

LOUISIANA BUILDER

Volume 16, Issue 3 Late Spring 2008

The Green House Effect

More and more builders choose environmentally friendly practices

New Orleans leads Louisiana's green construction revolution

Energy-efficient products make going green economical



The growing popularity of green construction practices promises benefits to builders and homeowners

Green... It's a word that builders across Louisiana are hearing a lot about lately. With the recent launch of new guidelines for smarter building practices, many building professionals are learning that green is so much more than just a color.

According to the National Association of Home Builders' website, "NAHB members build more than 80 percent of the homes in this country, and it is estimated that half of those incorporate at least some green practices into their development, design and construction. A recent McGraw-Hill study predicts that the green building marketplace is expected to

be worth nearly \$60 billion by 2010."

Although the concept of conserving energy isn't new, widespread interest in "going green" has prompted an explosion of more responsible building practices throughout the state. In turn, environmentally friendly products and services are now more accessible than ever for consumers who are either building a home or remodeling an existing one.

So what exactly does it mean to have a "green home?" NAHB recently released specific green home-building guidelines to address issues like energy efficiency, water and resource conservation, use of recycled or sustainable products, indoor

environmental air quality and homeowner maintenance. The NAHB Green Scoring Tool (www.nahbgreen.org) helps consumers to make informed decisions about processes and materials through working with Certified Green Professionals (CGPs) on specific projects. The user-friendly scoring tool includes a comprehensive resource guide with additional information on the latest techniques and technologies available in green home building.

According to Joe Didier of Didier Home Builders, who serves as president of the Capital Region Builders Association, the popularity of green



Don Kaldair

Right: Chip Blair is one of the state's first Certified Green Professionals. At this Baton Rouge home, which he unveiled as part of the recent Capital Region BA Parade of Homes, he worked with Thomas Marino of Advanced Technologies to install backyard solar panels that help to power a portion of the home's lights and electronics. Some of the home's many other green features include a 23 SEER air-conditioning system, foam gaskets at all exterior switch and outlet plates, Energy Star appliances, low-flow plumbing fixtures, low-emissivity windows and low-VOC paint.

Above: Environmental considerations were incorporated into every aspect of the construction of this new home in Baton Rouge. Builder Chip Blair of Blair Construction Co. built the home in accordance with the NAHB Model Green Home Guidelines. "With an increase in construction costs by only 10 percent over traditional construction costs, energy consumption is reduced by more than 50 percent," Blair says.

Left: The solar power hub of Blair's green home is located in a closet near the garage and contains a battery bank, which stores power generated by the solar panels and can be employed at night and during stormy conditions; a charge controller, which regulates the amount of electrical charge from the panels to keep the batteries from overcharging; and an inverter, which converts the 12-volt DC power from the solar panels to 120-volt AC and feeds it to a local circuit breaker panel.



Don Kaldair