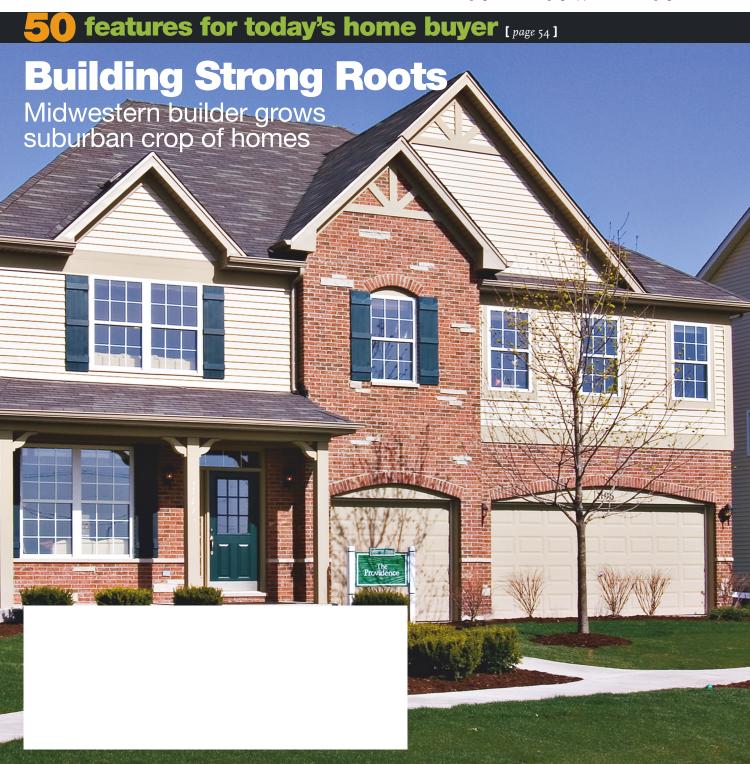


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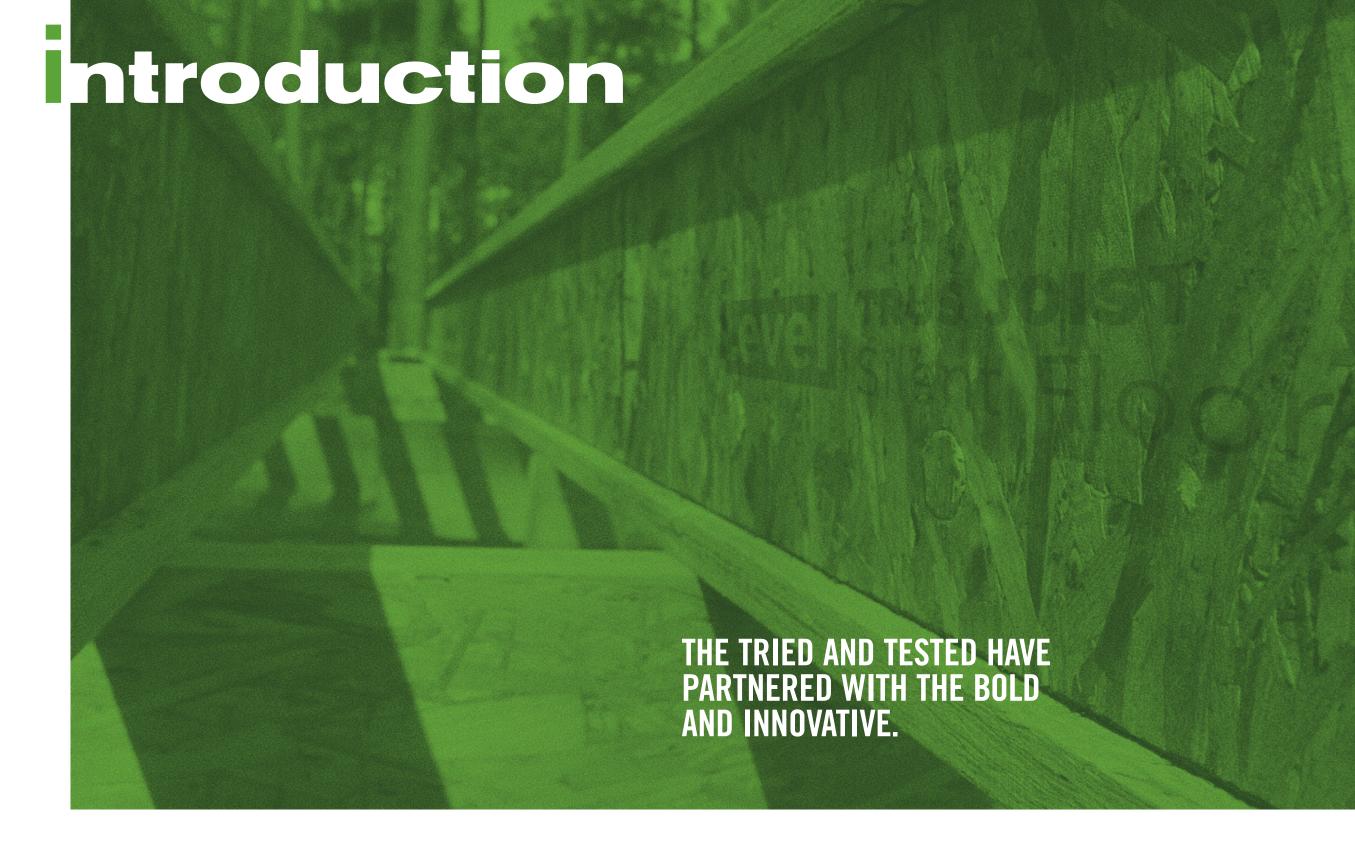
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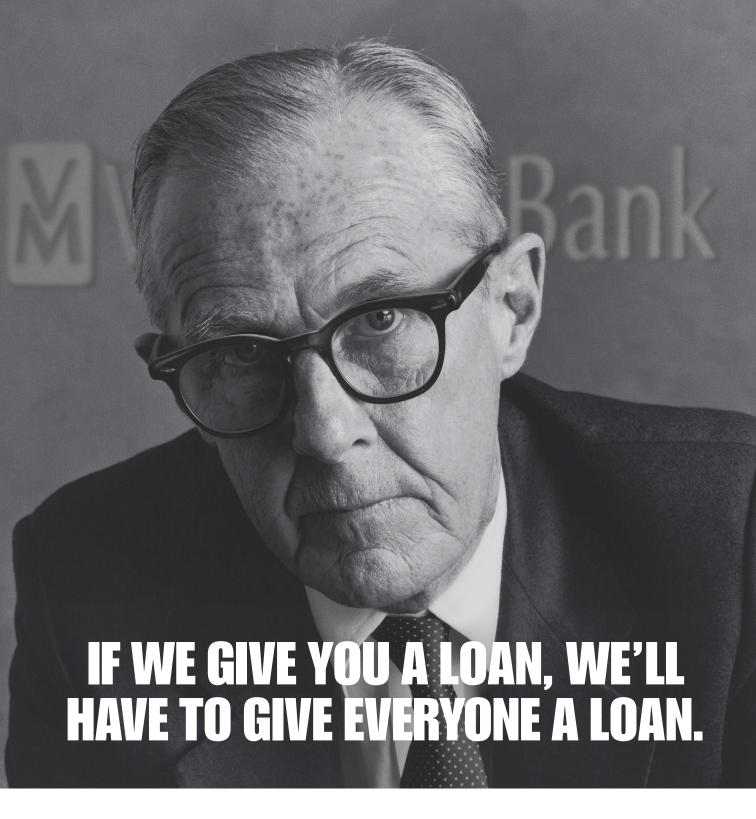


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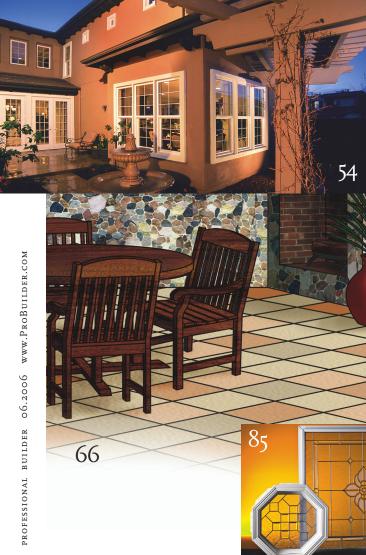
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Sprinklers and Storms

Hot Debate

The NAHB pays close attention to discussions about mandating residential fire sprinklers (Debate Rages, April I). Home builders must be advocates for the families who will buy new homes and who are affected by the costs of excessive regulation.

One correction to the story: Although the 2006 International Residential Code (IRC) does reference the use of residential fire sprinklers, the information is not contained in the body of the code, but in the appendix. Should a local jurisdiction choose to mandate sprinklers, the model code requirements are available there and must be adopted separately.

This placement echoes the stance of NAHB regarding residential fire sprinklers, which we believe should remain voluntary. Proponents of mandatory installation in new home construction often cite frightening and, unfortunately, flawed statistics when they make their pitch. However, there exists no definitive study demonstrating that mandating residential sprinklers is a cost-effective solution.

What is proven, however, is that modern home construction techniques, the use of smoke alarms and fire safety education for consumers have combined to dramatically reduce the instance of death and injury from fire.

GERALD M. HOWARD

NAHB Executive Vice President and
Chief Executive Officer

Washington, D.C.

Storm-Resistant Roofing

Storm-Resistant Roofing in the March issue of *Professional Builder* caught my attention. Because the effects of hurricanes and tornadoes in North America are a significant issue, I read the recommendations for storm resistant roofing with enthusiasm.

That was until I reached the section on wind and impact-resistant covering. I was expecting to read a few lines on the strong wind resistance of metal roofs. To my surprise only standing-seam metal roofs and impact-resistant asphalt shingles were mentioned, and the UL test numbers listed referred to the asphalt-shingle testing and impact resistance of prepared roof covering materials.

I just want to add that granular-coated metal roof panels also perform great during storms. Choosing the appropriate wind and impact resistant roof is always important, especially in hurricane and tornado prone areas. However, no matter what type of covering is chosen performance is affected by numerous factors,

including installation practices, job site conditions, time of year, weather, temperature, microclimate variations and other specific circumstances (ulstandardsinfonet.ul.com).

ALLEN REID, PRESIDENT DURA-LOC ROOFING SYSTEMS Courtland, Ontario

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A builder. Our new Double Hung Window. Perfect match. This alluring window's specs read like a dream come true for builders tired of settling for less: A higher DP rating. Ultrex,®

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Common Vision

For most builders, strategic planning entails sitting on the deck, frosty mug in hand, and daydreaming about what their company could be if they just had enough breathing room to put together a plan. In fact, the only real breathing room for builders often is that brief respite on the back deck.

It is essential to devote time to strategic planning. Just imagining you'll expand into a new market doesn't get you there; it's the business equivalent of closing your eyes, tapping your heels three times and saying, "There's no place like home."

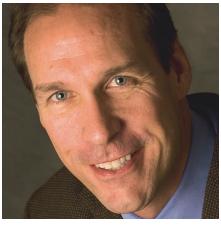
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So why don't more builders have clearly defined strategic planning processes? Why do so many believe planning is merely associated with a single development, new service or market?

I think it has to do with the cyclical nature of home building. Home builders feel there are so many forces beyond their control affecting their businesses that planning is almost impossible — better to be prepared to react to the buffeting winds than to plot a course.

Now that I've established that straw man argument, let me knock it down. First, the cyclical nature of home building is nothing compared to what it was in the 70s and 80s. Then, a five-year span could include the peak of production and the nadir. Now, we suffer mini-peaks and valleys. Second, strategic planning does far more than plot a course for your company. In truth, I believe its value is greater for the cohesive effect it has on your employees than for the strong direction it gives your business.

Consider this. When you go through a strategic planning process, you engage your entire staff in the future success of the business. The result is employees either buy the plan or reject it. I can't tell you how exciting it is to see a freshly energized staff member who sees a clear



future for both the business and his or her own. When employees know where the company is going they can identify a vital role for themselves in that success.

Equally important is the ability to identify employees who are not on the bus. You know the person; he sits in the meetings, tight-lipped and barely participating. Often he is a long-tenured employee who others view as vital to the operation. But after a couple of strategic planning sessions, you know this person doesn't believe in the vision.

This person, who may be a cancer in your company, often opts out because he recognizes there is no future within your walls. At the very least, strategic planning allows you to tie employee performance to company goals, making it easier to transition (what a lovely phrase) the employee.

The communication of a common vision to all employees is the most valuable tool you have. Strategic planning is the method for both establishing the vision and communicating it. At the very least, it's more effective than drinking and daydreaming on the back deck.**PB**

and D. Hab auch

Paul Deffenbaugh Editorial Director 630.288.8190 paul.deffenbaugh@reedbusiness.com

INSULATION IS NOT ENOUGH

HOW TO IMPROVE THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY, COMFORT, COST OF OWNERSHIP AND DURABILITY OF HOMES

Why Insulation is Not Enough

The fact is, you can't achieve the kind of energy efficiency your customers want by simply adding insulation. You need an air barrier to stop uncontrolled air leakage. The United States Department of Energy reports that over 30-40 percent of the cost of heating and cooling a home is lost to uncontrolled air leakage.

In addition to costing the homeowner money, air leakage also contributes to problems with moisture, mold growth, thermal comfort, noise, dust and pollutants, as well as premature structural deterioration and ice damming.

Glass fiber insulation will not stop air leakage¹, no matter how much you install. In fact, if you visit older homes you might see dirty, discolored glass fiber—a telltale sign of air movement, as it collects dirt like a filter.

With uncontrolled air leakage, the furnace and air conditioner have to work harder to maintain the indoor environment. COMFORT FOAM® combination insulation and air barrier eliminates uncontrolled air leakage by contributing to a monolithic, air impermeable building envelope system. This allows the heating and cooling equipment to do its job uncompromised by having to make up for the air it is conditioning leaving the house.

Increasing the operating efficiency of the heating and cooling equipment reduces energy consumption and therefore energy costs. The inclusion of an effective air barrier system may allow the equipment to be downsized—in some cases by a substantial amount.

¹ AIR SEALING: Seal air leaks and save energy! Technology Fact Sheet, Office of Building Technology, State and Community Programs, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, US Department of Energy

Breaking News:

Building America Launches Field Test Comparing COMFORT FOAM® with Traditional Systems

Building America, a private/public partnership sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, has launched a field study to measure the real-world energy-efficiency performance of COMFORT FOAM® medium-density (2 lb), closed-cell spray-applied polyurethane foam insulation and air barrier compared with traditional insulation systems, including glass fiber batts, damp-spray cellulose and low-density (1/2 lb), open-cell sprayapplied foam.

The study is being conducted by Building Science Consortium and Venture, Inc. and comprises four test homes in an affordable housing development in Royal Oak Township, near Detroit, MI. The houses are one-and-a-half-story, three-bedroom cape-style designs with conditioned basements and cathedral ceilings, offering 1260 ft² of living space with 444 ft² of unfinished, conditioned basement. The four test homes are identical except for the insulation systems, and all are expected to achieve 37 percent whole-house energy savings compared with the Building America Benchmark.

The study will include an evaluation of the speed and ease of installation, multiple short-term energy monitoring tests, and air leakage and flow characteristics testing using a blower door, duct blaster and flow hood, as per RESNET standards.

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The Chemical Company

BASF Polyurethane Foam Enterprises LLC

Making Foam Pay:

The Dollars and Sense of Using the Most Efficient Insulation and Air Barrier

Homebuyers want a lower cost of ownership over the long-term. One of the best ways for builders to provide customer satisfaction and profit from it—is to use COMFORT FOAM® closed-cell, spray-applied polyurethane foam: a fully-tested, proven combination insulation and air barrier.

Most developers cite the slightly higher upfront material cost of closed-cell polyurethane foam insulation as their primary reason for not using it more often. The Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing (PATH) estimates the installed costs for various insulation products1, as shown below.

