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Cover photo of Arverne by the Sea's East Hampton model by Taylor Photography

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SO MANY WAYS TO REACH US, SO LITTLE TIME. We don't just want you to read our magazine. We want you to be a part of it daily. Find us as the group *Professional Builder* on Facebook and LinkedIn, and follow our editorial director, Paul Deffenbaugh, on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/PDeffProBuilder](https://twitter.com/PDeffProBuilder). Let's keep each other updated.

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How would you like to be editorial director for *Professional Builder*? No, I'm not leaving, but the position is available. If you can access all the publishing tools as I have, you, too, can become editor.

Today, all the publishing tools that used to reside under the strict control of editorial directors and their staffs are now available to every person with Internet access. Here are some of the tools we're now using:

LinkedIn: We started several groups on LinkedIn, including *Professional Builder*, Best in American Living Award and National Housing Quality Awards. Members (and editors!) are posting questions for discussion, looking for information and sounding their opinions.

Facebook: We also have a group on this site for *Professional Builder*. Join up. We'll keep each other updated.

Blogs: Most of our staff is blogging on HousingZone.com. The best part of this is the comment section where we get direct feedback from our readers.

Twitter: Perhaps our newest opportunity is Twitter. Find me at www.twitter.com/PDeffProBuilder.

All of these outlets fit under the heading of social media, but it's astounding how much information you can gather by following the right people. I'm not really interested in the social aspects of social media.

Take Twitter, for example. When I first heard about it, I couldn't imagine following the details of other people's lives — or worse, having them follow the details my life. That kind of digging in just spotlights how unexciting our lives can be on a daily level.

What I found, though, was completely different. Twitter is a transaction. I provide bits of information — never personal and always about our industry — that I believe an audience would find of value. In exchange, people sign up to follow my "Tweets." From the people

Twitter is a transaction. I get access to information that keeps me on top of **what's happening** in the industry.

I follow, I get access to information that keeps me on top of what's happening in the industry. I have been astounded at how good Twitter is as a clearing source of information. You do, of course, have to clear out the chaff and get to the good data.

(Really, I don't care if you went to the dentist today.)

The same is true of blogs. I have set up RSS feeds to deliver blogs to my home page that keep the flow of information coming in. From those raw sources of information I have access to authoritative sources who do quality reporting.

All of this access to information and ways to disseminate it are available to everyone. We have truly a new world of media.

Paul Deffenbaugh, *Editorial Director*
paul.deffenbaugh@reedbusiness.com

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staff

Editorial Director

Paul Deffenbaugh 630/288-8190
paul.deffenbaugh@reedbusiness.com

Creative Director

Bill Patton 630/288-8050
bpatton@reedbusiness.com

Assistant Managing Editor

Sara Zailskas 630/288-8197
sara.zailskas@reedbusiness.com

Senior Editors

Susan Bady 630/288-8194
susan.bady@reedbusiness.com

Mark Jarasek 630/288-8171
mark.jarasek@reedbusiness.com

Bill Lurz 941/371-4804
bill.lurz@reedbusiness.com

Felicia Oliver 630/288-8483
felicia.oliver@reedbusiness.com

Products Editor

Nicholas Bajzek 630/288-8187
nicholas.bajzek@reedbusiness.com

Editorial Assistant

Jennifer Powell 630/288-8297
jennifer.powell@reedbusiness.com

Contributing Editors

John Rymer, Paul Cardis

Senior Contributing Editor

Ann Matesi

FISALES, MARKETING AND EVENTS Director, Construction Media

Dean Horowitz 630/288-8180
dhorowitz@reedbusiness.com

Publisher

Tony Mancini 610/205-1180
armancini@reedbusiness.com

Director of Events

Judy Brociek 630/288-8184
jbrociek@reedbusiness.com

Director of Custom Publishing

Emily Yarina 630/288-8109
emily.yarina@reedbusiness.com

FINANCE, RESEARCH AND CIRCULATION

Director of Finance
Bruce Ksiazek 630/288-8120
bksiazek@reedbusiness.com

Audience Marketing Manager

Angela Tanner 800/446-6551
subsmail@reedbusiness.com

Research Director

Barbara Allelujka 630/288-8175
barbara.allelujka@reedbusiness.com

EDITORIAL AND PUBLISHING OFFICE

Professional Builder

2000 Clearwater Drive
Oak Brook, IL 60523
Telephone: 630/288-8000
Fax: 630/288-8145

Reed Business Information

Iain Melville Chief Executive Officer
Jeff Greisch President, Chicago Division

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Editorial Submissions

letters to the editor
Send to Paul Deffenbaugh
2000 Clearwater Drive, Oak Brook,
Ill. 60523 or paul.deffenbaugh@
reedbusiness.com

products

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“I think HUD’s programs – whether it’s public housing, Section 8, voucher programs – haven’t adapted to the innovations and the energy that has been driven by state and local areas and non-profit groups – a whole range of players that have come on the scene. ... HUD has not been a significant contributor in many ways to that innovation.” – Shaun Donovan, Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development

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HUD REVISITED

Photo: Mark Wilson/Getty Images

INSIDE

Band together and sell homes now
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Where’s the AD&C money? [page 14]

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[CUSTOMER SATISFACTION]

Sell Homes Now



Be proactive during these dark days to get the industry back on track.

By Paul Cardis, Avid Ratings

No one wants to see market conditions worsen, but recent developments indicate the downturn will cut deeper before the economy heals.

Some economic forecasts show things improving in the fourth quarter, but I think it is unlikely to happen because the global crisis is worsening rather than stabilizing. Furthermore, the governmental stimuli will take considerable time to implement and ultimately affect job growth and consumer confidence. The eleventh hour changes by the House of Representatives to the housing portion of the stimulus bill and the clumsy rollout of a bureaucratic loan

down mortgages. Also note that the only manufacturing sector that exists in every city of this great country is housing, which dwarfs the auto, steel and even oil industries to put people to work in “shovel-read jobs.” Unfortunately, this administration does not see housing as a first tier solution but rather a symptom of the economic crisis. Prepare accordingly:

1. Combat the media. There are lots of good reasons to buy a home today: interest rates are low, housing prices have corrected and a surplus of new homes means buyers have lots of choices. Salespeople need to share this information with buyers in a

and Mrs. Homebuyer need to sell the home they own. Your salespeople are experts in real estate and most likely know the best way. Share those best practices with buyers and provide a home staging guide. In some cases, offer to list the home.

4. Maximize your referrals. The builder survivors we know all have referral sales higher than 80 percent. Sponsor weekly events that bring prospects and loyal customers together so that potential buyers can hear first-hand what a great builder you are. Studies show that a referred prospect is twice as likely as a regular prospect to give you business.

5. Don't ditch quality. The businesses that are able to maximize referrals and gain market share are those that maintained high standards of quality. During these tough times you need to have a pipeline of happy customers making referrals. If you don't have many sales coming from referrals, your chances of survival are greatly reduced. **PB**

Paul Cardis is CEO of Avid Ratings, a research and consulting firm specializing in customer satisfaction for the home building industry. You can reach him at paul.cardis@avidratings.com.

Cardis' Tips

DON'T DITCH YOUR QUALITY

It's OK to cut costs, provided you keep your quality high. If not, your probability for survival is greatly reduced.

MAXIMIZE REFERRALS

Sponsor weekly events and activities that bring prospects and loyal customers together so that potential buyers can hear firsthand why you're a great builder.

OFFER RESALE ASSISTANCE

Make it easy for home buyers to sell their existing homes by sharing best practices with buyers, providing a home staging guide and listing their home if it makes sense.

We need to **increase the number of home sales** and not have the government modify and buy down mortgages.

modification program all point toward more difficult times in housing.

The unthinkable failure of 12 percent of all mortgages is deepening this economic mess, and it will require the swift reduction of foreclosures to fix it. This means we need to increase the number of home sales and not have the government modify and buy

convincing way that counters negative news.

2. Tap your HBA. Now is the time to work with fellow builders for the sake of the industry. In some markets, the local home builders associations have launched public relations campaigns to promote why now is the time to buy.

3. Resale assistance. To close on a new home, Mr.



To read more, visit us at www.probuilder.com

Oh Where,
Oh Where Can My

AD&C Be?

Home builders are searching for financing for acquisition, development and construction. Can this lost dog be found?

By Mark Jarasek, Senior Editor, Electronic Media



The U.S. population continues to increase. Annual household growth is expected to rise by an average of more than 1.5 million for the 2009 to 2012 period. Affordability has leapt to its highest levels since the 1970s. Mortgage rates are lower than when even our grandfathers would remember.

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Someone will have to be there when the house hunters return to the market. And it's important to note that what's happening in the housing market in Sarasota, Fla., isn't necessarily what's happening in Buffalo, N.Y., Austin, Texas, or Portland, Ore. Home building will always be a business tied to the local market.

