

# Green building guidelines are a win-win for builders and homeowners

Both home builders and home owners are in agreement — using green building guidelines is a win-win. It's also a concept whose time has come, even if it has been 30 years in the making.

With a seemingly endless litany of environmental problems that face home builders and designers, architectural and environmental issues have become more intertwined, especially in the recent years as consumers have also demanded buildings that are cheaper to heat and cool, cheaper to live in and less taxing on the earth and its resources.

While much attention is focused on the rising costs at the gas tanks, the truth is that modern houses are far bigger energy "guzzlers." In 1990, for example, American households consumed more than \$110 billion worth of energy, and those numbers have only continued to rise. As a result, the onus has fallen to home builders to use principles of sustainable design to save money for themselves and home buyers, as well as waste fewer resources and distinguish their projects in the marketplace.

Locally, green building efforts are well underway, thanks, in part, to the leadership of Max Strickland of Burkholder Construction and Chair of the Green Build Committee organized by the Home Builders Association of Grand Traverse Area, Inc. (HBAG-TA).

Strickland says that the recent announcement of "Model Green Home Building Guidelines" developed by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and the NAHB Research Center will provide a nationally recognized baseline for

determining minimum thresholds for resource-efficient, cost-effective home building that are practical for the entire industry.

In Traverse City, the Green Build Committee, a group comprised of two dozen home builders, suppliers, environmentalists and representatives of local government, will be introducing their Green Building Standards Manual on March 12, 2004.

"The National Green Home Building Guidelines will take 'green' to the mainstream," said

Strickland. "We will ensure that all home builders, not just a few niche builders, better understand green building techniques and technologies. The home building community around the country can use them for their own specific, regionally distinct green home building efforts."

The Model Green Home Building Guidelines will contain criteria to set the industry bar for land development, site planning, resource efficiency, water conservation, indoor air quality, energy efficiency,

operations maintenance, and homeowner education. NAHB and the NAHB Research Center will provide the technical expertise in the guideline development process as well as a forum for builders to exchange green building ideas, initiatives and opportunities for potential collaboration.

"Our intent with this initiative is to collect, assess, and disseminate what constitutes the best of the best in residential green building today," said Michael Luzier, president of the NAHB Research Center.

"Members of the stakeholders group will represent all aspects of home building, designing, and developing, and will provide an essential base of expertise for this project's development."

Strickland says that because a number of home builders began using environmentally responsible and energy-efficient construction methods and materials, now referred to as "green building," about three decades ago, it has resulted in new homes today being twice as energy-efficient.



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