Sheep's Wool Blown Insulation (attic) some degree, still conducts thermal energy. To eliminate thermal bridging through wood stud systems, the insulation must be in contiguous/ intimate (fully-adhered) contact with the studs. Batts, blown-in and board stock materials do not exhibit this characteristic and, therefore, do not reduce the potential for thermal bridging, SPF, as a fully-adhered, fluid-applied insulation material, all but eliminates thermal bridging in a 2 x 4 structure at an application thickness of three inches.

COMFORT FOAM insulation provides both superior insulation performance at over R-6 ner inch and virtual air imnermeability

| isulation products, as shown below. A-o per inch and virtual all impermeabili | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------|--|
| Insulation | Cost / ft ² | Cost / 1,200 ft² home | R-value | |
| Spray-Applied Polyurethane Foam (3" application) | \$1.25 to \$2.25 | \$1,500 to \$2,700 | R-19 | |
| Spray Foam (1" application with R-19 batt) | \$1.60 | \$1,920 | R-25 | |
| Glass Fiber Batt Insulation | \$0.70 | \$840 | R-19 | |
| Cellulose Wall-Spray | \$1.20 | \$1,440 | R-19 | |
| Cotton Batt Insulation | \$1.20 | \$1,440 | R-19 | |
| Sheep's Wool | \$2.40 | \$2,880 | R-19 | |
| | | | | |

\$1,740 to \$2,940

\$600

Costs will vary according to local product availability and material cost, labor rates, and thickness of insulation.

\$0.50

\$1.45 to \$2.45

What these figures don't take into account is the need to also control air leakage. If you want to build a truly energy efficient home, insulation alone is not enough. You need an effective air barrier system to make a home truly efficient.

Cementitious Foam through a Membrane

Air moves around, through and behind traditional insulation materials. As we add insulation thickness (R-value) in hopes of raising energy efficiency, we in effect promote convection loops within the insulation. Energy efficiency is lost through the movement of cold air around glass fiber materials, and the phenomenon exists in low-density, dry-blown cellulose, wool and almost every blown-in insulation product. Board stock, although not subject to internal convection loops. loses effectiveness through loops behind the insulation boards themselves. If the edges are not fully and completely sealed to one another, warm or cool air can flow around them and may account for an energy efficiency reduction of up to 15 percent.

Thermal bridging is another factor that can affect energy efficiency when using traditional materials. Wood, although an insulator to

in a single installation. COMFORT FOAM insulation and air barrier offers a closed-cell content of greater than 90 percent and meets ASTM 1029/SPFA guidelines when applied at only 1.5-inch thickness. COMFORT FOAM also surpasses ASTM E-2178 at 0.0001 L/s/m² @ 75 Pa.

R-38

R-19

It should be noted that open-cell foams used for insulation have approximately 60 percent open-cell content and have far greater air and vapor transmission characteristics, with an R-value of 3.5 per inch. Although open-cell foams tend to be slightly less expensive to install than closed-cell formulations, this cost advantage is often lost due to the need to apply over four times as much material when using an open-cell foam as an air barrier.

Unlike traditional insulation materials that do not offer native air leakage control and therefore require an additional air barrier (polvethylene, airtight drywall, etc.) to be installed, with COMFORT FOAM, your outlay of \$1.25 to \$2.25 per square-foot gives you two integral systems-insulation and air barrier-in one. That means a much faster installation—an average crew can complete a 1200-ft2 house in less than a day-for a substantial reduction in labor costs. It also means you're not shelling out even more money for additional materials.

LOWER ENERGY, INSTALLATION AND LIFECYCLE COSTS

Because insulating air barrier systems combine superior insulation with total air leakage control, they allow HVAC requirements to be reduced at the design phase. Lower installation labor costs and a lifecycle that lasts throughout the structure's life expectancy combine to make the COMFORT FOAM insulation and air barrier one of the most cost-effective solutions available today.

A residential study by ADVANCED CERTIFIED THERMOGRAPHY shows that COMFORT FOAM installations can help reduce energy costs by as much as 60 percent each year compared to traditional insulation systems. With escalating energy costs, realized savings may be even greater.

COMFORT FOAM insulation and air barrier can also contribute to obtaining energy-efficiency incentives under the Federal Energy Policy Act of 2005. Under the Act, builders of site-built or manufactured homes are eligible for a rebate of \$2,000 for energy-efficiency measures that achieve 50 percent savings over the 2004 IECC Standard.

Existing homes can also benefit from using COMFORT FOAM insulation and air barrier, as well as ZERODRAFT® insulating air seal materials under the Energy Policy Act. Envelope improvements to existing homes that meet the 2003 IECC and supplements are eligible for a rebate equal to 10 percent of the cost of improvements, up to \$500.

The DOE offers financial assistance opportunities through the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) and other incentives are available through more than 60 ENERGY STAR® incentive programs. In addition, special mortgages for energy efficient homes are offered by more than 40 different agencies across the United States.

BASF Polyurethane Foam Enterprises LLC is associated with the ENERGY STAR Insulation Program and an ally in the ENERGY STAR Homes Builder Program. This program offers Energy Efficiency Mortgaging (EEM) that

| | COMFORT FOAM® | Glass Fiber | Wool | Blown Cellulose | Open-Cell Foam |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| R-Value | 6.0 | 3.0 | 3.5 | 3.0 | 3.5 |
| | Yes | | | | Yes |
| Approved Air Barrier System | Air leakage <0.001 L/s/m² @ 75 Pa at 1.5" thickness | No | No | No | Air leakage 0.005 L/s/m² @ 75 Pa at 5.5" thickness |
| Seamless Construction | Yes | No | No | No | Yes |
| Rigid | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Fully Adhered | Yes | No | No | No | Yes |
| Adds Structural Strength | Yes | No | No | No | No |
| Long Service Life | Yes | No | No | No | Yes |
| Absorbs Water | <4% v/v | Yes | Yes | Yes | >40% v/v |
| Allows Moisture Vapor In | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

may help borrowers to qualify for additional mortgage dollars.

WHAT ABOUT DURABILITY?

Because the BASF Polyurethane Foam Enterprises air barrier materials are seamless and fully adhered, they actually add structural strength and will not settle or sag over time, unlike traditional insulation systems.

Testing conducted by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Research Center shows spray-applied polyurethane foam insulation between wood- and steel-stud wall panels increased rack and shear two to three times over standard stick-built components and glass fiber insulation when sprayed onto gypsum wallboard or vinyl siding, and increased racking strength by 50 percent when sprayed onto oriented strandboard (OSB).

Results from testing conducted by the National Research Council (NRC) of the Canadian Construction Materials Centre (CCMC) show spray-applied polyurethane foam air barriers offering long-term durability greater than or equal to the building's expected life span³. They also show that 16-inch centered studs incorporating closed-cell polyurethane foam may be moved out to 48 inches and still maintain racking and structural loads according to Code.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

COMFORT FOAM insulation and air barrier uses ZONE3® zero-ozone-depleting blowing agent technology, contains no urea formaldehyde and emits no volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Also, the award-winning BASF Eco-Efficiency Analysis assesses total cost and ecological impact over the product lifecycle to benchmark current performance and get insight for future improvements.

The COMFORT FOAM system is accepted by all major building codes, including the International Code Council encompassing both commercial and residential applications. Accredited third-party testing of the COMFORT FOAM system using ASTM E 283-(04)⁴ and E 2178 proves that COMFORT FOAM insulation is a Building Code-recognized air barrier material.

PERFORMANCE ATTRIBUTES

Typical applications for COMFORT FOAM spray-applied polyurethane foam material in the building envelope system include:

- Wood framing
- Metal framing
- Foundations
- Slab on grade
- Walls
- Floors
- Crawl spaces
- Attics
- Garages
- Cathedral ceilings
- Rim/band joists
- Bonus rooms

Rising energy costs are fueling a demand among educated homebuyers for energy-efficient, sustainable, comfortable houses. Incentives from all levels of government, as well as local utilities, help raise awareness, desirability and affordability of energy efficient homes. Is it any wonder that developers, architects and contractors are actively seeking cost-effective, environmentally responsible ways to build homes with reduced energy demands?

- 1 TOOLBASE™ TECHSPECS: Alternative Insulation Materials, Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing.
- Home Performance Brochure, 1999, sponsored by Home Energy Magazine, Affordable Comfort Institute and US Department of Energy.
- 3 Canadian Construction Materials Centre (CCMC), Evaluation Report 12932-R, National Research Council (NRC) of Canada.
- 4 Test Method for Determining the Rate of Air Leakage Through Exterior Windows, Curtain Walls and Doors Under Specified Pressure Differences Across the Specimen

ZERODRAFT® Insulating Air Sealants Play a Key Role in the BASF Near-Zero Energy HomePaterson, N.J.

ZERODRAFT® single- and plural-component insulating air sealants are making a key contribution to the building envelope system of the BASF Near-Zero Energy Home-Paterson, N.J.

Built as part of the BASF Better Home, Better Planet Initiative, the BASF Near-Zero Energy Home-Paterson, N.J., features a high performance building envelope, or exterior wall system. Fast-curing ZERODRAFT® insulating foam sealants are used to join the Structural Insulating Panels (SIPs) and Insulating Concrete Forms (ICFs) together and create complete air barrier continuity between all the components of the building envelope of the BASF Near-Zero Energy Home-Paterson, N.J.

Plural-component polyure than einsulating air sealants and single-component polyure than e foam sealants are installed from within the building structure to seal and insulate 'hard-to-build' areas, such as windows, doors, penetrations, parapets and soffits to create insulating air barrier system continuity from the foundation up through the walls and across the roof.

The BASF Near-Zero Energy Home-Paterson, N.J., recently achieved a HERS rating of 95.5—more than 78 percent better than the Model Energy Code.

By sealing gaps, cracks, leaks and holes within the building envelope and creating air barrier continuity, ZERODRAFT foam sealants have helped lower energy demand and consumption in all types of commercial, institutional, multi-unit and single-family residential buildings—both new construction and retrofit—across North America.

Are All Spray Foam Insulations Created Equal?

No. And the reason is chemistry.

You probably don't spend a lot of time thinking about chemistry when you choose insulation to improve energy efficiency. Yet one popular insulation material—spray-applied polyurethane foam (SPF)—relies entirely on chemical cleverness.

Spray-applied polyurethane foam is a two-component product that is manufactured on-site, but engineered in the molecular level to optimize performance for a specific application.

Currently, three types of spray-applied polyurethane foam are commonly used within the construction industry:

- medium-density (MD) 24 kg/m³ to 48 kg/m³ (1.5 pcf to 3 pcf)
- low-density (LD) 8 kg/m³ to 12 kg/m³ (0.5 to 0.7 pcf)
- sealant foams

The most important distinction is whether the formulation produces an open-cell or closed-cell foam. MD foams are formulated to have a closed-cell content of greater than 90 percent, combined with an effective R-value of over 6.0 per inch. LD, open-cell foams have approximately 60 percent open-cell content and offer an R-value between 3.0 and 3.6 per inch.

But R-values are only the beginning when it comes to energy efficiency. The air permeability capabilities are the true differentiator.

To make a building truly energy efficient, it needs an effective, continuous air barrier system, as well as insulation. Without it, conditioned air escapes through the building envelope, and the HVAC system has to work harder to keep the indoor environment comfortable.

Most open-cell foams have not been tested for the function and, therefore, do not qualify as air barrier systems in 'typical thickness' of less than four inches. One open-cell foam manufacturer's product requires an application of 5.5 inches (its maximum allowable thickness) to pass the minimum requirements of ASTM International E 2178, Standard Test Method for Air Permeance of Building Materials (air leakage rate of 0.02 L/s/m² @ 75 Pa).

Compare this with closed-cell foams, some of which provide air leakage rates of <0.001 L/s/m² @ 75 Pa at 1.5-inch thickness.

Because the systems are spray-applied, fully-adhered and seamless, they also eliminate connective loops behind the insulation and, therefore, eliminate moisture. And since mold requires three things to grow—moisture, warm temperatures and a food source—and closed-cell foams do not provide any of these things, MD, closed-cell SPF can help to prevent dangerous mold growth.

Both closed-cell SPF systems and open-cell foams have low environmental impact, have no adverse effect on the ozone layer and do not emit volatile organic compounds.

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3 H

Proactive Solutions

>> BILL LURZ, SENIOR EDITOR, BUSINESS

Spec Carefully

Many builders are discounting to move homes, a reason experts warn spec production should slow

The latest data the U.S. Census Bureau and HUD released shows the inventory of completed but unsold new houses on the market reached 128,000 in March — the highest level ever recorded since 1973.

"This is certainly not a time to be building a lot of specs," says Littleton, Colobased management consultant and *Professional Builder* columnist Chuck Shinn, "especially with the public builders' discounting homes by \$100,000 or more to try to maintain their sales velocities."

Fannie Mae Chief Economist David Berson notes the March inventory of completed homes represents a fourmonth supply at the March sales pace, which is less than more than 4-month supply recorded in January this year, when the completed inventory stood at 120,000.

Berson cites three categories: houses with permits but not started, houses under construction and those completed but not sold. "The first two components have been at record levels for several months, but builders can eat permits and just not start those houses. They can change houses under construction to try to make them more saleable. But when houses are completed, there's not much you can do to move them except use incentives that lower the price.

"It's disturbing that the inventory of completed, unsold houses has now joined the others in record territory," Berson says. "Fortunately, it's still not high in relation to sales. If sales remain strong, these excess inventories can be worked through fairly quickly."

California-based consultant and GIANTS columnist John Burns says

spec sales will not produce the margins builders in many previously hot markets have come to expect. "In many markets where corporate relocations represent a high percentage of buyers, builders have always started many homes as specs. Cutting delivery time enhances the chance of making the sale. But the public builders now seem intent to grow their businesses regardless of the market, so they will sell houses at whatever price is necessary to maintain their velocities."

Burns says the public builders' attempts to lower costs with just-in-time deliveries of materials compounds the problem. "They are trying to get into even-flow," Burns says, "but they hate cutting their rate of production, such as from 10 a day to seven a day. They've got so much profit built into the land in their current communities, I don't look for them to cut back the rate until they face that decision on new communities, where they bought the land last year instead of five years ago.

"Until then, they will sell at whatever price they need to maintain the velocity, and private builders will have to compete with that price," Burns warns.

Shinn suggests builders use a formula to keep spec inventories from getting too high: "Take the last three months of sales and multiply by four to get your current annual sales rate. Then keep your specs at no more than 20 percent of that total. The spec starts need to go down as the sales pace drops."



>> LAURA BUTALLA, SENIOR EDITOR

Career Help

THE HISPANIC POPULATION IS THE LARGEST MINORITY GROUP in the U.S., but no formal effort had been made to recruit Latinos for the residential building industry – until now.

In March, the Home Builders Institute (HBI) partnered with Beazer Homes and Latinos on Fast Track (LOFT) to launch Team Builders, a first-of-its-kind program designed to introduce Hispanic college students to careers in the home-building industry.

Twenty-five college students will participate in summer internships at Beazer Homes' offices across the U.S.

HBI spearheaded the Team Builders initiative to help Hispanic college students understand an industry they might not consider otherwise, says HBI's Chairman of the Board of Trustees Michael Sivage.

Because Hispanics now make up the largest group of minorities in the U.S., at 14 percent, guiding them to careers through the Team Builders program is particularly important, HBI officials say.

HBI also predicts more than two-thirds of the overall workforce growth will consist of Latino workers in the next 15 years, with less than one percent in management positions.

"This program will help us connect with a previously untapped workforce and give young Hispanic people the opportunity to experience the home-building industry at a critical decision-making time in their lives," says lan McCarthy, president and CEO of Beazer Homes. "We hope their internships will be personally rewarding and enlightening."













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LESSONS LEARNED

Man's Best Friend

A lesson in builder/supplier/trade relationships.

A strange and sadly touching thing happened today. Our two family pets died within eight hours of each other, both of old age and natural causes.