But there's a serious threat right now to meeting future demand. In many markets, the collar has rapidly tightened on builders who've been looking to fund their next project. Home builders who do find the bank or private or institutional equity source that will talk with them are en-

Perspectives

David Ledford

NAHB Senior Vice president for Housing Finance and Land Development

David Ledford's department serves the membership of the NAHB on finance and land development issues.

"In most cases, banks are not able to do AD&C loans," says David Ledford of this current lending environment. He notes that builders who have solid contracts to build homes have a difficult time, too. Still, there's hope. Although it might vary by market, banks might lend if there's an existing relationship, Ledford says.

Other private funds and investors are out there looking for

profitable investments but "their fees are high, the terms are tougher and they are much harder to find.

"The general feeling out there right now is 'we don't need to build any more houses,'" Ledford says. He predicts this attitude will lead to future housing shortages in many markets. "The inventory isn't going to be there when the recovery process starts," he believes. "The big question is when the turning point will be."



countering new, different and more stringent requirements: — more cash equity, additional collateral, guarantor support, additional loan fees, higher interest rates or higher returns.

What's even worse is that the leash is being severely shortened on builders who have projects under way. Regulators are forcing banks to reduce their real-estate exposure and clear balance sheets of "nonperforming" loans. Property is being reappraised in a distressed market environment where comparables include foreclosed properties sold at auction, builder short sales or banks' unloading REO at ridiculously deep discounts. In a mounting number of extreme cases, banks are calling in existing loans, forcing home building firms into bankruptcy and out of business. These builders are finding there's virtually nowhere else to turn for cash.

Have all the capital sources for land acquisition, land development and home construction (AD&C) gone astray? With this unprecedented scenario as a backdrop, we went looking to find what sources, if any, may be out there for AD&C.



Perspectives

Bob Kline

Principal, R W Kline

R W Kline is a Scottsdale, Ariz.-based national firm that specializes in full-service asset solutions, acquisitions and land development.

"There isn't a whole lot of private equity money out there [for AD&C] right now, unfortunately," says Bob Kline. "New appraisals are so low."

Kline says that builders pursuing potential private equity sources would need to "be willing to share a significant piece of the pie." He adds that private funds are looking for 30 to 50 percent of the upside.

Kline points out that all markets may not be in the same dire situation that others are. "If someone's in a market where the conditions are right, some commercial lenders will probably look at a project."

As far as when the money for AD&C might be found again, Kline says it won't happen "unless the mark to market rules are adjusted or until the market starts moving the other way." Lending institutions are in a dilemma right now. "How can you mark to market if you don't know what the market is?"

IN THE DOG HOUSE

THAT'S HOW THIS LIST OF BUILDERS MUST FEEL AFTER LENDING INSTITUTIONS (MANY THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE FDIC) PUT THE MUZZLE ON THEIR LOANS.

A QUICK LOOK AT THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK'S most recent quarterly survey of bank lending practices reflects what the situation has been lately for home builders:

"Significant net fractions of banks reported having tightened many lending policies on CRE [commercial real-estate including residential loans]. Over 2008 as a whole, about 95 percent of domestic banks increased their loan-rate spreads, and about 80 percent tightened their loan-to-value ratios. About 75 percent of foreign respondents, on net, reported wider loan-rate spreads, and about 65 percent, on net, had reduced their loan-to-value ratios."

Uh-oh.

Here's a sampling of the distressing scenario that has been playing out recently to home builders across the country:

- Dec. 21, 2008 — The Sarasota Herald-Tribune reports on Snyder Construction Co., which has a credit score of 848 and had never been late on its payments. The Bank of America gave it 60 days to repay a \$2.5 million loan. "I've been to 15 lenders; no one will lend me a dime," says the firm's owner, Earl Snyder.
- Jan. 2 — The Atlanta Journal-Constitution runs an article on how Bobby Lunceford of Bobby Lunceford Properties lost his home, his cars, his life savings and his business after several banks that he was doing business with called in his loans. "The instant we ran out of money, all but one bank began foreclosure proceedings," Lunceford says.
- Jan. 5 — The San Diego Business Journal reports that Barratt American filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. CEO Mick Pattinson said that although he had borrowed more than \$1 billion during the 27 years he patronized, the bank refused to extend credit lines when they came up for removal.
- Jan. 14 — The Sarasota Herald-Tribune reports on home builder Lee Wetherington's troubles in getting \$22 million in debt renegotiated. "Regulators are telling banks in no uncertain terms that they have to look at all the land they have loaned against in Florida and mark that land to market," Wetherington says. "The banks are consequently telling builders to come up with additional cash as collateral. But builders don't have the cash. So banks are forcing them to go into foreclosure."
- Feb. 27 — The Albuquerque Journal reports that Wallen Homes has fallen victim to the tight financial markets. "The banking industry is making it extremely difficult for anybody in home building to do business anymore," Eric Wallace, one of three partners who owns the company, says. "The system is broken."



TALK BACK!

Are other home builders out there finding themselves in this same situation? Go to this article online at www.probuilder.com and tell us about it in TalkBack.



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Perspectives

Tom Stephani

President, Rosenthal Co.



The Crystal Lake, Ill.-based Rosenthal Co. develops residential and commercial properties. Tom Stephani is also a nationally recognized speaker and trainer on issues relating to the residential construction industry.

"Getting loans for spec housing is impossible right now. Loans are non-existent from traditional sources," says Stephani. "The non-traditional sources are scared to death because the market is so saturated. Private investors are asking 'why would we want to do that that now?'"

"Dirt is worthless," he continues. "The only value might be in the infrastructure that's in place. If you want to do speculative housing, you have to do it with 100 percent cash. Other than that, there may be friends and family that truly believe in you willing to lend money. But building anything on spec is a crap shoot right now."

"Whatever I would build now, appraisers will tell me the value is less than what it took to build. The freefall of foreclosures and short sales has to stop," Stephani says.

Stephani says there may be opportunities in the current market for builders who are able to use the customer's equity to build a specific home on a specific lot. Demand could also come from customers wanting new green features that aren't available anywhere else. Other examples would be customers who need special features built into their home for aging in place or disabilities.

"There is light at the end of the tunnel somewhere, but it will take awhile," he says.

Perspectives

Tony Avila

Senior Advisor, Americrest Homes



Boca Raton, Fla.-based Americrest Homes is a start-up builder with equity capital focused on finding opportunities in distressed land.

Tony Avila says that home builders can try the smaller local and regional banks, but the chances of finding any willing to lend on AD&C financing may be "few and far between." Money center banks such as Bank of America, Wachovia/Wells and JPMorgan/Chase are busy reducing their exposure to home building and not lending to new clients.

When builders do find a willing bank, they most likely will find the banks won't want to place any loans on the raw land and will offer only partial funding for development and construction — 60 percent to 70 percent as opposed to 100 percent advance rates. Builders will also find the terms of the loan will be much steeper — Libor plus 350, 450 points or higher, instead of Libor plus 125 to 250 points.

Other financing sources for builders could include "private debt and equity funds, hedge funds, family, friends or high net worth family offices," he says, adding that private equity sources are still viable and that his firm is currently working on assignments for builders to find new pools of debt capital. **PB**

TALK BACK!

Are home builders out there getting loans for AD&C? Go to this article online at www.probuilder.com and tell us about it in TalkBack.

OUT OF THE POUND

THE CREDIT SQUEEZE has captured the full attention of the NAHB. It's petitioned Congress to get a portion of TARP funds explicitly targeted to AD&C lending, thus far to no avail. And it's been working to get Congress to support initiatives that would broaden sources of AD&C credit. It wants::

- Fannie Mae to ramp up activity in its AD&C loan purchase program and for Freddie Mac to create a similar program.
- Federal Home Loan Banks to improve AD&C liquidity by accepting housing production loans as collateral for the secured advances made to member institutions.
- The Federal Housing Administration to help increase competition in the AD&C market by insuring the construction portion of these loans to attract new originators such as mortgage banking companies.

- Wall Street specialists to develop a prototype private security instrument for AD&C loans. In particular, changes to tax provisions relating to Real Estate Mortgage Investment conduits and taxable mortgage pools could be helpful in securitizing construction loans.
- Banking regulators to take a balanced approach when evaluating bank lending, especially in regard to AD&C loans.

However, NAHB's main focus currently is on that last bullet point, Dave Ledford, NAHB senior vice president for housing finance and land development tells us. "We're working with regulators to get banks to take a better approach to the situation instead of turning good loans into bad loans." Other ideas, like establishing a secondary market, would be great, Ledford says, but it's more important to "get the basic system up and working again first."



