are working to recycle and are committing to have reused as much as they can from a Lake Mendota cottage they are demolishing to make way for a new one.

The 1,800-square-foot cottage at 5110 Spring Court, was too energy inefficient and too old to be moved, they said. So, with the aid of Madison Environmental Group (MEG), a local environmental consulting firm, the couple joined a growing movement to recycle and have reused as much of the material in the cottage as they can.

While Madison has an ordinance requiring that a demolition project have a reuse and recycling plan, Shults and his wife decided to get directly involved, instead of leaving things to a contractor "We felt it was the right thing to do," he said.

It's just one example of a recycling trend, according to experts.

The reuse and recycling concept is gathering interest in Madison and nationally, said Robert Falk, a researcher at the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory and coordinator and chairman of DECON '07, a national conference being held in Madison next Monday through Wednesday on reusing and recycling building materials.

"In the last five to seven years, it's becoming a much greater focus. There's always been some elements of recycling or trying to reuse some material, but it certainly is becoming more predominant," said Jeff Tubbs, director of business development at, J.H. Findorff and Son, one of Madison's major construction firms.

According to MEG, nearly 24,500 tons of building material from the Capitol West development project, which began in 2005 to redevelop the 300 block of West Washington Avenue, was recycled instead of being dumped in a landfill.

A key point in the effort to recycle construction materials, said David Waisman, vice president of MEG, was the building of the Overture Center, which began in 2001.

Findorff received a \$78,416 demonstration grant from the state Department of Natural Resources to assess the feasibility of the idea.