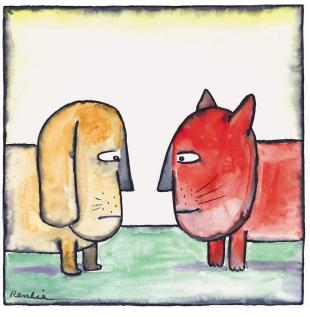
They came into our busy family of six more than 12 years ago. Alexi (aka "Lex"), a 100pound mutt of English Setter vintage with overtones of Lab, Rottweiler and Coon Hound, was a beautiful, energetic, kidloving chaser and occasional catcher of rabbits, squirrels and geese. He was your best friend within 10 seconds of meeting. Jenny was a tiny, 7-pound classic "tortie" who spent much of her life in typical cat aloofness. She would hide from any visitor, yet much to our surprise, she became openly friendly and affectionate in her final vears. I think she adopted this from Lex, seeing that he was doing much better getting treats and scraps.

Lex and Jenny didn't come off as best pals, and I don't have any heartwarming, anthropomorphic stories about how they worked out their differences with the help of a friend over a can of tuna. Yet these natural enemies were in the same house 24 hours a day for more than 12 years and were never once kenneled. Imagine that, being with someone virtually every minute of your life. Over those 12 years they developed a relationship that

was subtle but very supportive. I can't recall one instance of a hiss or a growl between them after their first month together. Many times I caught Jenny up on Lex's elevated dog bowl stand, stealing bits of his food while he ate. He, likewise, would invade her food and water domain in the basement, and she didn't seem to mind.

As I sat looking at them lying side by side where I had placed them on the cold floor of our pump house, I mentally calculated the statistical odds they would both die on the same day. If you take a two-year period either side of an average life expectancy for such animals, it comes out to more than one in two million! You may think its coincidence, but my family can only conclude that they were far more tied together emotionally than we could have imagined. Their relationship ran deep.

If you have been reading my columns over the past eight years, you know what comes next, but I can't blame you if you are wondering, "Now how is Sedam going to tie THIS story to home building?" It is surprisingly easy, because I am just wrapping up



If there is one thing that has truly changed for the better, it is that, by and large, the industry has finally 'gotten it.'" the most intense two-month period of work in my entire life – weeks on end of 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays plus Saturday mornings, Sunday afternoons and evenings.

It has taken that level of attention to pull off a conference that we are holding next week called Alliance TrueNorth's Executive Conference. Reaching our goal became doubtful due to a combination of the recentlyhammered home-building economy, deciding too late to go ahead with plans and being new to the conference game. Yet we have done it, people have responded and I know why. It is because of the message. The singular focus of Alliance is building productive, high-performance relationships among builders, suppliers and trade contractors. It's

a message whose time has finally come, and strange as it may seem, the passing of Lex and Jenny gave me some insight on that.

When I began concentrating exclusively on the building industry in the late 80s, the first and most obvious missing factor was a focus on customers. If there is one thing that has truly changed for the better, it is that, by and large, the industry has finally "gotten it." Many builders are still not executing well, but we have accepted that creating customer

delight through a total customer experience is not just the right thing to do; it is good business and it pays.

That took most of the 90s. Since then, we have made significant strides in the next most obvious factor, which is a commitment to our employees. The

best builders are beginning to value and thus manage their employee resources as much as they do land, inventory or money. We have a long way to go, but there are now solid models out there: builders who point the way for the rest of the industry.

Yet, as I have said many times over the years, ultimately you cannot treat your customers better than you treat your own people, and that includes your suppliers and trades. This is not just a common sense notion any more. We have data that correlates high customer satisfaction with high supplier/trade satisfaction. Few builders though — even most of the more progressive ones seem to understand this. When I make these statements, I always get support. Yet when I look for specific evidence and behaviors that demonstrate how a builder is proactively building longterm positive relationships with suppliers and trades, I see very little genuine substance. Just because you have a trade appreciation breakfast and pass out T-

shirts now and then doesn't mean you have what it takes.

In these days of tightening markets and shrinking overheads, the builder/supplier/trade relationship is more critical than ever. As I detailed in my April column, (see "Your Choice in Cost Control") there is 10 times as much money in house costs as in overhead. Add in land development's price and it's 12-15 times more. That is where the real money is, and the quality of the supplier and trade relationships determines how

well you can get at it in a way that still allows the highest levels of customer satisfaction. As far as the most powerful tools for cost reduction go — even-flow, Six Sigma and lean manufacturing techniques — without the very strongest relationships, don't even think about

it working.

It's a troubling notion for many, but we have to face the fact that, presuming you know how to manage land and finance, relationships are the single greatest key to success in this business. What we so often assume are naturally adversarial, competitive relationships don't have to be. The old models of "hammer the trades" and playing one supplier off against the other are counterproductive. There is a new paradigm of high-level cooperation, and though rarely practiced, it works.

This doesn't mean we have to always be best friends, but mutual respect and trust are the non-negotiable building blocks of any productive relationship. Now challenge yourself: do your relationships with your suppliers and trades stand up to that test? How about your non-construction suppliers, such as marketing consultants, attorneys and bankers? How about your relationships with the communities in which you build? If you are going to manage effectively

through the downturn and beyond, you need these relationships to be the strongest they can be, and for most of us, this requires a change of paradigms.

I can't say that Lex and Jenny were what we'd call best friends. But they found themselves in close proximity and forged a relationship of mutual trust, respect and support in order to please the customer — our family. They knew innately that whatever natural differences they were born with were subordinate to their critical needs of food, shelter, protection and love. We should be so smart. Some of you are, because I've been seeing it out there; there is a genuine movement of builders, suppliers, trades manufacturers and distributors trying to come together and build their relationships on a different level. More than 200 of them have decided to travel to the glamour spot of the nation, Detroit, in a difficult year to work on just that at the Alliance conference. But it doesn't take participation in a conference to help push this movement forward at the local level. It just takes you and a handful of your best suppliers and tradespeople to make the choice and change your world.

I have to go dig a grave now, a big one. I could just drop Lex and Jenny off at the vet, but the kids would never forgive me. Besides, there is this beautiful spot across the meadow along the tree line where the rabbits and squirrels run. Lex and Jenny lived great lives together and I see now that they were smarter than I ever realized. I hope all of us can live as well and be as smart. **PB**

Scott Sedam is President of TrueNorth Development, a nation-wide consulting & training firm focused on quality, process improvement and organizational development. He can be reached at scott@truen. com





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Motivation and Loyalty

The second article in a series dedicated to teaching builders how to retain great employees.

Motivated employees tend to be happier **employees**, and happy employees tend to stick around longer than unhappy ones – and do better work. Not exactly groundbreaking news, is it?

Last month we introduced the link between employee motivation and loyalty, i.e. the more motivated an employee is within a company, the more likely the employee will want to continue working there and thrive. On the flip side, employees who are not motivated by their work are more apt to look for motivators elsewhere.

The theory is based on research by Dr. Frederick Herzberg, former director at PSP, a human resource development firm in Pittsburgh. For the past 13 years, PSP has interviewed and tested virtually every management-level candidate for one of the top 10 builders in the U.S. (visit www. ProBuilder.com/bestpractices to see what PSP learned).

Personal motivators can change during the course of a person's career. For example, general management candidates are typically further along in their careers than those in sales or construction management. Therefore, money and authority become somewhat less important; for the most part, they have already been achieved and no longer serve as the primary drivers. And the number of motivators tends to

increase as a person climbs the corporate ladder, e.g. a CEO will have more motivators than a mid-level manager.

Now that we know this, what do we do with it? Two things. First, assess your own personal drivers and use them as a career navigation tool. Don't jump the fence to greener pastures if a new opportunity fails to match most of your personal motivators. Never take a new job for fewer motivators than you have in your present position.

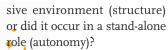
Second, use motivation as an assessment tool as you interview candidates. PSP's Gary Williamson says one way to assess motivation is to take an inventory of what an individual already has achieved; people who are internally motivated usually have an established record of results. Depending on age and experience, these results could be in the workplace, in school, in competitive events or in other activities that demonstrate continuous improvement.

What to look for during interviews:

 Do the individuals' experiences indicate they excel in a highly organized, team-inten-



One way to assess motivation is to take an inventory of what an individual already has achieved; people who are internally motivated usually have an established record of results.



 Do the candidates focus on their own accomplishments (recognition) or do they involve others (influence/coaching)?

One way to affirm your interview conclusions may be through psychological testing. In the hands of a well-trained professional, validated and reliable psychological tests can help identify candidates who are motivated by the kind of rewards a particular employer has to offer. Beyond face-toface interviews, references, etc., these instruments can assess a variety of internal driv-

If a candidate has the necessary skills and aptitudes and their desired rewards align with the motivators available in the position, everyone wins. The candidate is likely to be a motivated, highly productive employee who will want to stay with your organization. PB

Rodney Hall is a senior partner with The Talon Group, a leading executive search firm specializing in the real-estate development and home building industries. He can be reached at rodney@thetalongroup.com.





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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

How Do You Spell Team?

Using Neighborhood Quality Teams to boost customer satisfaction.

There has been a lot of builder buzz surrounding teamwork's ability to boost customer satisfaction with homeowners. But all of the buzz will simply be lip-service if your company doesn't understand what teamwork is and how to create it effectively.

Teamwork can be defined as people working together to achieve a greater goal. But it's more than just working together; it's working effectively together, which is harder to achieve than you think. One way we have helped our clients create the ultimate teams has been to implement Neighborhood Quality Teams (NQTs).

NQTs are buyer-oriented programs that create team synergy and improve communications among a builder's departments.

Truth be told, there has been a lot of challenge to NQTs, but companies that have done them successfully have some of the highest customer satisfaction ratings in the industry.

A major tenet of NQTs is that each community operates as if it were an independent business. To do that, you need to bring together the builder, salesperson, project superintendent, loan officers, designers and warranty personnel on a regular basis to discuss how individual sales are progressing in a specific community. As a team, they should review the flow of deals and discuss the

progress and potential issues with individual homebuyers.

Depending on the state of development, these meetings might need to be held monthly or weekly. People might resist planning around another meeting in their already overbooked schedules; however, to benefit from employees' working together in a synergistic manner, it is imperative everyone participate.

To ensure attendance and participation, senior management must believe in the concept and lead by example. It also helps if the NQT has a set time and place to meet. Attendance should be mandatory, with any absences approved in advance by the NQT leader. Team members must understand that their participation on the NQT is a priority.

Setting the Agenda

Once you have the team together, make efficient use of everyone's time by having a detailed agenda and sticking to it. Some things to include:

 Discuss new home sales and how overall sales are progressing.



There has been a lot of challenge to NQTs, but companies that have done them successfully have some of the highest customer satisfaction ratings in the industry."

- 2. Review homes being built. These should be discussed customer by customer, including where they are in the process, the next major milestone, who is communicating and any problems they are having.
- 3. Analyze customer satisfaction surveys received since the prior meeting. Discuss where these home builders are in the process.
- 4. Develop a list of action items and assign them to individual team members.
- 5. Review action items from the last meeting and discuss whether they are complete or more action is required.

As you can see, the success of this meeting largely depends on team members' being able to gather all of the necessary information and be able to present it in a clear and timely

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Best Practices

>> CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

manner. If a builder's organizational structure doesn't make this information easily accessible to all team members, they won't be able to prepare for the NQT meeting.

Pointing Fingers

It is important to note that the mere existence of an NQT doesn't guarantee a boost in your customer satisfaction ratings. It all depends on how well the team performs.

As problems with individual homebuyers arise during NQT meetings, some employees may be quick to blame and point fingers at other departments. Part of the problem is that the home-building industry comprises different disciplines that are too often fragmented, even within an organization.

It takes a strong and united NQT to mitigate these circumstances. Such teams have clearly defined ground rules regarding the tone and content of discussions. They realize that there are no sacred cows and that honesty and fairness are necessary if the organization is going to successfully face the facts, no matter how cold and brutal they may be.

This is not easy to achieve — especially with overworked and underappreciated staffs. In fact, the inability to work together and to take individual responsibility is another reason why many NQTs fail.

In the end, NQTs are about building a culture where teamwork is a top priority. When employees and departments operate individually without coordination, you are unable to effectively manage customers. But when you have achieved a level of teamwork where the project supervisor can rely on the salesperson to communicate information to the home buyer, or the salesperson can count on the project supervisor to handle a unique request, it has a significant impact on your customers' level of satisfaction.

Some builders are skeptical about the return on investment on NQTs. That is a fair concern. But the very best providers of customer satisfaction remain committed to NQTs because they know they work. They realize that NQTs can bridge the divide between departments and keep everyone's attention on what really matters: the customer. **PB**

Paul Cardis is CEO of NRS Corp., a research and consulting firm specializing in customer satisfaction for the home building industry. He can be reached at pacardis@nrscorp.com.



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my kitchen different from the rest."

While every new home doesn't always offer custom details, the need for individuality and personal expression is in — especially in the kitchen. People don't want the same commonplace stuff that everyone else has. They want their home to stand out and show off their unique personality. They want tailored kitchen solutions that fit their lifestyle.

The secret to delivering these personal solutions without creating the headaches of custom building is having the right selection of brands. The right brands make it easy for builders to create solutions that appeal to homebuyers — and make it easier for you to build business.

Delivering the right brands gives you a real advantage. Here's an easy way to take the

"mass" out of "mass marketing." Rather than choosing from a limited number of standard kitchen solutions, builders can benefit from having a larger portfolio of appliances to put in their homes. This not only allows more options to fit standard home plans — it's an easy way to satisfy the wants and needs of potential homebuyers. Maytag Builder Sales can help you answer the needs of homebuyers because we offer more diverse, quality brand names including Jenn-Air, Maytag and Amana. We understand consumer trends, so we can help you anticipate the appliances homebuyers want to personalize

their homes and fit their families' needs — without compromising your budget, timeline or building plans with custom solutions.

The right brands attract more buyers.

A new home is a clean slate. And choosing quality brands reflects on every aspect of your project. New homebuyers are drawn to quality brands that they trust and that offer unique features to fit their lifestyles.

Your dedicated Maytag Builder Sales team makes it easy and painless for you to bring the best solutions to today's homebuyers. We offer three unique and preferred brands that provide high quality and real innovation. For higherend homes, Jenn-Air® kitchen appliances offer the professional-style, luxury brand name these consumers expect. Maytag® appliances are known for dependability as well as for innovative features and unique configurations that make homeowners' lives easier. And Amana® appliances provide the freedom to fill your kitchens with contemporary, commonsense solutions that reflect today's younger homeowners' desire for style and individuality. Whichever you choose, you'll be sending a message that your homes are filled with quality solutions that are anything but run-of-the-mill.



Innovative solutions differentiate you from the rest. Maytag Builder Sales makes it easy to provide innovative solutions that make kitchens unique, make everyday tasks easier and reflect today's styles. We can suggest the right options to help sell your properties and to fit your appliance allowance.

Stainless steel appliances are all the rage. But some of your higher-end homes may require the individuality of the new high-gloss Floating Glass appliances, downdraft ventilation cooktops or professional-style appliances from the Jenn-Air* brand.

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O NEW HOME KNOWLEDGE

Overcoming with Attitude

John Rymer

Almost every experienced newhome salesperson I know has dealt with a slow selling period in their career. What do you do to reverse the trend and turn around your sales performance? What role does attitude play in the turnaround? And how do you maintain a positive attitude when sales are hard to come by?

Barbara Murtos

California local home builder

Annual unit sales: 67; Annual sales volume: \$27 million

YES, I THINK WE ALL HAVE EXPERIENCED A SLOW PERIOD. I was named Salesperson of the Year in San Francisco and two years later was trying to sell homes with record interest rates and little success. You have to be in touch with yourself. Remember what made you successful. Buyers like to buy from sales people with a positive attitude. When you have a positive attitude, buyers believe what you are saying and look to find ways to do business with you. When they sense doubt in your actions, they look for other alternatives. Everyone has had bad days. I always find myself saying how lucky I am to be in newhome sales – what a great profession this is and how good it has been to me. It keeps me positive and helps me prepare for my next customer – and helps me keep a healthy attitude in life.