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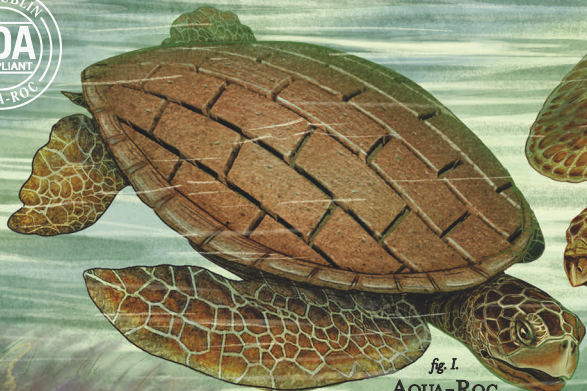


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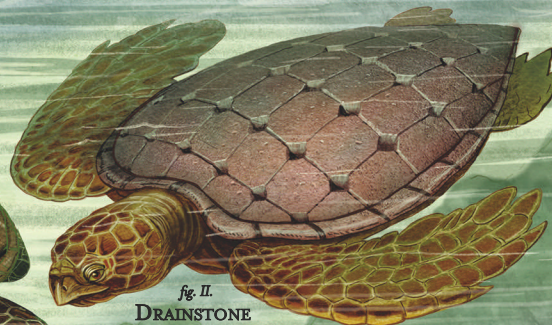


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fig. V.
SUBTERRA
[stack bond pattern]



fig. VI.
SUBTERRA
[herringbone pattern]

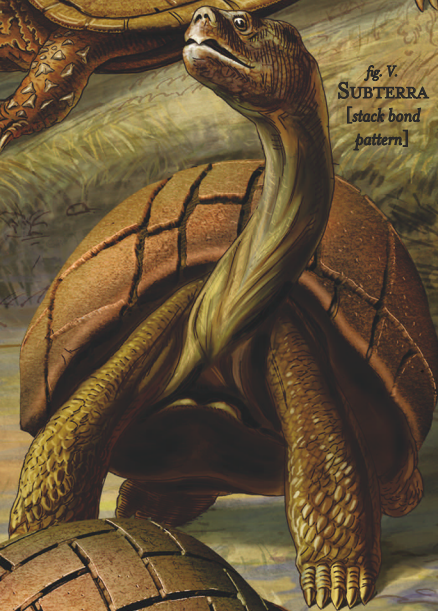
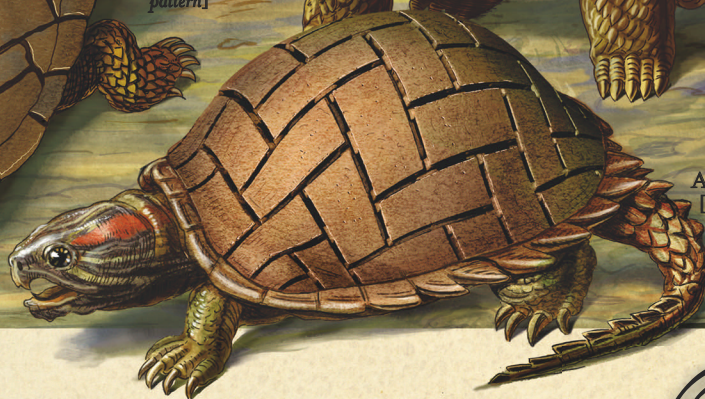


fig. VII.
AQUA-ROC
[herringbone pattern]



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Web marketing brands builders as unique, creative and different, says Meredith Oliver, president of Meredith Communications, a firm specializing in Web marketing for new homes. A Web site is a must, but you first need to entice people to visit it. "A Web site with no Web marketing is like a billboard in the Everglades," Oliver says. "It doesn't exist." Drive traffic to your site, follow up with visitors and convert them to on-site appointments – and eventually sales – to maximize the process.

CYBER SAVVY

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Photo: Jeannine Inda

INSIDE

Your sales team must believe
[page 23]

The essentials of selling live/work
[page 24]

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[SALES & MARKETING]

Be a True Believer



To sell in today's economy, your team needs to believe in the value of today's market.

By John Rymer, New Home Knowledge

How would you react to someone who directly challenged you on the basic patriotism of America — someone who said that American democracy was a farce, American people lacked moral principles to succeed in a global society and that the underlying values of our country were not worth fighting for?

For almost every American, the answer would be to strongly defend our country and challenge the person directly. Why? Because these are principles that we all hold so strongly to the core of our beliefs that we cannot simply let them pass us by without a comment.

the long-term benefits of home ownership. The problem is that many new-home salespeople simply choose to stand on the sideline and let these comments go unchallenged.

Remember, today's buyer can spot a phony a mile away. A customer has no interest in listening to a new-home salesperson's half-hearted attempt on the virtues of buying a new home when the salesperson really is fearful about the benefits of taking action today.

My rule on identifying sales success from potential candidates is to look first for genuine conviction that today's new home market is an

self and your sales team on their core beliefs on the merits of making a new-home purchase in today's market. Don't settle for, "If you're looking long-term, housing is a great opportunity." The direct question should be: Why a new home, and why today? You need to have your "elevator speech" ready, compelling, factual and, most importantly, genuine.

Don't be afraid to have an open discussion with sales team members who feel beaten down on why now is a great time to buy a home. As Warren Buffett says about smart investing: "Whether stocks or socks, I like to buy quality merchandise when it's marked down." Certainly, today is that day. **PB**

John Rymer is the founder of New Home Knowledge, which offers sales training for new home builders and real-estate professionals. You can reach him at john@newhomeknowledge.com.

Challenge your sales team on their core beliefs on the **merits of making a new-home purchase** in today's market. The direct question should be, "Why a new home, and why today?"

In today's housing environment, the similar open-ended "attacks" often confront new-home sales professionals. Customers will comment on the value of buying versus renting and today's price versus a potential discount in the future — even

outstanding value. Second, I look for honed sales skills. Both are important, but without enthusiasm on the wisdom of making a decision today, you are simply asking customers to pick your home over the competition.

Begin by challenging your-

Rymer's Rules

ROLE-PLAY "WHY-BUY NEW? BUY NOW!" AT YOUR NEXT SALES MEETING

It's the most important resistance obstacle.

BELIEVE IN THE VALUE OF TODAY'S MARKET

Customers can spot a phony. Either get converted or get out of the industry.

DON'T GET COMFORTABLE EXPLAINING THE LONG-TERM VIEW OF HOME OWNERSHIP

Today's buyers want to know why now is the time to buy.

RECRUIT FROM TRUE BELIEVERS

No amount of prior sales experience and success will overcome a tepid belief about the virtues of buying a new home. You can teach sales skills, but you can't overcome core beliefs.



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Live/Work Sales Essentials

Want to sell live/work projects?
Here's the who, what, when,
where, why and how to success.

Felicia Oliver, Senior Editor

Live/work projects have pull with home buyers: having a business within or attached to a home means they might save money on overhead and won't have to spend gas on a daily commute. And who wouldn't want the option to work in her pajamas if she felt like it?

Yet right now buyers looking for just this sort of arrangement really don't have a lot to choose from because the market is still small compared to the market for traditional homes. And if you are selling live/work, it doesn't mean you can sell just anything. A good product must meet home buyers' needs first.

Want to get your piece of this market? Here's a primer on the who, what, where, when, why and how of selling live/work.

WHAT IS LIVE/WORK HOUSING?

THERE ARE A VARIETY of live/work setups to suit the needs and wants of a diverse group of buyers/business owners. Some are:

- A built-in space within a home customized and intended solely for business use. The structure might include a separate entrance and other means to separate the home and business that co-exist at the same address.
- A mixed-use project with retail space on the ground level for a business and access to living space that's either attached on the ground floor or upstairs. In the case of separate floors for retail and living space, the buyer might have two mortgages.
- A flex space within a home or perhaps an extra bedroom that can be used in several ways, including as a home business or office. If the owner discontinues the business, the room can become a bedroom, study, etc.

WHO IS YOUR TARGET MARKET?

THE LIVE/WORK buyer typically:

- Is younger
- Has no kids
- Is stable but not too affluent
- Is creative
- Has a business already or is looking to start a sole proprietorship, service-oriented business as a graphic designer, writer, artist, accountant, attorney, therapist, real-estate agent, etc.
- Is a working professional who wants an option to tele-commute

Live/Work Profile

Front Street Lofts, Lemont, Ill.

Front Street Lofts is a mixed-use development in a Chicago suburb and is scheduled to open in July. It has 82 lofts above first-floor living space. Buyers can purchase retail space on the first floor and a unit to live in upstairs or a loft with space to set up their business.

The HOA declarations allow business to be conducted on the premises. There are separate entrances for clients and homeowners and a parking garage to accommodate the traffic from business patrons.

The target demographic is downtown Chicagoans who are already doing live/work and want to move to the suburbs.

Potential or existing business owners who would like to stop renting space and work in or near the same building as their home are a target demographic as well.

All 82 units can be used as live/work, but Art Bettuzzi, general manager of project sales with Marquette Companies, the developer of Front Street, thinks the larger one-story as well as two-story floor plans best lend themselves to this arrangement. Owners can work in their business on the first floor, where their kitchen and living room is located, and keep the second floor for personal living space (bedroom, bathroom, etc.).



