

“What Do I Mean By Building Green”

Guest Column,

By Ronnie Godfrey, CGB, president, R Godfrey Homes

In the last few weeks we have visited about High Performance Homes (HPH), energy efficient windows and doors, and insulation. To look at the meaning behind “Building Green”, let’s start with our original definition of a High Performance Home. **A High Performance Homes is one that uses sustainable materials, is energy efficient, and uses value added, green building practices, that causes it to be friendlier to the environment.**

The benefits to owners of an HPH are;

- More Comfortable and Quieter- Tight construction, better windows, and improved insulation ensure consistent temperatures and keep out excessive noise.
- Lower Maintenance- Enjoy the peace of mind that comes with a low maintenance home. Tight construction and long lasting, efficient equipment make these homes more durable, helping to minimize many of the maintenance problems found in typical homes.
- Healthier and Safer- Your family will breathe easier in a tightly constructed and proper ventilated home that works to reduce dust, pollen, and pests.
- More Energy and Resource Efficient- Lower utility bills, and the good feeling that you are doing something to help fight global warming

All of that is part of Green building, but let me expand the list to better explicate the term.

Materials:

- Readily available materials, manufactured close to the jobsite. An example would be James Hardie Siding that is manufactured in Cleburne, Texas as opposed to some bricks from Georgia. It seems silly to try to build earth friendly homes and then buy materials shipped from another state or country and burden the ecology with pollutants from shipping.
- Renewable materials. Wood is the best choice for framing. The industry is currently planting far more trees than it is harvesting and

with the newer engineered wood products young growth trees can be used with little or no waste. Steel framing requires a big nasty foot print on the ecology and although it is recyclable, you're not likely to tear down a steel framed house to get at the material. Also steel framing conducts heat (revisit what we said about insulation last week).

- Sustainable materials. Building homes with materials that have a long life cycle relative to cost, again Hardie siding comes to mind.
- Energy efficient windows and doors as discussed the week before last.
- Right sized HVAC systems. A system that is too big doesn't cycle long enough to pull out the moisture buildup in a home and one that is too small just doesn't cool well enough. All HVAC contractors have the manual J that helps them come up with the right size. The old method of using 500 square feet of floor space to a ton of AC is out of date.

Site management:

- Control storm water runoff per government requirements
- Plant trees, Plant trees, Plant trees, Plant trees,
- Jobsite recycling

Water Efficiency

- Low flow valves in showers
- Water efficient toilets
- Drought tolerant landscaping
- Pex piping. Once you've used the new pex water pipes, you will never go back to copper.

Energy Efficiency

- Energy Star certified. The homes we build are 5 Star plus, the highest rating.
- Proper orientation of the home. Minimize windows on the East and West and shade windows where possible.
- Insulate the roof instead of the attic.

Finally educate the homeowner about maintenance and energy efficiency.

This is only a partial list. I'm thinking there are those of you out there that could add to it and I would love to hear from you. Email or call me. See the contact information below.

Next week. We take a break from home construction and a look at some new ideas for land developments. Here is a question for you. Which major city in the United States has the lowest impact on the environment per capita?

For comments about this article contact Ronnie Godfrey at RGodfreyHomes.com or call 817 988 0149.