Adam Scott

Florida public home builder

Annual unit sales: 68; Annual sales volume: \$14 million

IT ALL BEGINS WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE. People who walk in the door can feel the enthusiasm of a sales associate who is excited about their neighborhood versus someone who sits in their chair and asks the customer if they can be of help. If you are distracted or don't believe in your community, that will come across to your customers. Excited sales people are contagious. People want to buy from people who absolutely believe they have the best community in the market. Also remember that slow sales are not always about you — but always focus on the items you can impact rather than those you can't. Slow sales periods are when I really work on my Realtor contacts and on follow-up with my prior customers. I also like to go visit my existing homeowners and ask them why they bought. It gets you excited as to why they believe you have the best community in the market and a great way to look for referrals as well.

Julie Green

Mid-Atlantic public home builder

Annual unit sales: 56: Annual sales volume: \$ 21 million

HAVE I HAD A DRY PERIOD IN MY CAREER? Absolutely! I think every experienced new-home salesperson has experienced a period when they were wondering if they have lost their touch. You have to be patient with yourself. Tomorrow is new day: a "do over." Attitude is what gets you past the slow time. Take that downtime to catch up on some of the things you have put off; take a tough look at your models, your community and your competition. But remember no matter how much you may be doubting your abilities, when your customer walks in the door it's not about you; you represent your builder. You need a positive attitude no matter what. You owe it to your builder and your team members to put any negative feeling aside and give every customer your best presentation. It won't be long until your enthusiasm pays off.

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On-Your-Lot Gets Hot

Building on scattered sites could seem like easy money to home builders who make their living in high-volume subdivisions. But what they don't know could burn them.

Today, many production builders are jumping into on-your-lot building as a sideline operation, lured by stories of extravagant returns. After all, what is there to fear when building their own house plans on the customer's lot while the customer covers the financing cost? No land, no risk and another way to get a little more bang out of marketing money that's already spent.

As long as builders don't venture too far into the countryside, it seems logical that subdivision supers and trades ought to be able to handle a few of these houses. It's like stealing!

Before committing to this strategy, there are a few things to think about besides the price of gasoline. Leaders in this highly specialized niche market have advice, including Houston-based Giant David Weekley, a production builder who made the jump into on-your-lot eight years ago; Ed Martin, a specialist in scattered-lot operations with Tilson Home Corp., a company outside Houston that closed 485 on-your-lot houses all over the eastern half of Texas

in 2005 for more than \$72.7 million in revenue; Ohioan Dave Showers, who built Wayne Homes into a scattered lot juggernaut with 22 percent net profit before selling his company to Centex in 1998.

Critical Leadership

"There's no denying the attraction onyour-lot has for production builders," says Showers. "The cash investment is much less because you don't have to buy land or take down lots from a developer. At Wayne, we didn't have



DAVID WEEKLEY'S ON-YOUR-LOT BERKELEY PLAN is 3,934 square feet, base-priced at \$334,990 to \$341,990 without land. This one is located in the Houston community of Coles Crossing, which has lots large enough to accommodate its nearly 60 by 80 footprint.

any financing expense because we worked off draws from the bank on the customer's construction loan. We paid most of the trades on a 30-day cycle, so we were always ahead of the bills with our draws. Because they owned the job site and got the construction loan, the customer was also responsible for the insurance. But this is a different business, and you'd better understand the nuances of it."

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DAVID WEEKLEY HOMES

Showers is critical of the idea of trying to have subdivision supers manage scattered-lot houses on the side. "That's dangerous," he says. "That's how we started, but we quickly learned how inefficient we were. As we separated from subdivision building, we learned that a good subdivision super isn't necessarily a good scattered-site super.

Because the buyer owns the land, "Customer relations is much more important in on-your-lot," Showers says. "You can't 'fire' him. If you don't make him happy; you don't get paid."

Leadership at the site is particularly critical: "A typical subdivision super is a hands-on guy," Showers says. "He understands construction but is not likely to be well-enough organized to run a job site remotely. He probably doesn't have the skill to anticipate challenges before they happen. The trade crews have to be self-starters in on-your-lot. In most cases, the super won't get to the job site every day. That requires a different management approach. It's about coaching and mentoring as much as supervising."

Showers also notes on-your-lot production building requires greater skill and attention to detail from the entire company. "Blueprint mistakes can be catastrophic," he says. "In a subdivision,

the super can catch such a mistake and improvise a solution. But on a remote job, if you send bad information to the field, it will come back to haunt you. For all of these reasons, it's very hard for people who are used to working for a subdivision builder to be efficient in a scattered-site operation."

Different Strokes

Martin says Tilson finances construction out of retained earnings rather than on the customer's dime, and Martin pays his supers (Tilson calls them 'builders') on commission rather than salary and a bonus, although both sales and supers have full benefits.

"When the customer owns the lot," Martin says, "you have to please him. You have no choice. Our financing construction just emphasizes the point. If they don't close, we not only don't get their money, we lose ours."

What Martin leaves unsaid is that financing construction out of Tilson's retained earnings creates a sales advantage for the firm, which specializes in entry-level and first move-up houses.







Buyers don't need interim financing, so they never have to juggle two house payments at the same time; they can make a down payment of a few hundred dollars and not have to worry about another payment until they close on the house. By that time, they're through paying on their current accommodations.

Tilson's builders drive an average of 300 miles a day, visiting every job at least every other day. But they spend six hours or more in the car in work days that may stretch to 12 hours. Paying commission makes the builders that much more entrepreneurial.

"Our builder has to develop in the trade crews the desire to work for him," Martin says. "We have to develop their talent, skills and confidence to where we can leave them alone for most of the time they're on the job."

The trades also learn to communicate



DAVID WEEKLEY'S ROGERS PLAN, shown here in San Antonio, is 3,169 square feet, and is priced between \$285,990 and \$319,990. It is 48 feet wide by 54 feet deep, and adding a side garage requires another 21 feet in width.

with each other instead of the builder to manage the hand-offs from one trade to the next.

"That's another reason it's hard to for us to bring on new trade crews, especially those used to working in subdivisions. They don't know the people there before them and after them. They don't call and then the others get mad. ...That's why we place so much emphasis on training and quality processes," Martin says.

Tilson's sales grew 27 percent in 2005, and the firm is up another 40 percent in the first third of 2006.

"Unlike our builders, who commute long distances to reach their job sites, our buyers usually work in the area," Martin says. "Many already live on the site, sometimes in a mobile home. While we build on some scattered lots in existing subdivisions, most of our homes — 70 percent — are in unincorporated rural areas as opposed to cities."

Customizing is Key

If you are a production builder and think you can build the same houses on scattered sites, Martin and Showers say you'd better get that idea out of your head. Unlimited customization is the norm, not the exception.

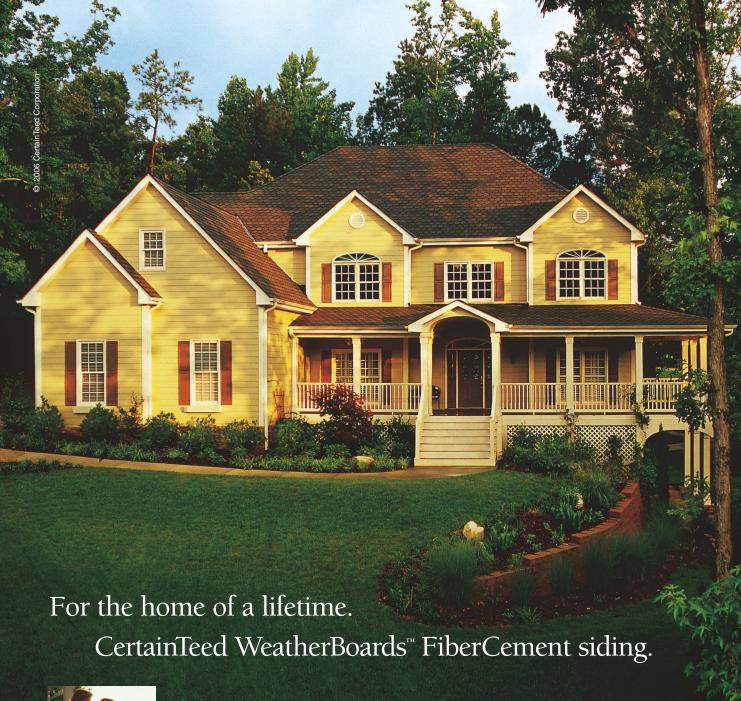
"That was our secret," says Showers. "We did virtually everything the buyer wanted. There were times I'd drive up to a site and not recognize the house as being one of ours. This is the hardest part of the business in my estimation because every house is different, and if you don't have good blueprints and good materials lists, it wreaks havoc in the field. And yet, you have to give the customers what they want."

Tilson has 105 employees, and seven of them are draftsmen working constantly on custom changes. "About five years ago, we were so busy we decided to stop letting people move so many walls," Martin says. "We stopped making structural changes and our business almost died. These people want what they want. They're independent, and remember, it's their house — not ours."

Tilson adopted new processes to find a happy medium. "We have a system with virtually all the changes anyone could make to our plans, pre-priced and constantly updated — so when people ask for a change, we can quote them a price before they leave," Martin says.

Land Mines on the Site

Both Showers and Martin say another on-your-lot building aspect that most





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or visit www.certainteed.com/wb120.

subdivision builders don't understand is the necessity to deal with a variety of site conditions. "A lot of times, people will tell us in the sales office that their site is flat. It looks flat to them," says Martin.

Showers taught his supers to do site assessments. Martin has specialists who inspect the sites and estimate the cost to make the site buildable.

Both of these two specialists in onyour-lot stay away from doing wells, septic systems and most other site improvements. "That's the responsibility of the buyer," says Showers.

"We're experimenting now with selling turn-key, full-site services," Martin says. "We want to see if it brings us more business."

Weekley's Tough Nut

David Weekley Homes created a profit center to do on-your-lot eight years ago, and the principal says he isn't certain he'd do it again if he had it to do over: "We went into it at about the same time we started building big new-home centers on Texas freeways," Weekley says today. "We were already committed to centralizing our options, upgrades and selections processes. So we decided to put an on-your-lot business into those design centers to capitalize on another profit opportunity. We put model homes behind the design centers. We had prospects asking us to build our houses on their lots for years. When we looked into it, we found developers were selling scattered lots all over the Houston area.

But "if you don't have that lot supply, it's a waste of time," Weekley says. "Specialists in on-your-lot always put their models on a well-traveled road. We had the opportunity to do it on a major freeway. It looked like a good idea."

Now he's not so sure. "The challenge is that every house is a one-ofa-kind because every lot is different. Each is in a different community with different restrictions and regulations,"





2-ON GAMES ROOM BE STROOM 3 2-ON GAMES ROOM 116' x 119' TEST FLOOR THERE ROOM 136' 1779'

TILSON HOME CORP.'S

Fredericksburg plan is 3,744 square feet as modeled in Katy, Texas, with a bonus second-floor game room. That brings the price to \$300,100 without land. The base plan is 2,693 square feet at \$220,150. Tilson specializes in entry-level homes, but this model pioneers a new price point for the Houston-based firm.

Weekley says. "And by their nature, onyour-lot buyers are customer-oriented. They want it their way. But they often can't make their dreams fit the reality of what it costs. We had to dedicate a special designer to adjust our plans to their needs."

Second Floor

Weekley also acknowledges that having subdivision builders and trades do this work is a challenge and estimates he increased his hard costs by \$5 to \$10 a square foot.

"You need to have your regular production operations really fine-tuned before you try to get into this," Weekley cautions. "Then you have to find people

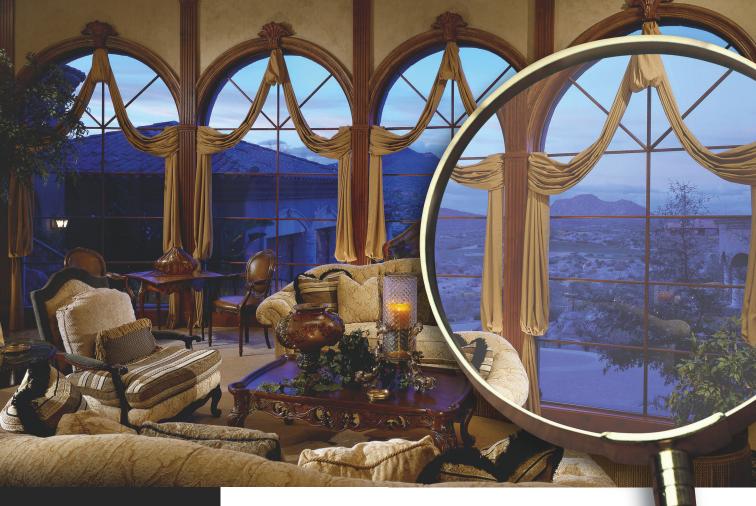
who are very entrepreneurial and willing to spend the driving time required to get this work done. It's very management intensive and not a way to add a lot of volume. We do about 100 houses a year in Houston compared to 1,700 to 1,800 in subdivisions."

Weekley says on-your-lot is working well enough now in Texas that his firm is starting operations north of Atlanta and in Ft. Myers, Fla. "I'm glad we're in it now, but it took a long time make it profitable." **PB**



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KEYNOTES: TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP



Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni is the founder and president of The Table Group, Inc., a specialized management-consulting firm focused on executive team-building and organizational health. He has been described by the One-Minute Manager's Ken Blanchard as "fast defining the next

generation of business thinkers." Pat's passion for organizations and teams is reflected in his writing, speaking and consulting. He is the author of five business books, including *The Five Dysfunctions* of a Team, which was on the New York Times best-seller list. His new book, Silos, Politics and Turf Wars, came out in March 2006. Pat consults to executives and speaks to world-class organizations, addressing thousands of leaders. Prior to founding his firm, Pat worked for Sybase, Oracle and Bain & Company. He also served on the National Board of Directors for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America from 2000-2003.



Keith Harrell

Known for his energetic, innovative presentations, Keith Harrell is a dynamic life coach who specializes in changing behaviors through a positive attitude. While growing up in Seattle, he aspired to become a professional basketball player. Although he never realized that

dream, The Wall Street Journal says, "What sets him apart . . . is driving ambition and an attitude that refuses to flag." Through his company, Harrell Performance Systems and his book *Attitude is Everything: Ten Life Changing Steps to Turning Attitude into Action*, Keith specializes in helping companies achieve and maintain their goals. Harrell spent 14 years at IBM, where he was recognized as one of the top sales and training instructors. He is widely regarded as one of the country's best speakers.

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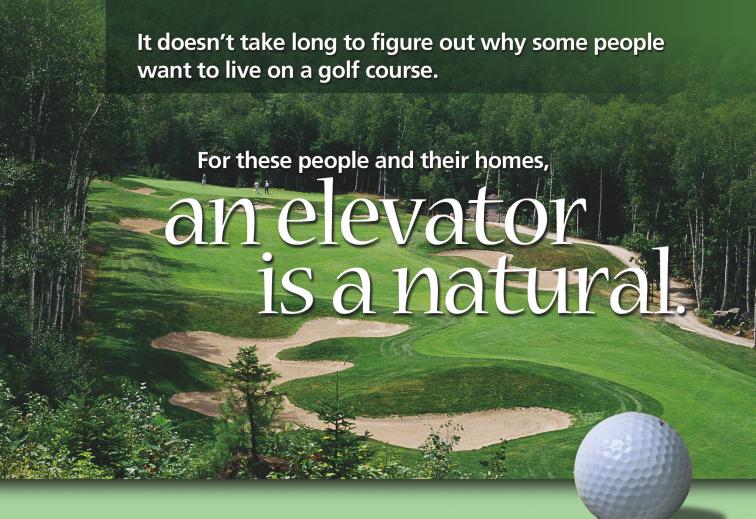


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>> BILL LURZ, SENIOR EDITOR, BUSINESS

A Looming Rental Boom?

Echo boomers and rising rents point to an upswing in the rental housing market, but converted condos may trump it.