SALES TIP: HOST AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP WORKSHOP

WHEN TRYING TO SELL a live/work space to someone who is thinking about starting a business but has no experience owning one, why not arrange a workshop? Sessions on how to run a business or write a business plan could answer a lot of questions and give potential buyers a sense as to whether this is something they can realistically do.

"They need to know, 'Here are the risks, here are the things you need to have,'" says Eric C. Brown, Artisan Village's developer.

WHY WOULD SOMEONE BUY LIVE/WORK?

NEARLY 21 MILLION AMERICANS were self-employed in 2006, the most recent year statistics are available from the U.S. Census Bureau. The vast majority of these businesses were sole proprietorships. And in this economy, more are likely to be added as some downsized workers decide to work for themselves.

Art Bettuzzi, a general manager of project sales, works for Chicago-based Marquette Companies, which developed Front Street Lofts, a community with live/work units. He points out that many traditional office spaces require a three- to five-year lease and notes that a large portion of new businesses fail. That's why a home buyer

owning her own office space as part of her home — as opposed to holding a lease or mortgage separately — is a good candidate. "If somebody is going to take a risk entrepreneurially, wouldn't it be simpler to take that risk out of the equation?"

Also, "Entrepreneurs thrive on creativity and collaboration," says Tracy Koe Wick, director of client services at Southfield, Mich.-based Neumann/Smith Architecture. "A live/work space puts you in close proximity with other like-minded individuals in a close-knit community where entrepreneurs are neighbors and stakeholders controlling the success of their retail environment."



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WHERE DO YOU FIND THESE BUYERS?

“THE BEST WAY TO FIND those individuals is to network and market directly to chambers of commerce, entrepreneurial organizations and professional services groups,” says Tracy Koe Wick, director of client services at Southfield, Mich.-based Neumann/Smith Architecture. “Once you know the types of businesses that work perfectly in these areas — people who don’t need staff — I think direct marketing to those kinds of groups makes a lot of sense, and it’s

usually very affordable.”

Wick is an advocate of using a search engine optimization/keywords ad campaign on the Web.

“If anyone is looking for live/work in L.A., Detroit or wherever your market is, your ad pops up and people go directly to your Web site,” Wick explains. “These ads are very cost effective. That’s the beautiful thing. We like target marketing.”

A CREATIVE WAY TO EDUCATE PROSPECTIVE BUYERS



HOW DO YOU EDUCATE prospects who aren’t familiar with the live/work concept in a practical way that makes it appealing?

Jack Skelley, senior vice president of Roddan Paolucci Roddan Advertising, Public Relations and New Media, faced this exact challenge in marketing the 300-unit Barker Block Lofts in downtown Los Angeles. He says that in Los Angeles and much of the West Coast, live/work is a fairly new

concept. Appropriate for its proximity to Hollywood, they decided to dramatize the lifestyle.

“‘Loft Life’ at Barker Block was an unusual sales event,” says Skelley. “We hired a theater company to enact one-of-a-kind interactive performances.”

The actors, who portrayed residents of Barker Block’s models, interacted with attendees, answered their questions and demonstrated the live/work lifestyle.

WHEN DO YOU OFFER YOUR LIVE/WORK PROJECT FOR SALE?

IF YOU ARE SELLING live/work units as part of your overall community, when do you offer these units for sale? At the very beginning, the end or somewhere in the middle?

“You want the synergy of the neighborhood,” says Eric C. Brown, president of Artisan Homes in Phoenix. He had 10 live/work units to sell as part of a 105-unit condominium complex he developed called Artisan Village in Phoenix. “We pushed our [release] to about the three-quarter mark of development. We didn’t want them too early, and we wanted some time to market them.”

He targeted a captive audience and showed them what the units would look like before they were available. “People would be willing to wait if they wanted them, because they couldn’t get them anywhere else,” Brown says.

Live/Work Profile

Artisan Village, Phoenix

Located in the downtown Phoenix Arts District and built in 2005, Artisan Village has 105 two- and three-story row home condominiums, 10 of which are live/work storefront units of 300 square feet. There is also a back bedroom that can be used as an office. “We knew exactly who were targeting,” says Eric C. Brown, president of Artisan Homes, the developer of Artisan Village. “We thought the best way to reach them was through the art community, their friends and those who live in downtown already. At this price point, I knew I was going to attract ... younger people who don’t have a lot to lose but have made enough money that they qualify for a house.”

The HOA restricts the kind of businesses and certain uses of the space. “They could take the downstairs back bedroom to make it an office,” says Brown. “But we had to have HOA restrictions so they couldn’t fry foods in there.”

The anchor is a bakery that bakes off-site,” Brown adds. “The owner lives there, and she has her people bring the baked goods over in the morning. They probably do more dollars per square foot of any retail shop I know.”





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ALL AMERICAN STREETSCAPE

31

Demand for new housing on rural military bases is up, but institutional-looking product won't cut it with military families. They want appealingly designed homes that would fit into any neighborhood, such as these Craftsman-style bungalows in Park Village at Fort Belvoir, Va., by RKtects of Bethesda, Md., and Clark Builders Group in Arlington, Va.

Photo: Michael Carpenter Photography

INSIDE

Great small-home designs [page 32]

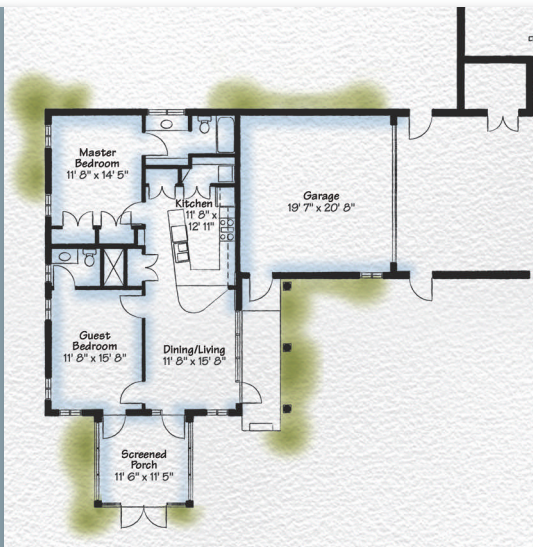
A Best Address by the sea [page 36]

Great Floor Plans for Small Homes

6 top architects demonstrate how to make the most of 2,200 square feet or less. By Susan Bady, Senior Editor, Design

Russell Residence

"On one of the **kitchen walls**, there was an opportunity to tuck in a little **bookshelf** unit. It has a couple of doors down below for **storage**. There's not one wasted square inch in the place."
— Darrell Russell

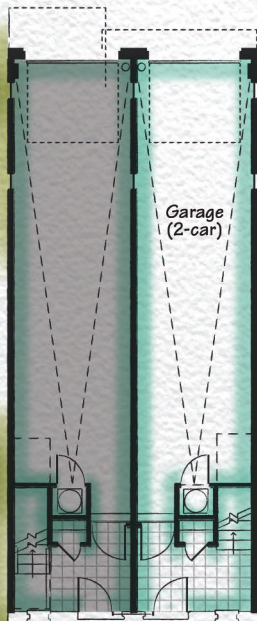


DARRELL RUSSELL, Looney Ricks Kiss Architects, Rosemary Beach, Fla., designer/builder

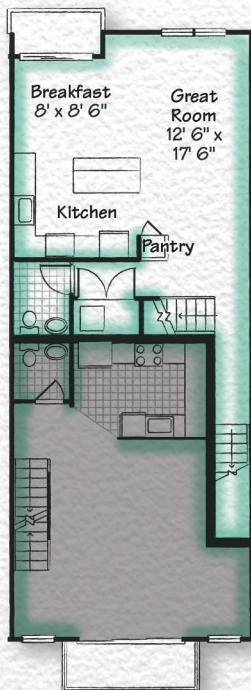
SPECS: 1,007-square-foot detached carriage home; one story; two bedrooms; two bathrooms

WHAT MAKES IT WORK: Screened porch; 10-foot ceilings; multiple windows; 10-foot-tall storage unit in master bath; two-car garage with attic for additional storage.

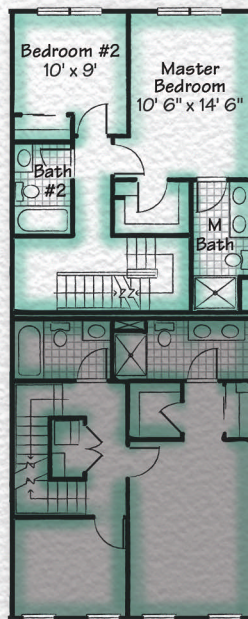
Russell recently removed the breakfast bar in the kitchen to create a dining room that seats eight. He also turned the master bedroom into a sitting room and uses the guest bedroom as the master bedroom. As more evidence of the plan's flexibility, he points out that the wall between the guest bedroom and dining room can be removed to create a larger living space.



