

- **What's in a Tent?**

Posted on Monday, August 10, 2009 by Halley O'Bryne

When the team was talking way back about where we were going to be building our house, it took some serious thinking. Where could you build an unusual, modular house with expensive components that need protection from the elements, especially working through harsh winter months on a tight schedule? A few options were discussed, such as finding a warehouse, but the temporary nature of the project, the cost of a lease and the likely non-central location of a large, vacant warehouse made this seem less favorable. When the tent idea was pitched, it seemed like a good fit.



Having worked for a local tent company called Warner Shelter Systems Ltd. (WSSL) over two summers, I thought it might be worthwhile to speak with owner Kurt Warner, also the tent designer and engineer, about our unique project. Way back in February '08, SolAbode team member David Silburn and I met with Mr. Warner, discussing the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Decathlon, our house design, and tents. The meeting evolved into a great talk on other topics, including broad sustainability issues. His enthusiasm for renewable technologies and energy efficiency seemed promising, and surely enough led to the current partnership between SolAbode and WSSL.

The tent structures in the multitude of shapes and sizes available have sheltered innumerable events and operations since Kurt founded WSSL over 30 years ago. Trade shows, major sporting events, industrial warehouses, airplane hangars, outdoor festivals, concerts, you name it - WSSL's structures can be found all over North America and even internationally (including those big tents at the Calgary Stampede). The SolAbode is currently being constructed under a Modular Clearspan MOD 4X with 14 ft. walls, just the right size for the project. Kurt mentioned this to me once: a tent he provides is only a shell - it's all about what's on the inside.

For more tent pictures see [Flickr March 7](#) and for more info about WSSL and what it does see [WSSL](#).