Central Florida builder Frank Herring Jr. of Faison Enterprises expects a big boom in rental residential infill development in his market over the next three to five years, and he has demographics and logic to back up that notion. But as builders shop for rental sites, they should take a close look at the "Multifamily Forecast Report" that NAHB's economics department recently released and do a quick count of recently built or converted condo apartments that may be oozing back into their own town's rental supply as investors bail and head back to Wall Street.

Herring suspects interest rates will climb right along with house prices and commuting costs. This would push the price of a new home out of reach of the echo boomers' taking jobs in Central Florida's resort-driven economy. He believes that Orlando's future is high-density and urban.

Consultant and *GIANTS* columnist John Burns agrees. In his latest newsletter, Burns writes, "With home prices now beyond the reach of many middle-income households, this will be the year the apartment market surges." He cites data from RealFacts, an apartment market research firm, showing 222 rental apartment communities in 15 states that were converted to condo ownership in 2005 — triggering a shortage of rental units.

However, just because an apartment is converted to a condo doesn't necessarily mean it's no longer in the rental market. "I got a newsletter that said 120,000 apartments were converted to condo last year, bringing the net change in the supply of rental apartments to zero," says rental builder Steve Patterson, president of Orlando-based ZOM Development, a specialist in luxury apartments aimed at renters-by-choice. "It said now is the time to find land and build rental projects — all you can, wherever you can. But that doesn't make sense to me. It doesn't account for all the condos bought by investors that are now leaking back into the rental pool."

NAHB's report points out that from 1997 to 2005, starts of for-sale multifamily units increased from 59,000 to 149,000 a year, with most of the increase in 2004 and 2005. Meanwhile, marketrate rental production fell from 235,000 to 120,000 per year.

"The most notable and possibly troublesome development over the past two years has been the explosion of production of condo units," NAHB's economists write.

"After remaining at about 20 percent (of total multifamily production) for a number of years, the for-sale share of multifamily starts jumped to 25 per-

16,000 hotel rooms and office buildings with 20 million square feet also moved into the hands of condo converters.

None of this necessarily overrides the recent increases in rents in many markets that now make rental investments more appealing. But the power is not at a price point that's easily reached.

Patterson says his firm will continue to build projects for high-income renters-by-choice. "I think 2007 is when you'll really see a big spike in rental starts because land prices are coming down."

The total number of multifamily housing starts has remained fairly stable this decade, Burns says.

"It's the mix between rental and for-sale that's changed, but a lot of people who own condos are not living there.

"The multifamily market is really messed up. I think a lot of condo proj-

ects aren't going to get built. And many of the conversions are B quality or less, so much of that will drift back into the rental market.

"The other piece of the puzzle is single-family home rentals, which are way up because investors own them."

The best idea may be to watch what happens in the condo market before committing on land for rental housing.



cent in 2003, 35 percent in 2004 and 43 percent in 2005. ...The 149,000 forsale multifamily units started in 2005 greatly exceeded the 98,000 completed (last year). Thus, much of the condo production tsunami hasn't yet come on the market as completed supply."

The report also notes conversions of existing rental properties to condos may have reached 195,000 units in 2005;

Must-Have Features for Today's Home Buyers

What baby boomers, Generation X and echo boomers crave for their new homes

Professional Builder surveyed six experts* — architects, home industry trend experts, and real-estate brokers and designers — to get their take on the must-have features for today's home buyers.

BOOMERS OR BUST!

No stairs – Single-story homes, first-floor master suites and/or personal elevators. As baby boomers age, they'd rather not do stairs stay."

2



Fireplaces. They've always wanted to have one. "It's a reward for their station in life," says real estate broker Mark Nash.

Low-maintenance surfaces such as granite, quartz and Corian.

4

Pedestrian friendly communities with walking trails and amenities conducive to fitness and social interaction in the neighborhood.

5

Emphasis on quality and detailing more than square footage. It's the McMansion theory in reverse. Baby boomers are willing to trade some space for [better] features, architect Cheryl O'Brien says.

6

Flexible floor plans. Rooms and spaces that can adapt to changing needs and circumstances, that are multi-functional, perhaps with sliding doors and movable partitions. "Designing bedrooms so that they can be easily con-verted into dens ... sitting rooms off the bedroom, etc.," says architect Thomas Barton.

7



A keeping room. Living rooms are giving way to great rooms; a keeping room provides an intimate space for families to gather near the kitchen area. "You can put a sofa and a couple of chairs in there and a fireplace," says market expert Cecilia Davidson-Farkas.

8

Private outdoor space. This could be a deck or patio. "Somebody coined the phrase, 'Does it pass the smooch test?'" says Davidson-Farkas.



- 9
- **Accessible storage.** Cabinets and shelves placed at heights that can be reached without a stepladder and that have pullouts, lazy Susans and shallow shelving to keep items within easy reach.
- IO
- Ample wall space for a photo gallery of all the kids, grandkids, siblings, and parents who may have passed away is helpful, architect Bill Kreager says.
- II
- **Radiant floor heating.** Baby boomers may have more health issues like asthma or emphysema. "Forced air becomes problematic you don't want dust blowing around," Kreager says.

GEN XERS AND ECHO BOOMERS

- 12
- **Smart home technology.** Every room should be wired for phones, modems and DSL. "They want to be able to call from their cell phone and turn the lights on and change the heat," O'Brien says. stay."
- 13
- Home entertainment centers. "Putting the plasma [TV] and the surround sound in your family room -- it's not that you have to have a separate destination for it," O'Brien says. Barton adds: "It's ... part of the living space, a center of activity in the home."
- **I**4
- The state of the s

Built-in wiring and conduits for flat screen TVs. A popular location for plasmas screens today is over the fireplace. Good design provides a place for all the components, and no unsightly cords and wires.

- **15**
- A breakfast bar or nook as a secondary eating space. "Xers and Yers tend not to eat formally. They tend to graze," Barton says, "and on their way through the kitchen they pick up something to eat."

- 16
- **Green/environmentally sensitive features.** Says Nash: "Generation Yers in particular will ask about it: 'Do you know of any green developments or eco builders?' That influences their buying decisions."
- **I**'7
- A mudroom. "A place for what I call 'dirty storage': the snow board, bicycle, kayak, and the other outdoor equipment ... usually off the garage area," Notes Barton. 'This is your [bowl], that one is mine, " says Nash.
- 18
- **Quality closet organizers.** Vinyl coated wire shelving isn't acceptable anymore. Elfe and Ikea-styled wood or plywood finishes are required at minimum. "If builders make them standard," Nash says, "people would pay the extra money."
- 19
- A soft loft look. A home with "loft-like" features, a look seen on TV shows like "Friends" and "Seinfeld," as well as commercials aimed at the Gen X and echo boomer audiences. "Brick or stone interior wall accents and veneer bricks as an accent or as a full wall" add to the feel, Davidson-Farkas says.
- 2C
- "We have an optional **space for a dog washing station** off the garage. Gen Xers are [more likely to own pets] than any other generation," Davidson-Farkas says. An alternative is a community dog park. "It's a new way to meet people," Nash says. "An Xer will say, 'How close is the nearest Starbucks? Echo boomers want to know about the dog parks."
- **2**I
- Darker paints. "You need to get rid of the 'builder beige' walls. They like color. They like vibrancy," says Davidson-Farkas. For a lot of builders, "it's a paint upgrade to do these Pottery Barn burgundies and the mustards," Nash says.
- 22
- An upstairs computer loft or "net nook." "People want an open area dedicated to computers," Nash finds. Adds Davidson-Farkas: "Parents need to be able to peek around the corner and see who their kids are on the Internet with."
- 23
- "The echo boomers are into **natural light** like I've never seen," Nash says. "They say, 'I won't buy a condo that only faces north,' because they want sun."



SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

24



Large, open kitchens with plenty of space to prepare food and entertain guests. "Kitchens are coming out to be about the size of the grand room because it is the new living room," says Davidson-Farkas. Adds O'Brien: "Open family rooms and kitchen entertainment areas "are here to stay."

25

Huge kitchen islands with space for guests to sit while the homeowner is cooking, for boomers to keep an eye on the grandkids, for additional room on the counter, and extra storage.



26



Quality kitchen cabinets. "With the kitchen/great room the center of family living, buyers today are looking at furniture-style cabinets," notes Nash.

27

High-quality, high-performance appliances. O'Brien's suggestion: High-end brands or high-end features available in some affordable brands such as the GE Monogram line.

28

A separate tub and shower. "Gen [Xers and] echo boomers will take a shower over a tub/ shower combo," Nash says. "Boomers want a separate shower and a soaking tub."



29



Separate vanities in the master bathroom. "Usually the woman says, 'This is your [bowl], that one is mine,'" says Nash.

30

Large master baths, especially for couples without kids. Boomers are looking for a "large shower with a double showerheads and a bench. ...Gen Xers are looking for the big Jacuzzi tub for two. But everybody wants the shower with the bench — ladies want to shave their legs," Davidson-Farkas says. "Boomers want a separate shower and a soaking tub."

3I

... And more spa features. "Shower heads that are really big and come down like a waterfall out of the middle of the top of the shower, not out of the wall," are popular, notes O'Brien. Davidson-Farkas' group is "putting shower massage jets in all of our homes, even down in the low price points, to give that resort-type feeling."

32

Linen Closets. "A lot of developers were taking out linen closets out of bathrooms; buyers miss them and want them back. Even if one is not in the master bath, where they expect it, it's in every other bathroom – not in the hallway," Nash says.

33



A home management/command center. "It used to be the desk, but now it's become a little bit more elaborate. It's a space near the family hub where you put the mail, the computer," O'Brien says. It's a niche or nook.

34

An upstairs laundry room conveniently situated near the bedrooms so clothes don't need to be carried down-stairs.

35

"In homes with higher square footages, we're seeing **a second, stackable washer and dryer** for the kitchen towels, the stuff you drop," notes O'Brien. For baby boomers, the small stack space is for the teenager – "the wash it yourself situation," says Davidson-Farkas.



Multi-functional laundry rooms that double as a family activity area, sewing room, gift-wrap station or tech area. "Each adult needs space to call his or her own," Barton says. "Space in the laundry room can accommodate that."

37



"Everybody needs more elaborate front doors ... on all price points," says O'Brien. Those doors feature more glass and ironwork details. "[I'm] seeing more 8-inch front doors, where 6 feet, 8 inches used to be the norm, even on affordable, entry-level products," Davidson-Farkas adds.



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SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

38

More ornate garage doors sometimes resemble carriage doors and are more "high-style," O'Brien says."

39

Oversized garages for extra storage. "Some people build the smallest two-car garages: extra deep, [fit for a] car and a half, because they [want] a lot of storage [for] grills, patio furniture, bicycles and the grandkids' toys," Nash says.

40

A drop zone – a foyer with built-in shelves by the garage as a place to shed coats and drop book bags. "You have outlets ... for dropping your cell phone, a place for all the junk that you come into the house with," Davidson-Farkas says.

4I



Exteriors with natural or natural-looking materials. "The building products industry is doing a better job of offering synthetic versions of ... cultured stone on the outside of the house," O'Brien says. "Ten years ago, it was bad. There was no detailing. ... The industry has come a long way."

42

Wider balconies and decks. "Home buyers want usable outdoor space big enough for a bistro table and chairs and a couple of pots for container gardening," Nash says.

43



Courtyards "are seen as a feature for mild climates, but almost everything I'm doing has a courtyard; [it's] really not climate specific," says O'Brien.

44

Outdoor fireplaces. For outdoor entertaining, particularly in warmer climates.

45

Low-voltage lighting can add ambience and interest to a room. It can be used to light a pathway to an outdoor garden, or as a gentle highlight to a picture on a wall. "This plays back into that whole smart-house technology – lighting that you can have on at night ... along the wall to light the stairs," O'Brien says.

46



"They all want **good quality Low-E windows....**People seem very tuned in to windows and window quality," says Nash

47

High-efficiency furnaces and water heaters. "It's a hotter and hotter issue [that] really spiked this year with the cost of energy," says Nash.

48

Bamboo wood floors. "It could overtake maple as the favorite light-colored wood flooring," Nash says.

49

Built-in water purification systems. "So you don't have to order the bottles of water," O'Brien adds.

50

Carbon monoxide detectors. Home inspectors flag homes that have only smoke detectors. Nash says one should be installed on every floor of a home.

*The Experts: Professional Builder surveyed six experts – architects, home industry trend experts, and real-estate brokers and designers – to get their take on the must-have features for today's home buyers: • Thomas Barton III, AIA, principal, Barton Partners Architects in Norristown, Pa. • Catherine Daly, president of Design East, a design and merchandising consulting firm to the building industry, in Medford, N.J. • Cecilia Davidson-Farkas of Marketing Synergy, a home-trends market research expert based in Atlanta. • Bill Kreager, principal of Mithun, an architectural design and planning firm in Seattle. • Mark Nash, a Chicago-based real-estate broker and author of "1001 Tips for Buying and Selling a Home" and the article, "What's In, What's Out with Homebuyers in 2006." • Cheryl O'Brien, AIA, Professional Builder contributing editor and president of C. O'Brien Architects in Bala Cynwyd, Pa.





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>> LAURA BUTALLA, SENIOR EDITOR

Survey says

An architectural design study discovers demand for more accessibility, mixed-use communities and plenty of family space.

In 2005, the American Institute of Architects asked residential architectural firms nationwide to participate in its four-part survey to determine the latest home design trends across the country. The new survey found designers crafting for aging adults, catering to communities complete with shopping and transportation, and allowing space for gatherings.

Accessible Features



The first part of the survey focused on baby boomers ready for retirement. Because they will generate a majority of home

sales for years to come, there is more demand for greater accessibility and single-floor design to promote easy mobility within the home, the survey found.

Of the firms surveyed, 62 percent reported homes are becoming more accessible with features for the aging and handicapped. Accessible features include wider hallways, fewer steps and more single-floor designs.

Forty nine percent of the firms reported finished basements and attics becoming more popular, while owners of older homes are looking to increase their living space.

Home Features

The second part of the survey results show a rise in telecommuting costs as well as higher



gasoline prices that have led owners to add offices to their homes. Almost half the survey participants said they are being asked to design home offices more than ever. Home theaters ranked high on this survey, too. A drop in price and the better availability of audio and video options added to the demand for home theaters.

Other special features gaining popularity: hobby and/or game rooms by 30 percent; in-law suites by 22 percent; security systems by 32 percent; and firesafety by 23 percent.

Easy Access

The third portion of the survey focused on community and neighborhood planning and showed mixed-use development is all the rage. Many consumers are on board for shorter commutes from work to home and want shopping, public transportation and recreational activities within their communities.

"To combat the isolation caused by distant residential construction and to increase accessibility for households, we are seeing a strong increase in community design trends that are integrating more activities into housing development," says AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker.

"In addition to mixed-use development strategies, 63 percent of residential architecture firms reported that infill development — where smaller land parcels closer to urban centers are targeted for development — is another strategy that is increasing in popularity," says Baker.

Kitchen & Bath

For years, the kitchen has been the focal point of the home, which hasn't changed, according to AIA's survey. Homeowners want more pantry space, high-end appliances and family space integrated within the kitchen.



"Both the square feet devoted to kitchens and the number of separate cooking facilities throughout the home are increasing, including the additions of outdoor kitchens in many areas of the country," says Baker. "As far as specific trends in kitchen design, granite countertops, natural wood cabinets and drinking water filtration systems are especially popular," says Baker.

Bathrooms, the second focal point of the home, are being designed with his and her vanities. Multi-head showers, heated floors and towel racks also topped the bathroom trends list. "Upscale products and features are going into bathroom design as well," says Baker, "noted by heated floors and towel racks, and even fireplaces becoming more common in homes, while heat lamps and whirlpools aren't nearly as prevalent."