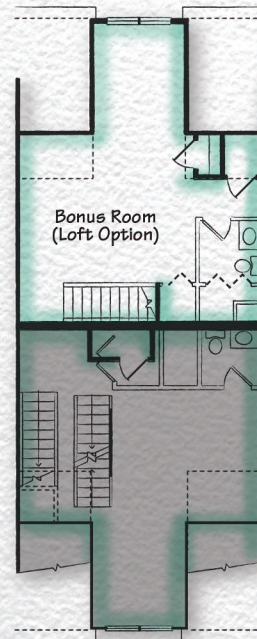
First-Floor Plan



Second-Floor Plan



Third-Floor Plan

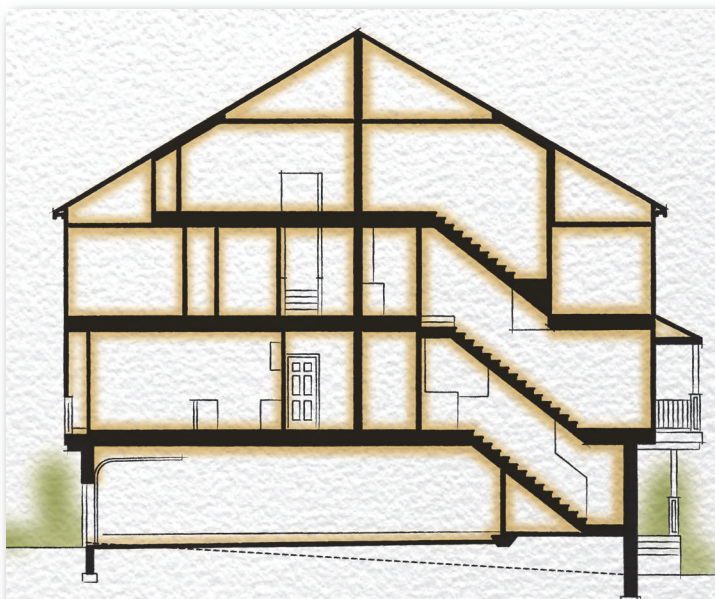


Fourth-Floor Plan

"A lot of times with this kind of **higher density**, direct-entry product, you end up walking up **stair after stair** after stair. With this configuration, you only have to **walk up one flight of stairs** to get to the unit."

— Tom Barton

Plan D, Green Street Mews, Downingtown, Pa.



TOM BARTON, Barton Partners, Norristown, Pa., designer
Progressive Housing Ventures, Malvern, Pa., builder

SPECS: 1,756-square-foot townhome; three stories above garage; three bedrooms; 2½ bathrooms

WHAT MAKES IT WORK: Back-to-back design fits two units in space typically allocated to one, but rooms don't feel narrow; each home has its own front door and porch for "row house" look; alley-loaded, two-car tandem garage; window wall and private deck off great room; third-floor bonus room.

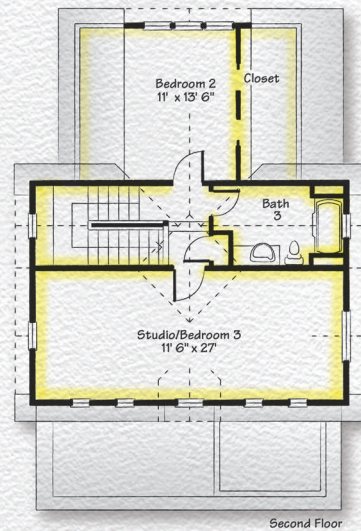
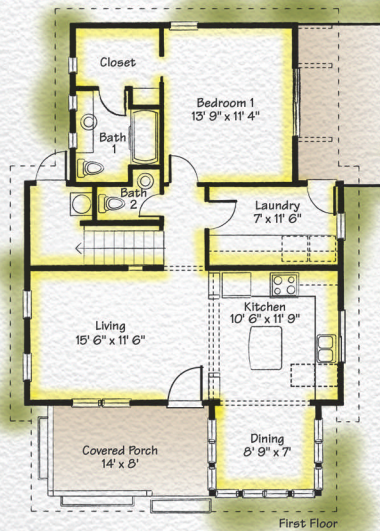
The Plumrose

ROSS CHAPIN, Ross Chapin Architects, Langley, Wash., designer

SPECS: 1,635 square feet; single-family detached; two stories; two bedrooms; two bathrooms

WHAT MAKES IT WORK:

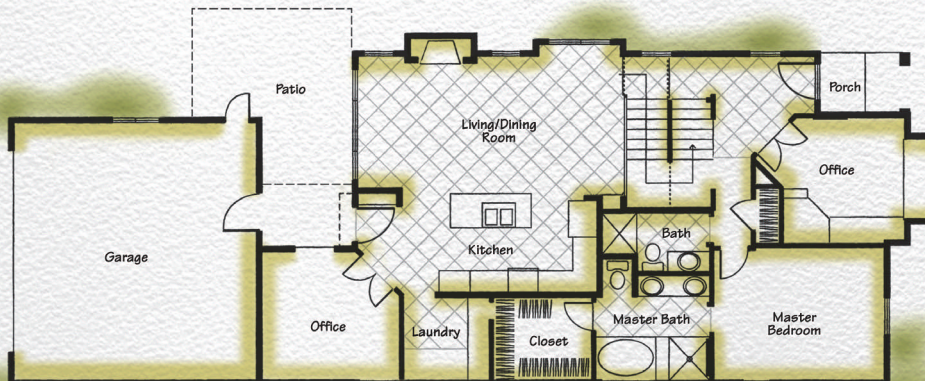
Main-floor master bedroom; front and rear sections can easily be “flopped;” many variations possible with second-floor layout, including hobby room, guest room and playroom; dining room wrapped in windows; closets tucked under second-floor eaves; extra-deep stair landing for window seat and bookshelves.



“Many designers don’t think about what **people need for daily living** in a small home. Is there enough room to do the **laundry**? Where does the **vacuum cleaner** go? Is there a place to **drop off mail**, post reminders and pick up the **kids’ homework**?” – Ross Chapin

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The Emerson



ANNE OLSON, Olson Architecture, Niwot, Colo., designer
Wonderland Homes, Lafayette, Colo., builder

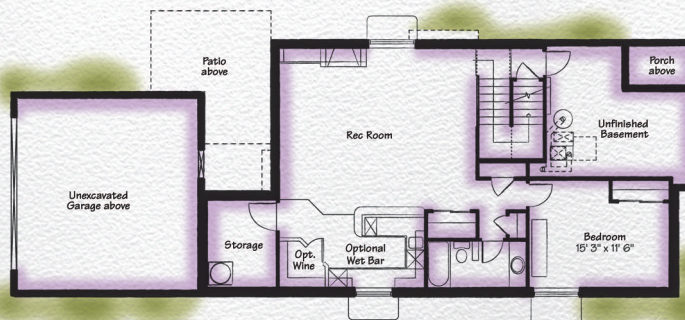
SPECS: 1,300-square-foot detached home; one story with optional lower level; two bedrooms; two bathrooms

WHAT MAKES IT

WORK: Lots of options, including his-and-her home offices, master sitting room and lower level with recreation room, wet bar and guest bedroom/bath; drop zone near garage entrance; passageway between master closet and laundry room; alley-loaded, two-car garage.

“As homes get **smaller**, you have to design them with spaces in mind, not rooms, and you absolutely have to **design with furniture**.”

– Anne Olson

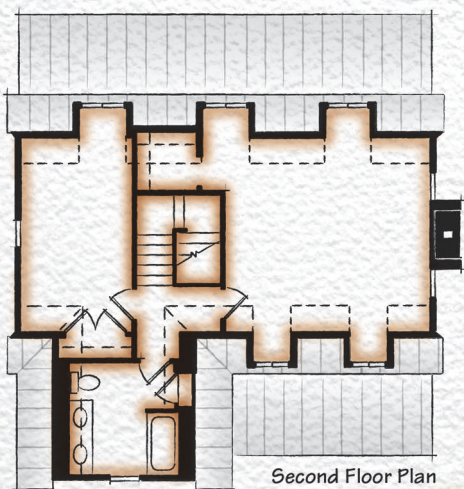


The Joiner

RUSSELL VERSACI, Russell Versaci Architecture, Middleburg, Va., designer

SPECS: 1,769-square-foot detached home; two stories plus full, unfinished basement; three bedrooms; 2½ bathrooms

WHAT MAKES IT WORK: Eat-in kitchen (no breakfast nook or dining room); first-floor powder room and coat closets; shared bathroom for master bedroom and secondary bedroom; generously proportioned living room; central staircase; French doors that open to back porch spanning rear of home; no corridors on second floor.



Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan

"I often refer to **[small-home design]** as designing a yacht. You fit out the inside so that **everything serves a purpose.**"

— Russell Versaci

The Birch



BARRY GLANTZ, Glantz and Associates Architects, St. Louis, Mo., designer
McBride & Son Homes, Chesterfield, Mo., builder

SPECS: 2,184-square-foot detached home; one story; three bedrooms; two bathrooms

WHAT MAKES IT WORK: Three-car garage with one bay recessed to minimize impact on elevation; open, family living spaces at rear of plan; formal dining room; master bedroom separated from secondary bedrooms; optional walkout basement.

