

## **Award for Corofin man's eco-heating firm**

Corofin man David McHugh was in Frankfurt at the weekend where he received on behalf of his firm, ProAir, the coveted Passive House accreditation for the company's Heat Recovery Ventilation product. Coillte Ireland were the only other award winners at the event in Germany.

This system uses the heat in air being extracted from a house to pre-warm fresh air from the outside. Passive Houses are energy efficient and it is claimed that heating bills can be as low as a tenth of what some other heating systems can cost.

David McHugh says that new technology plays a major part in cutting the cost of heating homes using the ProAir system.

“As with most things nowadays, computer software is involved. This software allows you to build an energy model for your house before you build the actual house.

“When all the information on your building is entered it will tell you exactly how the building will perform and what your energy bills will be. A central part of this is to have a strategy to make the building air-tight and draught-proof,” says David.

He added that apart from the low running costs, in order to perform, these buildings that are designed and built to the Passive House standard also guarantee high levels of comfort and a better than normal indoor air quality.

David says that this award is the culmination of 18 months of hard work where the product has been rigorously tested.

Thousands of trained Passive House designers around the world will now have a direct link through the software to this small Galway based manufacturer as ProAir is the sole representative of the system for Ireland and the UK.

“Although there are around a dozen manufacturers of the type of product in the UK, to date none have achieved this quality mark of Passive House certification.” said the Corofin man.

Dr Wolfgang Feist is a building physicist who decided to approach building his own house in a scientific way back in 1989. His and his wife set up the Passive House institute which develops the software, trains the users and certifies the buildings as well as the components used.

This way of building has now been copied over 80,000 times worldwide. Each April, the institute organises an international conference where over 1,000 building professionals gather to learn from each other.

Ireland punches way above its size in its adoption and its support for the Passive House concept. Apart from private house builders using the system, the Dunlaoire-Rathdown council recently voted to adopt the standard in its new five year plan. It is the first local authority in Ireland or the UK to do so.

“This is one of the reasons why our firm has invested resources into acquiring this accreditation and we moved the ProAir company to a 700 square meter manufacturing facility in Castlegar.

“We expect this certification to have a positive impact on our exports,” concluded David.



**Award winner David McHugh, Corofin of ProAir (left) with Dr. Wolfgang Feist founder of International Passive House Institute, Germany and David Murray of Coillte Ireland (right) at the awards ceremony in Frankfurt.**