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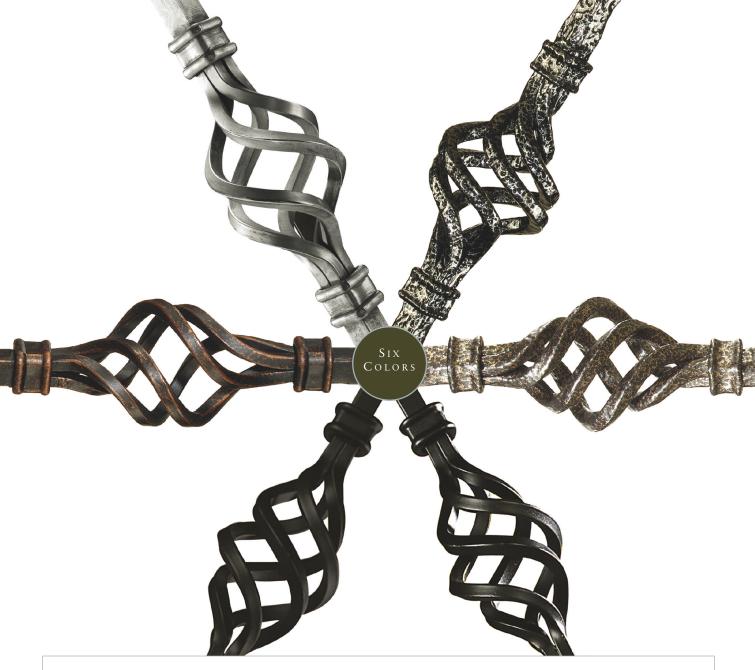
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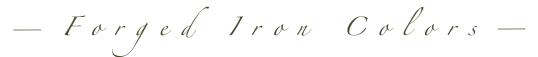


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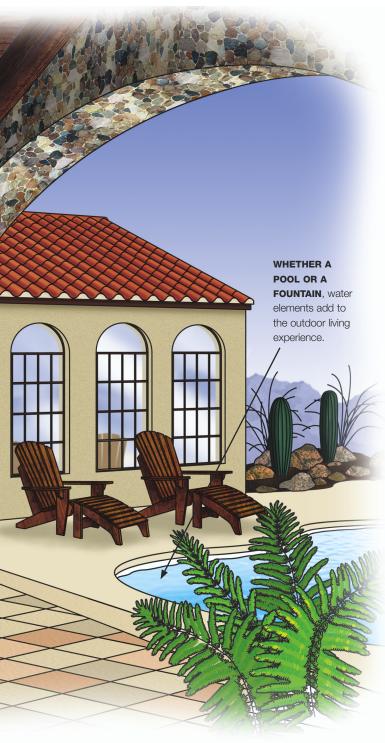


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'Give us our Outdoor Rooms'

Outdoor rooms become retreats for busy homeowners.





Our lives get busier and busier. We don't have enough time to relax. Tension builds. People get sick. Missing work causes more stress. "The statistic we've come up with says between 75 and 95 percent of all doctor visits in this country are related to stress," says Georganne Derick, president of Merchandising East, a company specializing in in-terior design for model homes. "We are addicted, as a nation, to stress hormones, and they are very harmful over the long-term."

The solution, Ellicott City, Md.-based Derick says, is "creating outdoor rooms where one can get away. Just the experience of being outside and being exposed to sun, breeze and rain pattering on a roof is very calming." Hence, the outdoor oasis arises.

Outdoor rooms can be fun, fancy and free. The range of opportunity depends on the home's style, available land, lot location, the designer's imagination and what the buyer wants. One thing is certain: buyers want them, and more builders are delivering the outdoor rooms customers crave.

Why is there such a strong trend? Barry Glantz, president of Glantz & Associates Architects of St. Louis, Mo., says, "It's the indoor/outdoor connection. It's an extension of the living space."

Braving the Elements

For decades, designers have used natural materials indoors to create pleasing environments. Now those same ma-terials are being matched in their natural environment.

"If it's an exterior material, like a stone or slate on a wall, we'll try and repeat that in the outdoor room," says Chip Pierson, principal and general manager for Dahlin Group Architecture Planning in San Ramon, Calif. "If it's a hard surface in the living areas on the floor, we'll try and repeat that outside as well."

Using natural materials also follows the feng shui philosophy of balancing the five major elements: water, wood, fire, metal and earth. These elements create a balance in the outdoor spaces, producing an energy flow.

Whether or not you ascribe to the feng shui design ideas, consider what each element adds to an outdoor room:

- The water of a fountain or pool is soothing.
- Wood furniture provides durability and natural ruggedness.
- Stone matches the surrounding environment, reinforcing the outdoor feel.

The earth can be represented by decorative plants and flowers, giving a more complete sense of the outdoors.

• Fire brings the drama and a focal point with a hearth or

Plans and Projects





OUTDOOR ROOMS OFFER MYRIAD OPTIONS, including water elements, left, and fireplaces, right. Features such as the fireplace allow homeowners to use the "room" throughout the year.

fire grid.

 Metals in furniture — as decorative elements or as part of the structure — provide the same balance and design tension they do in indoor environments.

Regional Trends

Due to climate differences, outdoor rooms require different designs. In fact, the name "outdoor room" can be debated.

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Some are courtyards, others are patios, and many are simple porches. However they're viewed, these spaces are built to provide a sense of comfort as well as a place to entertain.

"It's not just a porch outside or sitting under a tree," says Brian Van Bower, president of Murfreesboro, Tenn.-based Genesis 3 and Aquatic Consultants of Miami. Outdoor rooms "are a way of having space where one might sit outside for the whole evening or have people over and go right outside to entertain there."

In Southern California, the climate is conducive to courtyards. "These spaces are typically bound by as few as two and as many as four walls with no overhead coverage," says David Kosco, senior principal for Bassenian/Lagoni Architects of Newport Beach, Calif.

"While they exist as wonderful outside environments and a valuable means with which to bring natural light into the home, their uses are somewhat limited because of their exposure to the elements.

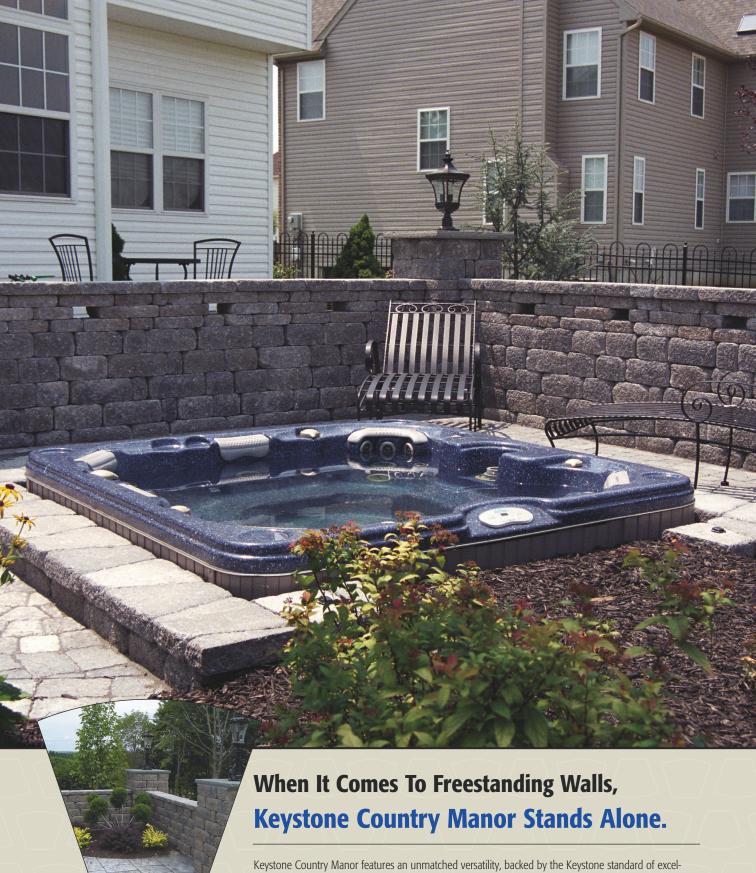
"For that reason, we are designing transitional spaces fusing inside with outside," Kosco says. "They allow for year-round activity and increased flexibility with furnishings, lighting and finishes. From outdoor kitchens, billiard rooms, dining rooms or media lounges, the potential for these spaces becomes limitless."

Northern California outdoor rooms need to provide protection from rain and wind. "We're very concerned about weather protection from wind," says Pierson. "If it's a highend project, usually it's on a hill or in a hilly area, so you have some wind and rain coming in."

But the harsher weather doesn't prevent homeowners from using well-designed outdoor spaces. "If you protect the outdoor room," Pierson says, "you actually get wonderful outdoor spaces where you can build a fire and the fire won't go out because of the wind."

Most East Coast and Midwest outdoor rooms can't be used year-around, of course, unlike Southern and West Coast outdoor rooms. Maryland-based Derick says, "Even in our area, people want to do outdoor rooms more and more."

In the Midwest, Glantz says, "It works — it just doesn't work year-round." The Midwestern outdoor rooms tend to be covered balconies or decks, courtyards, screened porches or



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patios. "In the Midwest," Glantz adds, "some sort of roof protection is nice."

Fireplaces or fire pits have been popular in all parts of the country for years, but they are particularly welcome in the East Coast and Midwest because they prolong the time frame to use outdoor rooms.

Natural materials, such as stone, marble, granite, limestone, slate and flagstone are used in outdoor rooms throughout the country. But in Florida, outdoor rooms also incorporate more exotic materials such as coral and inlayed tumbled marble.

Limestone is very different from coral,

indicating how important it is to choose the right colors and material. "If you're in a very cold climate, you may want to add warm colors, like reds, oranges and yellows to add warmth," Derick says.

"If you're in a very hot climate, you want cool colors, like greens, blues and violets."

Design Trends

When people think of outdoor rooms, they often think of outdoor kitchens, which is probably the hottest trend. A kitchen is more than just a grill. Most outdoor kitchens are equipped with mini-refrigerators, islands with stone countertops, and built-in cabinetry. Other popular features include pizza ovens, wet/dry bars, icemakers and infrared cook tops.

"We're pretty much doing complete outdoor dining and entertainment areas to prepare an entire meal outside with running water, icemakers, refrigerators and so forth," says Van Bower.

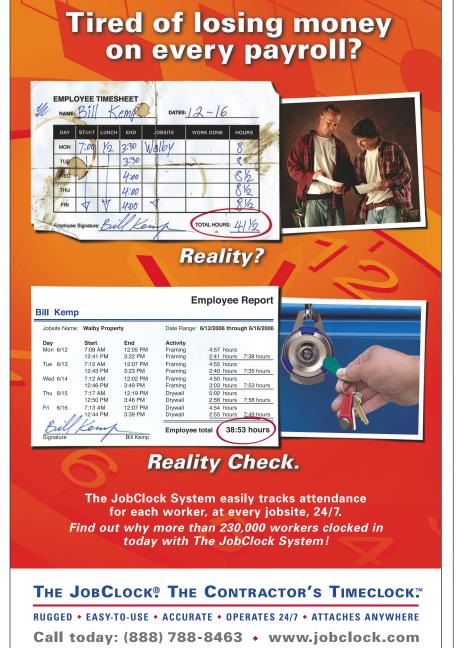
Having fun with fire seems to be another trend. "We're doing a lot of themes with fire," says Van Bower. "We're doing functional fire items like pizza ovens and barbeques. We also do fire pits."

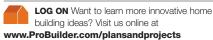
Combining fire elements with water features provides a strong contrast.

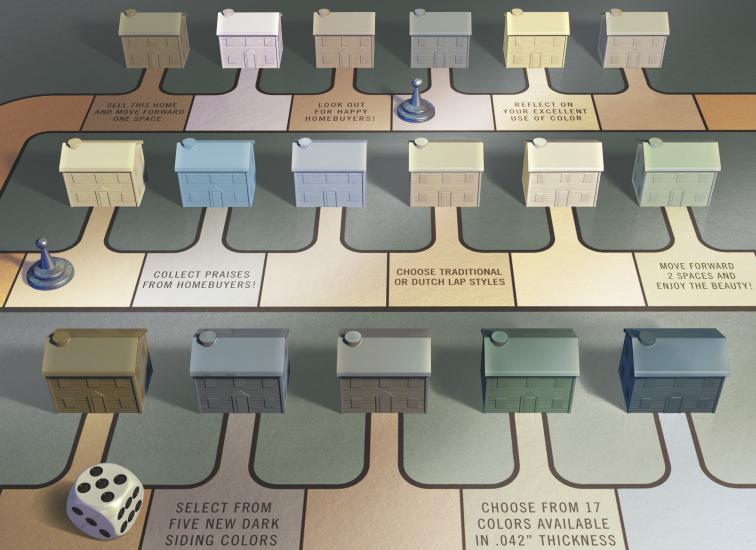
"You can imagine an outdoor room with three sides open over some type of decorative water feature." Van Bower says. "On the opposite side of the water, a fire bowl appears to be floating on the water."

Outdoor rooms are shifting from being a trend to a necessity, and extending living space from the inside to the outside matters to more consumers every day.

"Builders need to recognize we are craving these spaces," says Derick. "People are now craving reconnecting with the earth, so give us our outdoor rooms." **PB**







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THE PROVIDENCE'S **EXTERIOR**

demonstrates the builder's commitment to creating an architecturally distinctive neighborhood where homes feature windows on four sides. Buyers sometimes add character to their living space by adding a bay window, as shown in the Providence's dining area.





PROFESSIONAL BUILDER 06.2006 WWW.PROBUILDER.COM

OTOGRAPHS: PAUL SCHLISMAN

New Community Built on Strong Roots

This builder's architecturally distinctive models cultivate a new crop of buyers for a clubhouse community in a fast-growing corridor outside Chicago.

Not long ago, an hour's drive south from downtown Chicago led to the land of the two-lane country road, framed on either side by field and farmstead and punctuated periodically by a town passed through in the blink of an eye. Today, Illinois' northeastern counties have the state's hottest housing markets, as new home buyers continue to move farther in search of more home at an affordable price.

Lakewood Homes reinforced its role as one of the area's leading production builders by opening 10 single-family models in January at Lakewood Prairie west of Joliet, Ill.

The abundance of open farmland has led the rural counties southwest of Chicago to become the next major zone for development in the area, says Richard Bridges, regional sales manager for Hoffman Estates, Ill.-based Lakewood Homes.

"We had just closed out a successful project in a nearby community east of Joliet and wanted to capitalize on the strong regional acceptance we already had in place," says Bridges. "We have a unique and highly competitive situation here because every major builder in our market has its own project in literally the same spot. You have to really stay on top of things and offer buyers something unique, high quality and competitively priced to remain successful under these circumstances."

Market Opportunity

Lakewood Prairie is designed to be a family-oriented development that includes a private, community-supported clubhouse with a swimming pool, tennis and volleyball courts, and a tot lot. Because of diverse product offerings, the builder is able to court a wide range of buyer markets, ranging from singles and empty nesters, to first-time buyers on up to second-time move-up executive families.

"So far, customers are buying the spacious, flexible floor plans available at Lakewood Prairie," says Bridges. Presales began there in June 2005. "We're finding, however, that our market draw has actually been more difficult to pin down than it has been on our previous projects in the area. For the most part, those buyers were typically local residents already. This time, we are getting buyers from much further north and west than we had originally anticipated. This has turned out to be a blessing in this highly competitive market."

Challenges Met

The builder added the 325-acre parcel of reclaimed farmland to its portfolio five years earlier but suspended plans for its development until several nearby projects were completed. "We held off until the timing was right for us. We did

not want to end up competing with ourselves," says Bridges.

While Illinois farmland is typically flat, the topography of this site had a significant grade change running from its northeast to southwest corner that presented the builder with both an opportunity and a challenge. "It does permit us to offer buyers desirable walkout and lookout basement options on some lots, as well as the chance to create a more interesting overall streetscape," says Bridges. "But from an engineering standpoint, it made the grading issues much more difficult."

Because of this, Lakewood Prairie required more planning than usual, says Bridges. "There were a whole bundle of

VITAL STATS

Lakewood Prairie

Location: Joliet, III.

Builder/Architect/Developer: Lakewood Homes, Hoffman Estates, III.

Interior Merchandiser: Eleni Interiors, Naperville, III.