"Shrinking a big house to **fit a small footprint** doesn't work. In small-home design, **you have to prioritize.** This sort of plan gives the **buyer and the builder a great deal of flexibility.**"
— Barry Glantz

Remember These Rules

- Keep hallways to a minimum.
- Put the staircase toward the center of the plan.
- Use windows liberally to bring in natural light from different directions.
- Raise ceiling heights to enhance the feeling of spaciousness.
- Examine every nook and cranny for storage potential.
- Incorporate outdoor living areas (even small ones make an impact).
- Eliminate rooms the targeted buyer won't use, such as a formal dining room, to enlarge frequently-used spaces.
- Consider shared bathrooms instead of en-suite baths. **PB**

MORE ONLINE

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[BEST ADDRESS]

DYNAMIC

36



Photos: Taylor Photography

DUO

A beachfront, mixed-use development in Queens hits home with middle-class New Yorkers.

By Ann Matesi, Senior Contributing Editor

37

CEILING DETAILS and built-in niches contribute to the contemporary, custom feel that characterizes the interiors of the two-family homes at Arverne by the Sea. Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects designed the units to have open floor plans that maximize views of the sea.

An upscale, privately owned home with its own attached rental unit proves to be a winning combination for New York buyers and builder and developer Benjamin-Beechwood at Arverne by the Sea.

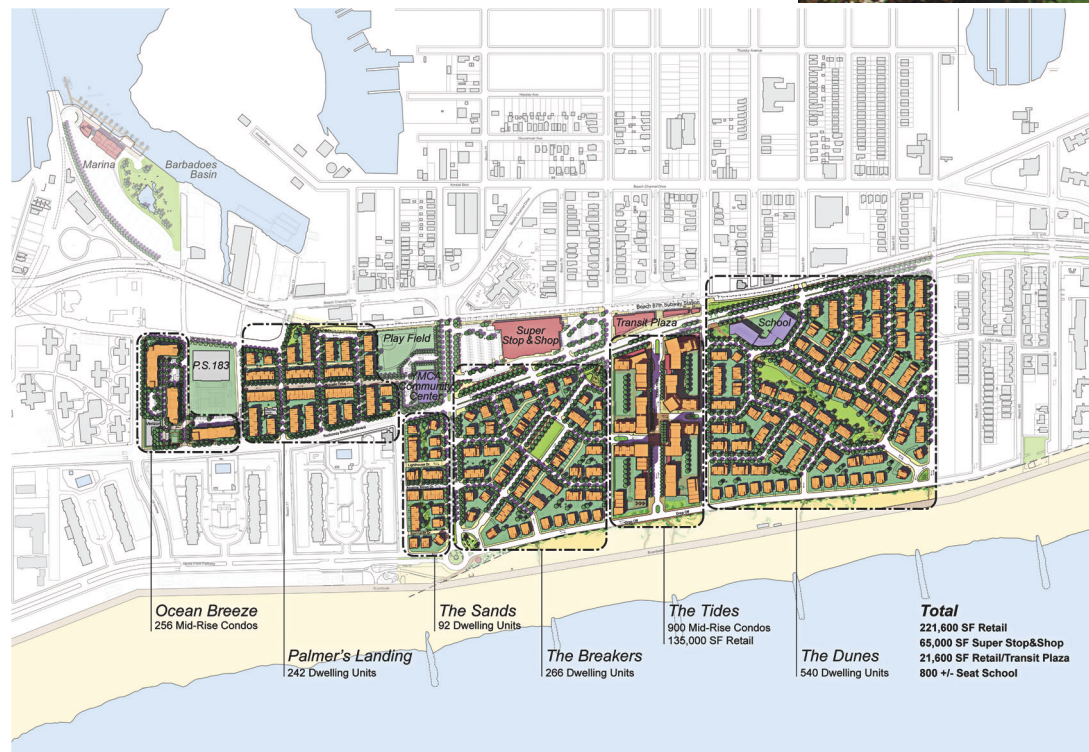
The development is situated on the southern tip of Long Island's Rockaway Peninsula that once hosted vacation goers around the turn of the twentieth century but sat abandoned for decades. The oceanfront development is a steal for middle-class buyers: it has a reasonable commute time to downtown Manhattan, a 20-year tax abatement program from the city and housing plans with a for-lease component.

Sales are steady, and its story is strong.

The community

Arverne by the Sea opened for sales in 2004 and will feature six distinct neighborhoods, including four that feature Benjamin-Beechwood's two-family residences exclusively, plus two others that offer clusters of mid-rise retail/office/condominium buildings. The goal is to introduce employment opportunities, lifestyle flexibility and vitality into the community. The builder has focused on developing Arverne's two-family home neighborhoods, with construction of the office/retail element to begin this spring and sales for the condominium component projected to begin in early 2010.

Palmer's Landing and the Sands, which have two-family residences, are completed and sold out, and the Breakers, also comprising two-family residences, is 95 percent sold out. Benjamin-Beechwood's sales efforts are now directed on the largest neighborhood, The Dunes,



OCEAN VIEWS WERE PRIORITY for the architects working on Arverne by the Sea's design, says Peter Cavaluzzi of Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects. Three-story buildings stand over two-story residences (right). The development (left) sits on Queens' Rockaway Peninsula, which was a seaside playground at the turn of the twentieth century.



COOPERATION MAKES PERFECT PARTNERS

FOR THE PROJECT TO BE SUCCESSFUL, the Benjamin-Beechwood team had to carefully choose its partners and worked closely with the community to understand its wants and needs.

"Gentrification is not really the way to describe what is taking place today in the Arverne community today," says John Gaska, Community Board 14's district manager, "because that implies that this is the evolution of an older community. In this case, there was really not much left of the physical community."

In some ways, long-time residents' insisting that new development replicate the area's past was a challenge in revitalizing the area, he says.

"In order to move forward, it was important to get the remaining community residents to give up the ghost of old Rockaway — the grand hotels, the seaside resorts. These things were no longer there and no longer practical."

Gaska continues: "The city of New York would have been more than happy to line the seashore with high rises, but we were committed to fighting that scenario. Everyone at the Benjamin-Beechwood organization understood that. The way we saw it, we really had one shot to bring this area back to life. We wanted the developer to be successful; it would make us successful as a community again."

The builder's relationship with the local community is excellent, he says. "They really listened to us and have met every commitment that they've made."

What is the developer doing so well? Gaska has these praises:

- A willingness to make themselves available to community residents to provide information on construction plans and timelines as well as to hear complaints and concerns
- Coordination with the local community board to time street closures and schedule infrastructure improvements to minimize disruptions for residents
- Incorporation of community-building features into the master plan such as a recreation center, a school and play areas
- Creation of jobs through the use of local trades and vendors wherever possible
- Keeping the stakeholders — the community residents — in on the process from start to finish

"The lesson," says Gaska, "is that when you are working in a community it is much easier to get things accomplished when the residents that live there trust and support you."

A SITE READY FOR REJUVENATION

THE SOUTHERN TIP OF LONG ISLAND might be the last place you'd expect to find 300-plus acres of vacant oceanfront property ready and waiting to be developed. But that's the way it was less than a decade ago.

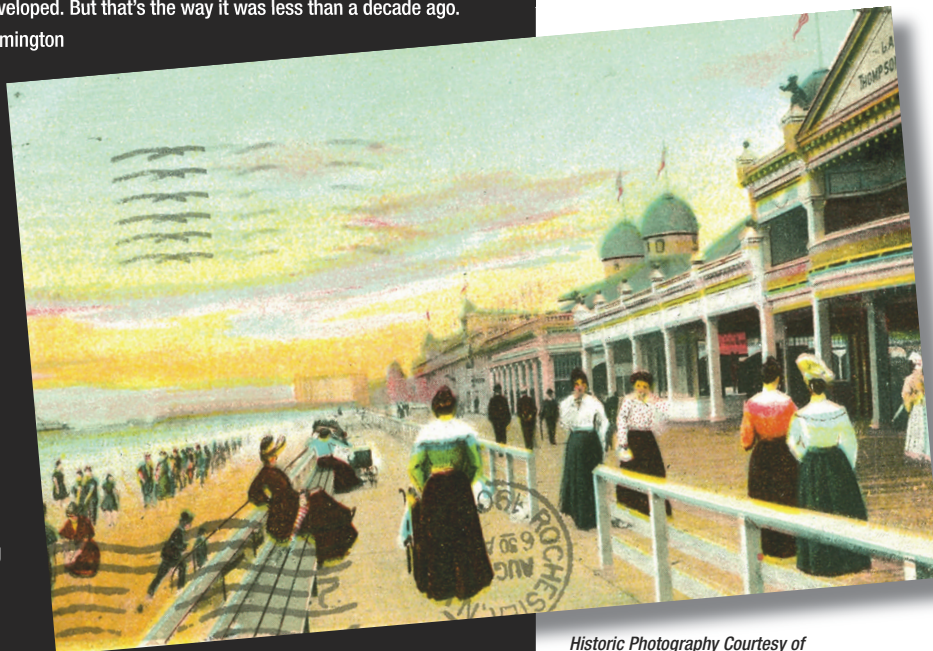
Arverne, named for its original developer, Remington Vernam, is on the east coast of Queens' Rockaway Peninsula and had been the weekend playground for New York residents at the turn of the twentieth century. In its heyday, the area included a mix of seasonal bungalows, resorts, high-end hotels and boardwalk concession areas that drew crowds to the shore.

