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**Green Building Demand Holds Strong in Weak Market**

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**March 3, 2008** - While the overall housing sector is experiencing a downturn, the green building market continues to thrive, according to panelists speaking at an [International Builders' Show](#) press conference last month in Orlando.

"This is a fantastic time for those of us who have been doing green building for the past 20 years," said Donna Shirey, a builder and remodeler and president of [Shirey Contracting Inc.](#) located outside of Seattle.

There are three main components that go into green remodeling - energy efficiency, better indoor air quality and sustainable recycled materials - Shirey said.

"With remodeling, we start at the roof and work our way down by using spray foam to seal all the open spaces," she said. "The next step is to seal the walls and door between the garage and house and insulate, insulate, insulate."

The easiest way to make a house air-tight is to use structured insulated panels (SIPs), which are high-performance panels used in floors, walls and roofs, she said. SIPs are manufactured under factory-controlled conditions and can be custom-designed for each home.

Shirey offered several tips for novices seeking to engage in green remodeling.

"Use sustainable materials such as low-VOC paint, get rid of carpeting, use [Energy Star](#) appliances and windows and replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs."

According to Energy Star, if every American replaced just one light bulb with an Energy Star-qualified bulb, "we would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year and more than \$600 million in annual energy costs, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars."

"Green building and remodeling allows us to be energy-efficient, reduce waste, use recyclable materials and provide homes that are



A green home from EcoBuilders in Asheville, N.C.

healthy to live in," Shirey said.

### **Staying Out of the Texas Sun**

Dan Ferrier an award-winning builder in Forth Worth, Texas and president of [Ferrier Custom Homes](#), is designing 12 green homes and expects to sign contracts for another two shortly.

"We've never had more than four contracts in one year before," he said.

With the hot summer sun the biggest challenge in the Texas climate, Ferrier uses metal roofs to help dissipate the heat.

"It reflects 70% of the heat from the sun," he said. "Strategically placed windows allow for more lighting and help keep the house cooled."

Like Shirey, Ferrier says structured insulation forms are an integral part of the green home building process.

"We're more concerned about air-tightness than insulation," he said. "SIPs give us a solid barrier."

While Ferrier said that the federal government sets minimum R-values at 13 for insulation, his homes typically use R-values rated between 16 and 25.

The superior whole-wall R-values and building tightness of SIPs allow HVAC equipment to be downsized and ductwork to be minimized.

### **Asheville Builder Doubles Green Business**

Rob Moody, president of [EcoBuilders](#), a residential green building general contracting company based in Asheville, N.C., has seen his business double in the past year from three-to-four homes up to eight.

"We emphasize design as much as we do green," he said.

EcoBuilders, participates in two certification programs with each home it builds - [NC Healthy Built Homes](#) and Energy Star.

The latest green trends are green panelization, solar hot water for forced air systems and net metering for solar photovoltaic, said Moody.

Green panelization uses optimum-value framing, placing insulation into every nook and cranny and using as little lumber as possible, he said.

Since SIPs are manufactured in the factory and all the panels are made-to-order, there is much less job site waste that needs to be disposed of.

"Our waste stream is so minimized by this process that we use a 10-foot dumpster instead of a 30-foot dumpster," said Moody.

Moody's homes also utilize high-efficiency solar water panels on the roof that circulate water into a holding tank, where a blower circulates the moisture through a forced-air system to heat the home.

"The basic goals behind the green building movement are the same as the goals of sustainability that we should all embrace - the utilization and conservation of resources for the long term," said Moody. "In construction, whether commercial or residential, the tenets of building green are simple: reduce, reuse, recycle and renewables."

Also located in Asheville, [Deltec Homes](#) is a sustainable, eco-friendly manufacturer that produces green building components for home builders in the field.

Deltec is known for its circular home and self-supporting roof system, which allows builders and home owners to design custom floor plans with few limitations since there are no-load bearing walls.

"Everything we do is built with 100% renewable energy," said Joe Schlenk of Deltec Homes.

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