Square Footage: 1,250 square feet to 3,997 square feet

Minimum Lot Size: 9,100 square feet Current Models Opened: January

Price Range: \$180,990 - \$303,990 **Began Pre-Sales:** June 2005

Buyer Profile: singles; first-time buyers; move-up buyers; empty nesters



THE KITCHEN IN THE PROVIDENCE MODEL features a center island, walk-in pantry and built-in organization center as standard. The breakfast area can be expanded with an optional box bay window.

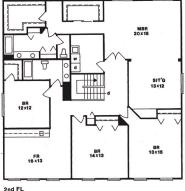
considerations that made engineering this development like putting together a puzzle." These included painstaking planning of neighborhood roads to create a curvilinear streets; anticipating and accommodating driveway slope requirements, building pad size requirements and side yard requirements; avoiding lining up multiple homes in a row; and the challenge of siting big homes on relatively modest-sized lots.

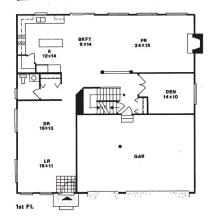
The rural location also presented the builder with the challenge of creating new infrastructure where there was none in place already, including constructing or improving key access roads in conjunction with the city and other local builders.

"According to our annexation agreement with the city, each builder is responsible for building or improving the portion of the road that they impact on in accordance with the specifications of the municipality. One year later, we've had to reconstruct our portion of the main access road from two lanes to a five-lane highway with a center median and turning bays."

Captivating Models

Three product lines are currently available at Lakewood Prairie, including single-family attached







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THE PROVIDENCE'S MASTER SUITE

provides buyers with plenty of opportunity to customize their personal retreat; a tray ceiling, sitting/ exercise room, office space, coffee bar or a bathroom skylight can be added.

Country Homes; larger, detached Classic Homes; and upscale Executive Homes. Although the builder's portfolio of plans offered at Lakewood Prairie includes designs that have been developed and used in its other communities, their exterior architecture makes them look very different from past projects, says Bridges.

Homes in different price points are intentionally intermingled throughout the development rather than arranged in clusters to enhance architectural diversity.

Although all of the single-family plans have been developed to provide buyers with some choice in configuring their living space, the Executive Homes are designed to offer pre-determined options to overcome a buyer's negative preconceptions about buying a non-custom home, says Bridges. "I call it Swiss Army knife planning because we offer so much flexibility that, viewed side-by-side, the same model can be completely

different and we've eliminated the need to go out for bids in order to make changes."

Bridges cites the two-story Providence model, which he describes as the "hook" for the neighborhood, as a great example of flexibility in living space. With a base price of \$288,990, the 3,573-square-foot home can feature 2½ to four full bathrooms and three to six bedrooms; a mainfloor "wildcard room" that can be used as a den, play room or in-law quarters; a second-floor family room; and an exercise or sitting room as part of the master suite that doesn't increase the overall square footage.

"We are able to tell them, 'If you like that in this model, you know that you can do that in your model, too', says Bridges. "They really respond to the custom feel of this approach. **PB**



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KEYNOTES: TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP



Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni is the founder and president of The Table Group, Inc., a specialized management-consulting firm focused on executive team-building and organizational health. He has been described by the One-Minute Manager's Ken Blanchard as "fast defining the next

generation of business thinkers." Pat's passion for organizations and teams is reflected in his writing, speaking and consulting. He is the author of five business books, including *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, which was on the New York Times best-seller list. His new book, *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars*, came out in March 2006. Pat consults to executives and speaks to world-class organizations, addressing thousands of leaders. Prior to founding his firm, Pat worked for Sybase, Oracle and Bain & Company. He also served on the National Board of Directors for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America from 2000-2003.



Keith Harrell

Known for his energetic, innovative presentations, Keith Harrell is a dynamic life coach who specializes in changing behaviors through a positive attitude. While growing up in Seattle, he aspired to become a professional basketball player. Although he never realized that

dream, The Wall Street Journal says, "What sets him apart . . . is driving ambition and an attitude that refuses to flag." Through his company, Harrell Performance Systems and his book Attitude is Everything: Ten Life Changing Steps to Turning Attitude into Action, Keith specializes in helping companies achieve and maintain their goals. Harrell spent 14 years at IBM, where he was recognized as one of the top sales and training instructors. He is widely regarded as one of the country's best speakers.

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>> BY JENNIFER BLOCK MARTIN, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Shower Your Clients

Spas aren't just for specs anymore, experts say.

Move over, whirlpools. Soaking tubs, take a hike. The hottest products are called vertical spas, shower towers, performance showers and carwashes. And consumers are clamoring for them.

Ed Pell, manager of market research at the National Kitchen & Bath Association, says that although these shower systems have been in commercial spas for years and available to use in homes the past 15, the trend has exploded recently. "Consumers don't take baths as often anymore," Pell says. "People love these showers for the time saving — and the toys."

Know the Players

Moen, Hansgrohe, Jacuzzi, Grohe, Kohler and others offer systems to satisfy all ends of the market.

Kathy Yates, Moen's target market manager, says systems that were considered luxuries are now mainstream. "On the low end is rainshowers; mid-range, a showerhead and hand spray with three-function diverter. High-end would be a larger shower with four sprays and two showerheads or a 'head and hand,'" she says.

"A hand spray is an easy upgrade and great for families whose small children are transitioning from the tub." Moen offers the pressurized Rainshower. "Others are like a watering can — you can't rinse the shampoo out of your hair," she says.

"People recognize they can add luxury to their daily routine," says Michael Wandschneider, a senior product manager for Kohler performance showers. Kohler's ultra low–profile WaterTile has no protruding nozzles and is installed flush in the ceiling or wall. The BodySpa 10-jet tower recirculates water twice a minute from a 90- to 200-gallon basin. The DTV offers programmable temperature-based hydrotherapy and feeds up to eight showerheads, hand sprays or body sprays.

Hansgrohe's Shower Panel has four body sprays plus a hand spray and is installed in the existing shower mount.

"It's an easy upgrade for new construction because it uses existing hot and cold water connections — no plumber needed," says spokesman Jason McClain.

Plan for the Unknown

Doug Santoro, president of General Plumbing in West Palm Beach, Fla., stresses that builders should keep plumbers in the loop. "Showers can take on a life of their own after the initial plans are drawn," he says.

Obstacles can include undersized water and drain lines, so Santoro recommends a minimum ¾-inch supply line with 1-inch for cold water and a 3-inch drain. Spec a heater sufficient to supply 15 gpm — the Kohler DTV uses 21 — and at least 50 psi. Look for valves with a higher gpm range. "Three to 4 gpm is not adequate," he says. "A recirculating hot water system is a must with these showers. You don't want to wait to get cold water out of the pipes." An ample wastewater system is also needed to handle the demand, especially if the home is not on a public line.

Thicker walls to accommodate plumb-



THIS MOEN VERTICAL SPA boasts a rainfall showerhead, a hand spray and four body sprays.

ing and electrical lines and insulation for noise are a good idea, "but builders don't want to give up the inches," Santoro says. For steam units, "forget the 10-foot ceiling — go for 7 to 8 feet in the enclosure," he says; in air-conditioned spaces, as steam builds and heat rises, condensation beads up on the ceiling. Also consider additional ventilation.

Builders should make sure they have the right controls and components for the valves. Kohler, for example, has behind-the-wall and finished-trim packages for builders.

With all the bells and whistles, shower systems can retail for more than \$6,000, plus the pump. "It's my experience that builders don't put shower spas in spec homes, only as an upgrade," says Pell.

Jennifer Block Martin is a San Francisco–based writer.



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Solar energy for everyone

Photovoltaics are not just for sunny states.

Many builders assume they need a hot, sunny state to even consider installing a photovoltaic (PV) system. While there is a benefit to being in these areas, homes in colder climates may be equally good — or even better — candidates.

Does Bright Make Right?

First, you'll need to discard any misperceptions you have about location.

"Solar thermal and photovoltaic devices depend on light, not heat — and this light does not need to be direct.

"While the Southwest enjoys particularly good resources, the entire U.S. has good solar resources," says Noah Kaye, a spokesman for the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA).

The NAHB Research Center tested homes with PV systems in upstate New York and in Tucson, Ariz., and discovered financial benefits in both areas.

While a 2-kilowatt (kW) capacity PV system in Tucson would generate about 9.4 kilowatt hours (kWh) per day, a similar size unit in New York would produce 6.2 kWh.

And while a unit in a less sunny area may produce fewer kWh per day, it could be more cost effective if the local utility has high summer peak rates because the output of a PV system has a higher value in summer than in winter.

Orientation, Tilt, Roof Shading

Whatever the location, orientation is part of determining the cost-effectiveness of PV. Although a roof facing south is ideal, a system can still work at 95-percent capacity facing southeast or southwest.

"If you are 20 degrees off due south you can still be successful," says Joe Wiehagen, a research engineer at the NAHB Research Center.

"In fact, sometimes there is a real cost benefit to orienting somewhat west because the PV output can match peak utility demand more closely."

The tilt of the PV unit can affect its efficiency as well. It is ideal to allow the maximum exposure to sunlight, but even on a flat roof, a PV system can perform near maximum capacity as long as it has a south-facing array at the optimal tilt, which is an angle equal to the home's latitude.

Additionally, there should be little or no shading over the PV system.



Often referred to by casual observers as solar panels, photovoltaic systems are single cells combined and connected to form PV modules. PV modules are manufactured with varving electrical outputs ranging from a few watts to more than 100 watts of direct current. The modules are then connected into PV arrays to power electrical devices.



Is the Price Right?

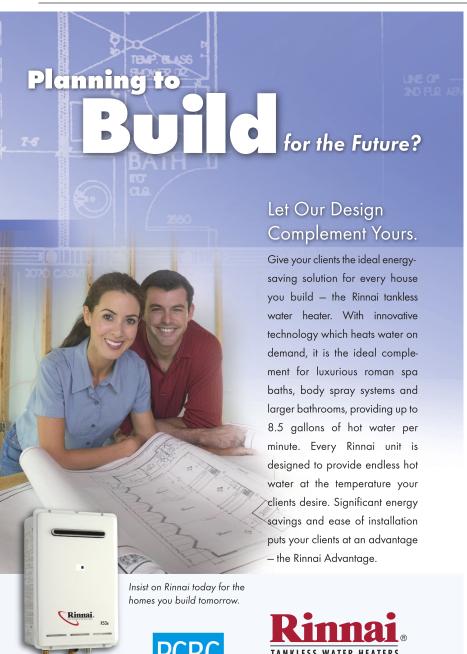
Determining the price of the system — and the payback will require some research. For upfront costs, builders will need to account for the cost of the components, labor, federal tax rebates and local incentives. (Go to www.ProBuilder. com/innovations to learn how to calculate the costs). For information about local incentives. consult the Database of State Incentives for Renew-able Energy at www.dsireusa.org. For utility rates and payback periods, contact the utility.

The size of the unit that's installed has the most impact on price.

Generally, a PV system connected to the grid costs about \$7,000 to \$10,000 per kW of capacity, before incentives.

Builders can use the following formula to determine a project's payback period:

(Installed Cost - Incentives) / (Electric Rate * Hours of Sunshine/Yr * Size of PV System in kW)



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For more information, call 1-800-621-9419 or visit our websites www.rinnai.us www.foreverhotwater.com Thirty-nine states also permit customers to sell excess energy back to the utility. (Contact the local utility to learn more.)

To determine the project's payback period, find out the local peak electric rates and the number of sunlight hours per day. Divide the upfront cost of the product by the local price of electricity, the hours of sunshine per year, and the size of the PV system.

To make a generic estimate, builders can use this formula: (Installed Cost - Incentives) / (Electric Rate * Hours of Sunshine/Yr * Size of PV System in

This does not take into account all of the variables, however. For further assistance, use the Performance Calculator for Grid-Connected PV Systems, provided by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory at http://rredc.nrel.gov/ solar/calculators/PVWATTS/.

Easy to Install

Builders who have never installed a PV system before shouldn't let any a fear of new technology daunt them, says John Graziose, vice president and co-owner of Gerber Homes in Rochester, N.Y.

"The systems were very simple to install," Graziose says. "We built the houses, and [the subcontractor] came and plopped them on. We had to run some feeds up into the attic, and we ran some conduits for them to use, but it was very convenient and very simple. On top of that, we didn't have any problems finding a subcontractor to install it."

But before installing the system, put some effort into improving the efficiency of the home that the system will serve.

Insulation, Low-E windows, air sealing and a high-efficiency HVAC system all have shorter paybacks, so it makes sense to do them first. PB

Scott Shepherd writes about better building practices on behalf of PATH.



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Windows & Doors

Kolbe & Kolbe

Kolbe & Kolbe Millwork connects the past and the present in its Old World Classic windows. These classic windows feature a traditional brass and pulley system with a lever handle and an oil-rubbed finished. This window is available in western pine, Douglas fir, mahogany, oak, maple and cherry. There are nine interior pre-finish options and 20 color offerings. Decorative options include: removable grilles, grilles-in-the-airspace and performance-divided lite or

Andersen Windows & Doors

Andersen has a new Low-E4 glass for windows and doors. The Low-E4 features an exterior coating that works with sunlight to reduce dirt buildup and water spots. This fast-drying glass is energy efficient and also reduces sound and shields UV rays. This glass is offered standard in all of Andersen's 400 Series.

Circle 126 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-126



This eight-panel fiberglass door replicates the look of Honduran mahogany grain. The door measures 6 feet by 8 inches by 3 feet. The door has an optional 10-inch by 42-inch center arch for a decorative glass insert. The Classic-Craft line is designed for the Arcadia, Ashurst, Longford and clear decorative glass styles. There is also a 6-foot, 8-inch full-lite, flush-glazed sidelite.

Circle 127 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-127

Innovations

>> WINDOWS & DOORS



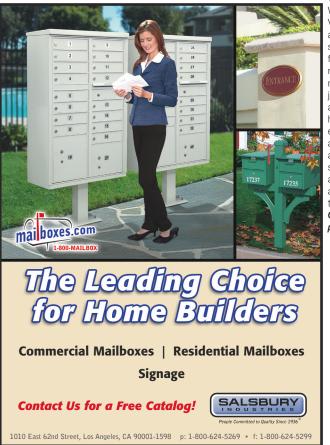
Hurd Windows & Doors' new line of patio doors are characterized by its wood interiors. The doors are available in nine woods with six hardware finishes. The locking mechanism is designed to match entry door locks by operating from the bottom up. The patio doors have two installation options: an in-swing installation with an adjustable hinge system and an out-swing set-up that operates by ball-bearing butt hinges. Circle 128 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-

128



Quiet Moments

Circle 53 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-53



Circle 54 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-54

Weather Shield

Weather Shield introduces Visions 3000, an expansion and upgrade to its 2000 series line. Visions 3000 features a sloped sill, interior finger lift, integral brick mould and a floating 2-1/4 jamb liner. The windows are available in several singlehung styles: tilt, tilt oriel, tilt eyebrow, tilt picture as well as a simulated transom and a single slide-by design. Visions 3000 comes in white and tan with vinyl, wood and cellular PVC interior trim options.

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It's not a door without FrameSaver.



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No matter how well a home is built, over time water and insects will come in contact with your exterior door frames. Wood acts like a straw drawing up the moisture and eventually rots your frame. This makes repairing the damage costly.

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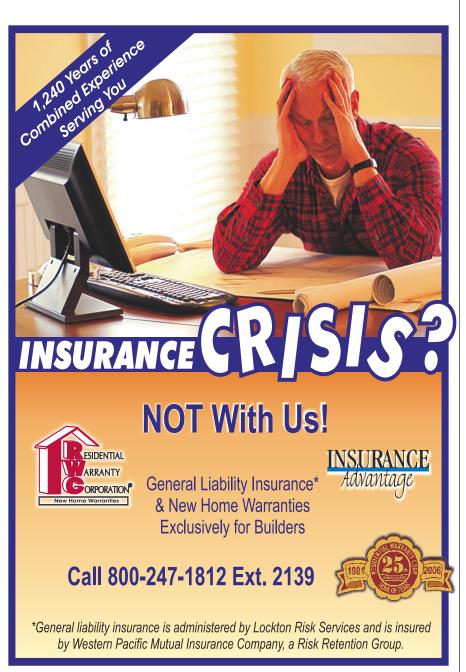
Circle 55 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-55



Integrity

Integrity's new line of All Ultrex windows is available in single-hung, polygon and transom window styles. Special features include factory applied jamb extensions and Sheetrock return, optional universal J channels and standard non-integral folding nailing fin. The exterior frame can be ordered in stone white or pebble gray and the interior frame comes in stone white.