Automobile and air travel drew vacationers further afield, and the area's popularity as a getaway spot diminished. The community fell into disrepair and eventually was targeted by the city of New York as the site for several ambitious but unsuccessful public housing projects. In 1968, the area was condemned, and the demolition of the sub-standard housing began. By the early 1970s, this site was totally vacant.

The land did not go unnoticed by public and private ventures — there was talk of creating a casino, theater district or sports center — but numerous proposals failed to find full support. The tract sat vacant for nearly 40 years. "It was literally patrolled by packs of wild dogs," says Gerard Ronski, Arverne by the Sea's project manager.

Eventually the city of New York's Department of Housing Preservation and Development hired the consulting firm Hamilton, Rabinovitz & Alschuler to work with local community leaders and developers to create a revitalization plan including new housing, employment opportunities, entertainment venues and transit options.

What was the largest undeveloped tract of waterfront property in New York City is today the largest active urban renewal project in the country. Within this, Arverne by the Sea serves as a shining example of "how to do it right," says Community Board 14 District Manager John Gaska.



Historic Photography Courtesy of Benjamin-Beechwood

AUTO-FRIENDLY DESIGN

EVEN IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT, people still love their cars. That's why Arverne by the Sea owner units and even some rental units include attached garages.

"We recognized the fact the homeowners today — even urban dwellers — are very dependent on their automobiles," says architect Peter Cavaluzzi. "We wanted to provide homeowners with a place for their cars without having them dominate the neighborhood streetscape."

The solution was to provide plenty of parking options, including:

- Rear alleys
- Attached garages
- Narrow driveways that encourage homeowners to put their cars in the garage rather than leave them outdoors
- Urban-style mews incorporated into adjoining side streets, eliminating the need for additional curb cuts
- Shared parking courts

which has a planned 270 homes. The first 120 homes, Phase I, were released for sale in a June 2008, with 80 sales.

Peter Cavaluzzi, design principal for Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn, the New York-based architectural firm that developed the site plan for the project and the six models featured there, says the oceanfront location and amount of open land make the project what it is. "The combination of the variety of open spaces and the buildings, as well as the transit element, have resulted in a really unique environment that buyers have really been drawn to," he says. "This development goes against the prevailing economy today, thankfully."

All of the homes at Arverne by the Sea are Energy-Star-certified and feature low-maintenance exteriors designed to handle

the effects of the Atlantic Ocean. Everything from the landscape materials to the vegetation was carefully considered so that they thrive in the beachfront environment.

New York's working middle class is the target buyer for Arverne by the Sea, but the community has captured the attention of other markets as well. One of the surprises, says Cavaluzzi, is that the development is drawing more affluent buyers from Manhattan.

"We have attracted a very vibrant mix of homeowners that is not racially or ethnically divided," says Gerard Ronski, project manager for the joint venture that includes the Beechwood Organization and the Benjamin Companies. "We have a very diverse population here. I call it a gorgeous mosaic."

Enough is Enough:

The Treated Lumber Industry Stands Up to a Destructive Campaign

February 17, 2009

Viance LLC

*Steve Ainscough, President & CEO
200 East Woodlawn Road/Suite 350
Charlotte, NC 28217*

Dear Steve,

As an industry we have a long and well-established history of providing safe and reliable pressure-treated lumber products. Today, we're taking the unusual step of coming together to denounce the recent efforts being employed by Viance LLC to discredit micronized copper pressure-treated lumber. Some of us manufacture these products; some of us do not. We all are concerned about the negative impact this campaign is having on our industry.

This campaign is either an ill-advised marketing ploy or an inappropriate method for addressing technical concerns.

If technical questions exist, there are well-established forums in our industry to voice and address them. Those forums are already engaged in this issue and include the Forest Products Journal and the International Research Group on Wood Preservation (IRG). We are strongly encouraging all concerned parties to learn about recent developments in these forums: <http://www.forestprod.org/features.html> and <http://www.irgamericas.org/>.

We value healthy competition. This is not about competition; this is about a self-serving marketing crusade that threatens the reputation and questions the integrity of an entire industry.

As concerned members of the pressure-treated community, we urge Viance LLC to abandon this damaging campaign.

Hal Bumby, President
Maine Wood Treaters, Inc.

Tom Evans, President
Coastal Treated Products Company

Carey Garst, President & CEO
Rocky Top Building Products

Michael B. Glenn, CEO
Universal Forest Products

Bob Hixson, CEO
Hixson Lumber Sales

Mikee Johnson, President & CEO
Cox Industries, Inc.

Bert Jones, President
Mid-States Wood Preservers, LLC

Larry Lang, Vice President
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Keith Laugen, President
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Doug O'Rourke, Director of Sales & Purchasing
Biewer Lumber

Michel Pascarella, Vice President
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Darrell R. Smith, Vice President of Operations
Conrad Wood Preserving Co.

John Stauber, President
Innovative Pine Technology

Scott Steinkamp, President & CEO
Steinkamp Southern Indiana Wood Treating, Inc.

Ben Stimpson, President
Gulf Treating, Inc.

Sea's the opportunity

The key decision made at the start of the planning process was “to identify what will feel right for the location,” says Cavaluzzi.

The plans were developed so that they could be combined in multiple ways to avoid monotonous streets and maximize the views of the Atlantic for as many people as possible, he says. The materials and colors emphasize the beachfront as well.

Arverne by the Sea features a variety of courtyards, walking paths, recreational areas and a boardwalk. Streets are both pedestrian- and transit-friendly.

The two-family homes are elevated 3-feet up from street level. “This is a very subtle change, but one that really makes a big difference when you are inside the homes. It provides better street views and lots of opportunities to create walk-out porches and decks,” says Cavaluzzi.

Best seller

The Dunes is the development's best seller and features roof-deck entertaining areas; top-floor living areas in the owner's units that capitalize on views; high-end finishes; and spacious, flex-use bedrooms.

Although the prices for the two-family homes in The Dunes range from \$559,000 to \$1.1 million, the added financial bonus that the rental element offers allows even first-time buyers to have a strong presence in the community.

The Dunes' three-story East Hampton model, priced from \$619,000, has been the best selling model so far. The 3,360-square-foot residence features a 1,711-square-foot, three-bedroom owner's unit with a reverse floor plan that includes a private garage, mid-level master suite and third-floor living area that captures ocean views. The East Hampton also has its own rooftop terrace with a separate storage locker.

To maximize privacy for all residents, the East Hampton's attached, two-bedroom rental unit features a ground level entertaining area and a second-floor master suite and guest bedroom. The third-floor is dedicated to the owner unit. **PB**

COMMUNITY FEATURES

- 2,594 planned residential units including 726 two-family residences (total of 1,452 residential units) and 1,142 condominium units
- Full-service grocery store (Spring 2009)
- YMCA (2009 construction start)
- Oceanfront boardwalk (completed)
- Interior walking paths (completed)
- Charter school for up to 800 kindergarten through eighth-grade students
- Multiple transit options to downtown Manhattan and Brooklyn including commuter rail, express bus and express ferry service
- 270,000 square feet of office/retail space
- Highest density buildings clustered along a new main street corridor
- New community infrastructure

PROJECT PROFILE

Community: Arverne by the Sea

Location: Arverne, N.Y.

Model: East Hampton

Size: 3,360 square feet

Builder/Developer: Benjamin-

Beechwood (The Beechwood

Organization, Jericho, N.Y.; The

Benjamin Companies, Garden City,

N.Y.)

Architect: Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn

Architects, New York

PRODUCTS USED

Appliances: Frigidaire

Plumbing fixtures: Kohler

Windows: Andersen

Doors: Therma-Tru

Flooring: Shaw; Dal-Tile; Bruce

HVAC: Goodman

Paints/Stains: Sherwin-Williams

Exterior siding: James Hardie

Roofing: Owens Corning

OWNER/RENTAL COMBO MAKES CENTS

THE RENTAL COMPONENT to the project makes sense for buyers as well as the community. In fact, Community Board 14, the governing body that oversees local development, was a strong proponent of the two-family home concept, says John Gaska, who has been district manager for Community Board 14 for more than 20 years.

