

Guest Column

Houses that Work

By Ronnie Godfrey, CGB, president, R Godfrey Homes

Houses That Work is a trademarked title of a seminar conducted by the Energy & Environmental Building Association (EEBA). Their Mission Statement reads;

Our goal is “To provide education and resources to transform the residential design and construction industry to profitably deliver energy efficient and environmentally responsible buildings and communities.”

I have attended these seminars on many occasions and will again in February. I feel it important to stay on top of the constant changes in the residential construction industry. New science, new materials and new methods continually evolve. If you are building a home the same way this year like you did last year, then you are out of phase with technology.

The seminar covers all pieces and parts of the construction of a new home but emphasizes that the home should be built as a system. The object is to have you build in such a manner that every element is integrated. For example the way you insulate the home, orient it on the lot, size, quality and location of windows, dictates the size of the air-conditioning (AC) system. If you change one thing it influences another. Adding more insulation may cause the need to downsize the AC; adding more windows will have the reverse effect.

There are many materials used in today's home construction and the goal is to build a home that is Safe, Healthy, Durable, Comfortable, and Efficient.

- Safe and Healthy, in that you should expect the home to not contribute to potential health problems. Be built of materials that offer some combustion safety. A place where the indoor air quality is better than the outdoor. Where materials are not out-gassing volatile compounds.
- Durable to the extent that the home maintenance cost should be minimal. Moisture should be managed (liquid, capillary, air

transported, and vapor) to keep the building from rotting. This is accomplished through the proper choice and application of materials.

- Comfortable, both physical comfort and peace of mind.
- Efficient in the use of materials and the long term benefit of those materials and the energy to manufacture and transport them. And of course the cost to operate the home, that is the utility bills.

This is just a partial list of topics covered in the seminar. Foundations, roofing, drainage, life cycle costs, rightsizing, benefits to the owner, benefits to the environment, were discussed as well.

Generally to build a home correctly has a cost greater than doing the minimal attempt seen in many construction jobs today. The long term benefits far outweigh those costs. The lower utility bills will be with you as long as you own the energy efficient and environmentally responsible home. So will the high bills of house that is not.

Psalms 91:1-2,

1 HE who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say to the LORD, My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!

For comments about this article contact Ronnie Godfrey at Ronnie@RGodfreyHomes.com or call 817 988 0149. Many of my past articles about energy efficiency can be found on our website at www.Rgodfreyhomes.com.