Circle 130 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-130.



Circle 74 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-74





Loewen



Loewen introduces metal to its windows and doors with Cyprium Collection. This collection features copper- and bronze-clad windows and doors. The .04 thick metals are available with several patina options: natura (non-patina), umbra (brown) and verdigris (green). The copper and bronze are integral in the sash, frame and simulated divided lite bars. This collection is available in awning, casement, picture and specialty windows and terrace doors.

Circle 131 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-131.

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Public announcement of the 2006 winners will be at the 63rd NAHB International Builders' Show. Winners will be presented awards during a ceremony sponsored by NAHB, *Professional Builder* and several leading building product manufacturers. The BALA winners will be posted on probuilder.com for up to one year after the ceremony.

Any questions contact Judy Brociek at 630-288-8184 or jbrociek@reedbusiness.com



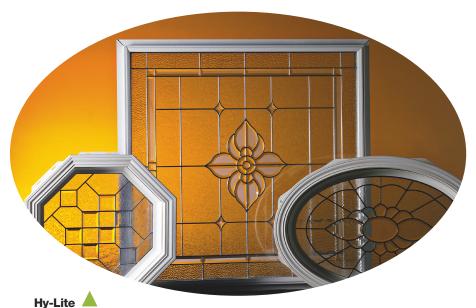
Www.housingzone.com/bala for registration information

Professional Builder









Hy-Lite has added decorative glass windows to its family of glass block products. The windows are offered with a square, oval or octagon shape frame with black, brass or nickel caming. The square windows are 4 feet by 4 feet with optional white, tan or driftwood vinyl frames. The two oval windows measure 2 feet by 3 feet with a white frame. There are eight designs to choose from: Craftsman, Cathedral, Victorian, Spring Flower, Fleur-de-lis, Radiance, Floral and Geometric. Circle 132 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-132.

CraftMaster



The Corvado is a new Shaker-style interior door by CraftMaster Door Design. With a two-panel, square-top plank design, the Corvado can be combined with a bi-fold style design or the Cellini series for a raised-panel molding. This door is available in 7-foot and 6-foot, 8-inch heights. Circle 133 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-133.



ODL -

ODL introduces the Michael Graves Collection of decorative door glass. The collection offers elegant, clean designs in three styles: the Acacia, Vienna and Fleur-de-lis. The Acacia's sizes include 22 inches by 64 inches, 22 inches by 80 inches, 8 inches by 80 inches and a rectangular transom.

Circle 134 or go to http://pb.ims.ca/5127-134.

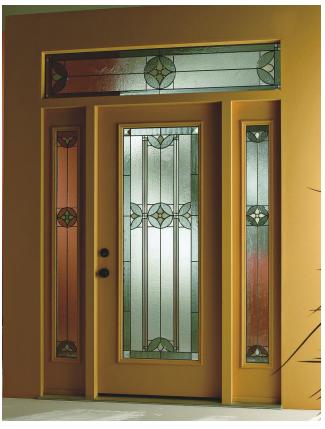
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RITZ-CARLTON LAKE LAS VEGAS SEPTEMBER 27 - 29, 2006

KEYNOTES: TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP



Patrick Lencioni

Patrick Lencioni is the founder and president of The Table Group, Inc., a specialized management-consulting firm focused on executive team-building and organizational health. He has been described by the One-Minute Manager's Ken Blanchard as "fast defining the next

generation of business thinkers." Pat's passion for organizations and teams is reflected in his writing, speaking and consulting. He is the author of five business books, including *The Five Dysfunctions* of a Team, which was on the New York Times best-seller list. His new book, *Silos, Politics and Turf Wars*, came out in March 2006. Pat consults to executives and speaks to world-class organizations, addressing thousands of leaders. Prior to founding his firm, Pat worked for Sybase, Oracle and Bain & Company. He also served on the National Board of Directors for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America from 2000-2003.



Keith Harrell

Known for his energetic, innovative presentations, Keith Harrell is a dynamic life coach who specializes in changing behaviors through a positive attitude. While growing up in Seattle, he aspired to become a professional basketball player. Although he never realized that

dream, The Wall Street Journal says, "What sets him apart . . . is driving ambition and an attitude that refuses to flag." Through his company, Harrell Performance Systems and his book Attitude is Everything: Ten Life Changing Steps to Turning Attitude into Action, Keith specializes in helping companies achieve and maintain their goals. Harrell spent 14 years at IBM, where he was recognized as one of the top sales and training instructors. He is widely regarded as one of the country's best speakers.

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SEPTEMBER 26-29, 2006 RITZ-CARLTON, LAKE LAS VEGAS



Zuesday, September 26

12:00 – 5:00 Housing Tour - Mountain Edge Community

12:00 — 5:00 Golf Outing - Reflection Bay Golf Course

6:00 — 8:00 Welcome Cocktail Reception

Wednesday, September 27

8:00 — 9:30 Keynote on Leadership — Patrick Lencioni



Patrick Lencioni is the founder and president of The Table Group Inc., a specialized management-consulting firm focused on executive team-building and organizational health. He has been described by the One-Minute Manager's Ken Blanchard as "fast defining the next generation of business thinkers." Pat's passion for organizations and teams is reflected in his writing, speaking and consulting. He is the author of five business books, including *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, which was on the New York

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9:45 - 11:00

Real-Estate Market Update — John Burns, President, John Burns Real Estate Consulting

GIANTS magazine columnist John Burns provides unique insight to the real-estate market. He will share the trends, opportunities and threats facing home builders in an increasingly difficult market.

11:00 - 11:45

Building Material Market Update — Barry Rutenberg, President, Barry Rutenberg and Associates

Barry Rutenberg has been a leading voice in understanding the impact building material issues have on builders. He will share his timely information on regulations, tariffs and other events affecting product supply.

DETAILS

1:15-1:45

Leadership — Larry Webb, CEO, John Laing Homes

Establishing a culture of leadership in a company requires inspired direction and a strong plan. Hear from a recognized industry leader on successful methods for developing true leaders in your organization.

1:45-2:15

Strategic Planning – Mark Hodges, Senior Vice President, Corporate Operations, Hovnanian Enterprises

Leadership translated into action only comes from strategic planning. The future of Hovnanian Enterprises has been mapped by a clear plan. Learn about the methodology for strategic planning executed by one of the largest, most aggressive builders in the country.

2:15-2:45

Human Resources — Mark Upton, Executive Vice President — Western Region, Technical Olympic USA

The engine at the center of any successful home building company is fueled by quality employees. Technical Olympic's focus on supporting quality people with best practices points to the clear connection between recruitment/retention and superior operations.

3:00 - 5:00

Breakout Sessions — Leadership, Strategic Planning, Human Resources

6:00 — 10:00 NHQ Award Dinner

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In a year of change, home builders face new pressures from all sides. Ensuring they execute the details of their businesses is essential to growth and prosperity. To help you succeed, the Professional Builder 2006 Benchmark Conference focuses on the specifics of operating a quality home building company.

Our keynote speakers will address the essential success elements of leadership and team-building, providing the framework for executing the details. Then our nationally recognized builders will delve into six areas that are essential to develop for your company's future success: Leadership, Strategic Planning, Human Resources, Trade Relations, Performance Management and Construction Quality

Thursday. September, 28

8:00 — 9:30 Keynote on Performance — Keith Harrell



Known for his energetic, innovative presentations, Keith Harrell is a dynamic life coach who specializes in changing behaviors through a positive attitude. While growing up in Seattle, he aspired to become a professional basketball player. Although he never realized that dream, The Wall Street Journal says, "What sets him apart from less successful speakers is driving ambition and an attitude that refuses to flag." Through his company, Harrell Performance Systems, and his book, Attitude is Everything:

Ten Life Changing Steps to Turning Attitude into Action, Keith specializes in helping companies achieve and maintain their goals. Harrell spent 14 years at IBM, where he was recognized as one of the top sales and training instructors. He is widely regarded as one of the country's best speakers.

9:45 — I I:45 Legendary Service at the Ritz

The Ritz-Carlton has earned a worldwide reputation for delivering customer services that set a standard for every business owner to emulate. How do they do it? Get the inside story on their methods to identify, hire, train and motivate employees to meet the demands of the most demanding customers.

11:45 — 1:15 NRS Satisfaction 1 Award Lunch



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DETAILS_

1:15-1:45

Trade Relations — Bryan Binney, Vice president of operations, Shea Homes

Developing partners to support the future of your business is essential to mitigate the risk of home building. Trade partner relations mean sharing in each other's success. Executing that requires careful communication, attention to details and long-term commitments.

1:45 - 2:15

Performance Management – Bill Saint, CFO & Director, Simonini Builders

Every good company wants to improve performance. Establishing a foundation for performance management is essential. 2006 Builder of the Year Simonini Builders has created in-house methods that give the tools to its employees to meet enormous expectations from demanding clients.

2:15-2:45

Construction Quality — Charlie Scott, Executive Vice President, The Estridge Companies

Known for its superior customer service, The Estridge Companies starts the process through a program of superior construction quality. Learn the techniques this dynamic company uses to control, communicate and execute the craft of building every day.

3:00 - 5:00

Breakout Sessions — Trade Relations, Performance Management, Construction Quality

6:30 - 10:00

Networking outing — Nine Fine Irishmen Pub

Friday, September 29

9:00 - I 2:00

TEAM-BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

After two days of hard work, bring your group together for fun and team-building exercises. Offered through the Ritz-Carlton, attendees will have access to hiking, biking, ATV riding and other outdoor activities in the beautiful Lake Las Vegas area. Also, take the opportunity to participate in team-building exercises such as a CSI Investigation or Building a Catapult.

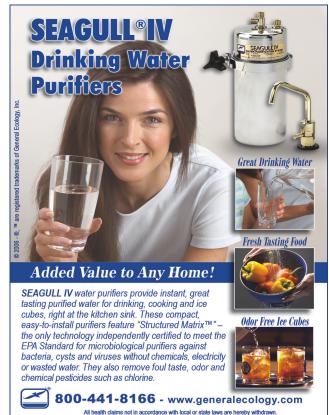


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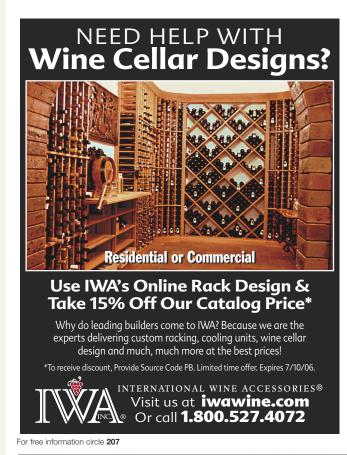
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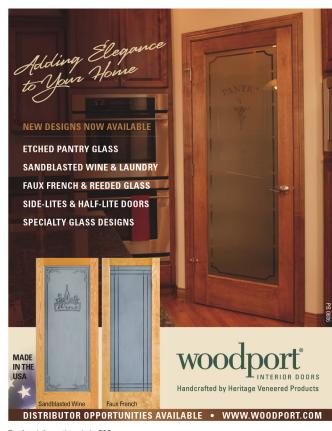
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Version 13



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High Capacity Girder Hangers



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www.strongtie.com **Simpson Strong-Tie**

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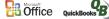


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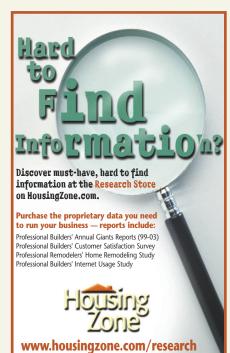


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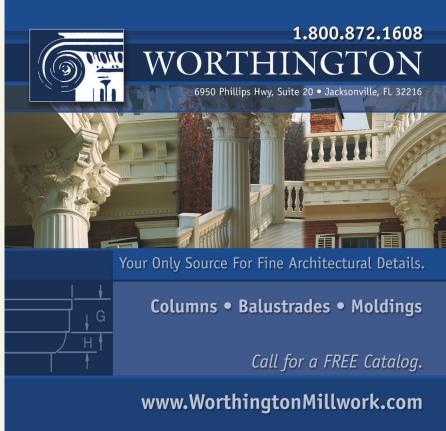






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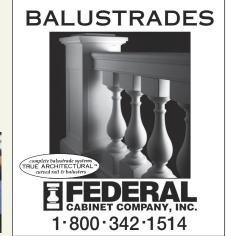
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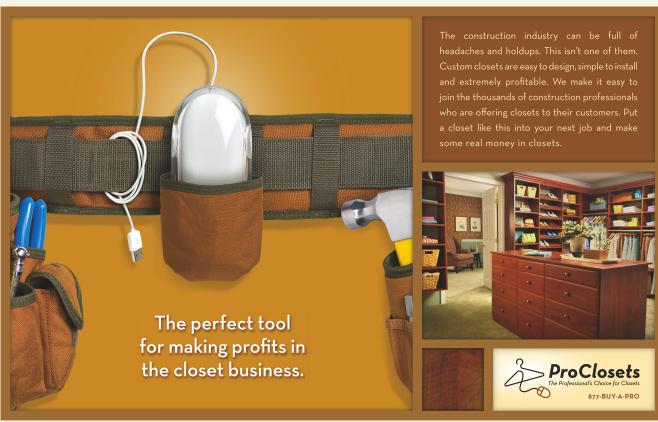
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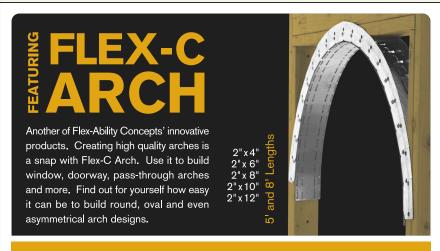
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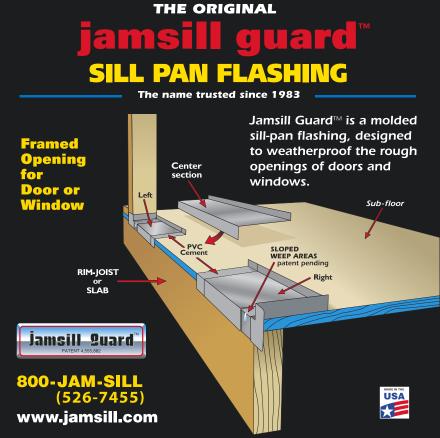


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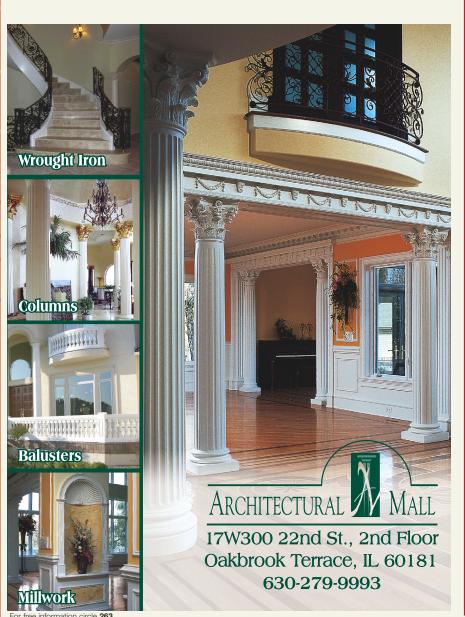
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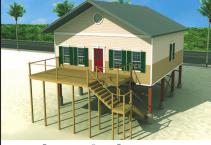
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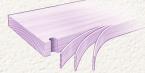


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