“We knew that rental income would defray costs for potential buyers and make the homes more affordable for a wider range of buyers,” Gaska says. “To us, the two-family building just made a lot of sense for the area.”

Other benefits of the owner/rental combination include increasing the affordability for the project, promoting community diversity and attracting an eclectic mix of middle-income buyers to the area.

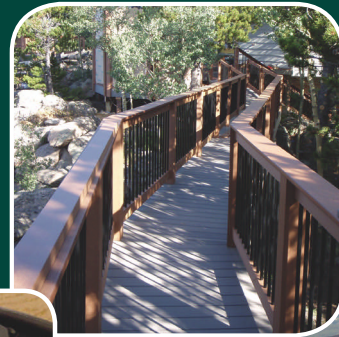
“The homeowners manage the rental aspect of their property themselves,” says Gerry Ronski of builder/developer Benjamin-Beechwood. “We would certainly assist our buyers with finding a tenant if they required it, but so far that has not been an issue for us. The demand for the rental units is consistently strong.”

As an added bonus, the attached designs also promote architectural variety by providing the opportunity for variation in entry points, rooflines and orientation.



BOTH OWNER AND RENTAL RESIDENCES at Arverne by the Sea feature high-end finishes and open interiors. Ceiling details define the rooms in the best-selling East Hampton model; interior walls would obstruct views.

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SPRINKLED WITH SAFETY

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Photo: Tyco Fire Suppression & Building Products

INSIDE

Bamboo overview [page 47]

Spiced up kitchen fixtures [page 49]

Inspired bath products [page 50]

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[GREEN TREND]

Bamboo Overview

We examine why bamboo flooring is green and how to determine its quality.

By Nick Bajzek, Products Editor



Photos by Teragren

Some see bamboo as an eco-friendly source that can provide a virtually limitless supply of beautiful flooring. Others say it creates an easily-marred and carbon-intensive product of little use to high-traffic homes. But what's the bottom line: is bamboo a good choice?

Interior decorator Steven Patrick's clients have mixed reactions to bamboo. They like that it's a renewable resource and is harder than other woods. They don't like that furniture, high heels or heavy objects can easily mar and damage a bamboo floor.

A green product

Bamboo's rise as a premier flooring product can be largely attributed to the fact that it's a rapidly renewable resource. Bamboo is a type of grass that reaches maturity in about three to five years, whereas oak trees can take 120 years to grow to full maturity. The bamboo plant also regenerates and, when left to its own devices, requires minimal fertilization or pesticides. Bamboo floors are also naturally water repellant.

David Knight, CEO of bamboo flooring manufacturer Teragren, estimates that 95 percent of bamboo flooring today is the Moso species, which is mostly grown in China. Other bamboo might



IT LOOKS GOOD, but do your buyers understand they can damage the bamboo planks? The fact bamboo regenerates in its natural surroundings isn't the only factor to consider.

come from Central and South America or even Vietnam. Teragren recently unveiled its latest boards, which can help builders attain LEED points.

Quality

Knight says builders and contractors must objectively look at the price of bamboo; you mostly get what you pay for, he says, adding that not all manufacturers import their bamboo from the same sustainable sources or produce boards in ISO-certified facilities.

Color is equally telling. Knight notes that bamboo flooring gets its color from

a process called carbonization in which bamboo is steamed under controlled pressure and temperature. As the bio-organisms and sugar breaks down, the color of the material changes into varying shades of brown. This, in turn, can weaken the structural integrity and overall hardness. The name "solid bamboo" doesn't help, either, and can be misleading. Natural and carbonized bamboo floors are often referred to as solid bamboo even though it's layered, similar to plywood.

Founder Dan Smith from Smith & Fong flooring agrees builders and buyers should pay strict attention to the color. "From empirical experience, the darker, amber color will be softer because of the heat process. The natural color is invariably the best. The flat grain, not the edge grain, will produce the hardest boards," he says.

Smith says that Smith & Fong's Plyboo product is the only bamboo flooring provider that's FSC-Certified right now. That means there's minimal, if any, need to use pesticides, says Smith.

"It's really more of a matter of appropriate application than anything," says Knight. "If you use a softer wood from who knows where in a high traffic area, well, yeah, you might not be satisfied with its performance." **PB**

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[KITCHEN FIXTURES]

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Tradition and Modernity

There's no accounting for taste, so the company decided to let you (or your homeowners) choose. KWC's Deco faucets can be top- or side-operated with a pull-out spray or swivel spout. According to the company, the rounded, curved style and decorative details are inspired by the Art Deco movement.

For FREE information, visit <http://pb.hotims.com/23721-253>



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[BATH FIXTURES]

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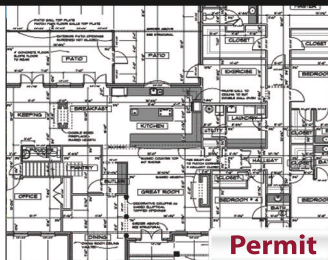
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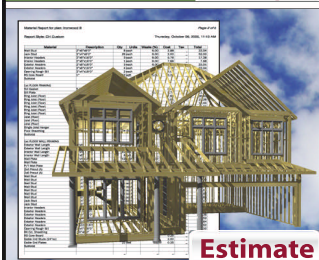
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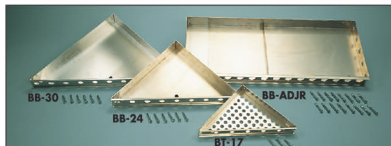
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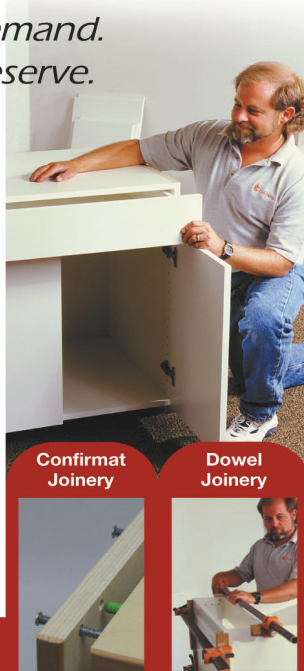
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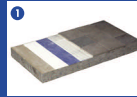
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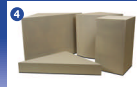
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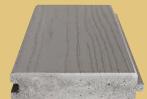
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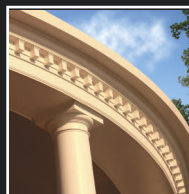
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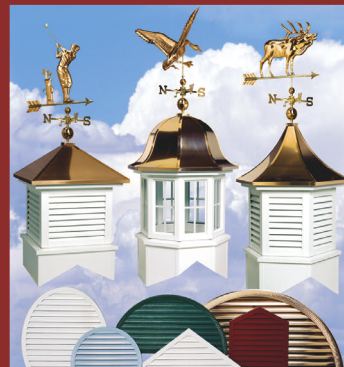
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Editorial & Publishing Office

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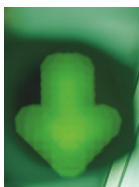
A DesignIntelligence survey found that architects with 20 or more years of experience get an average base compensation of \$100,723. The Top 20 percent in this group can make \$142,200.

2

John Burns Real Estate Consulting's survey of 218 public and private builder executives around the country, representing more than 1,600 new home communities, showed that both new home sales and expectations rose again in February. Current new home sales are still poor, but the national rating lifted to a 2 on a scale of 0 to 10.

6 months Six months after being hired to manage **Freddie Mac**, **CEO David Moffett** announced he is **stepping down**.

49.9 The median number of days it took to sell a single-family home was 49.9 days in **January 2009**, reports the **California Association of Realtors**. In the same month in 2008, it took 70.8 days. What will be the stats following the tax credits?



2.8% **Residential construction** spending fell 2.8 percent in January, while in December it **dropped 4.4 percent**, according to the **U.S. Department of Commerce**.


\$10,000 According to the **San Diego Union-Tribune**, the California Legislature passed a budget compromise that included a \$10,000 state tax credit for home buyers. Home builders in California hope this will get the people buying. This is in **addition to the \$8,000 tax credit** from the stimulus package **President Obama signed** into law.

1 One compact fluorescent light bulb uses about **75 percent less energy** than an incandescent bulb, according to Energy Star. However, a **Canadian Broadcasting Corp.** report suggests energy savings associated with CFLs may be offset by **higher heating bills and more greenhouse emissions**.



2010 The "**Beige Book**," a Federal Reserve Bank survey of regional economic conditions, found economic conditions poor with no pick-up in recovery until late 2009/early 2010.

\$64,000 KB Home is offering **880-square-feet**, two-bedroom, one-and-a-half bath houses for \$64,000 in **Houston**. It's the company's strategy to combat the **foreclosed homes** the banks are selling.



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*As ranked for 2008 by *Inside Mortgage Finance* (January 29, 2009) © 2009. (Rank combines mortgage originations of Bank of America, N.A. and Countrywide Financial Corporation.)
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