



## Inside the International Builders' Show

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Spending time in Orlando in February may sound like a vacation, but last week it was all work. Several Home Builders Association members made the trip south and reaped the rewards from working hard.

Each year, thousands of companies from around the world gather for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) International Builders' Show® (IBS), a showcase of the latest products and technologies available to builders. More than 92,000 building industry professionals visited this year's IBS, which brought together a record 1,900 companies exhibiting products in more than 300 different categories spread across 1 million net square feet space.

Innovation and environmental awareness were the leading themes of the show, where exhibitors premiered new products that help make the homeowner's experience easier and more enjoyable. Below are some exciting products and trends that you and your family and friends may start enjoying soon.

Kitchens are becoming more sophisticated and are boasting restaurant-grade technology on a homeowner's budget. Ovens that prepare meals up to 15 times faster than conventional methods or that can double as a fireplace when entertaining are a few examples of this trend.

The futuristic world of "The Jetsons" doesn't seem so far away with the introduction of home automation systems allowing homeowners to control lighting, heating and air-conditioning, security, garage doors, irrigation, spa and pool temperatures, cameras, and more from anywhere in the world from nearly any Internet-connected device.

Innovation brings about new ways to create homes that are both pleasing to you the homebuyer, but can also be designed, built and maintained to leave minimal environmental impact.

New flooring options feature hardwood products which use reclaimed wood, including pine, oak, and chestnut. These reclaimed woods are recovered from old buildings and recycled for new use, reducing the need chop down living trees.

Solar hot water systems are designed to reduce water heating bills by 50 to 80 percent. While they are initially more expensive on the front-end, they will save the homeowner money in the long run through increased savings on bill payments.

The latest electric fireplaces use technology that provide the warmth and ambiance of a real fire without the use of combustion so they do not produce carbon monoxide or greenhouse gases, making them a true "green" fireplace option.

Interesting also in the green product category were more energy efficient tool batteries at DeWalt to everything in between and the tankless water heaters on display at the Propane Education and Research Council.

NAHB celebrated Green Day on Thursday, Feb. 14, as the association launched the NAHB National Green Building Program and introduced the Certified Green Professional educational designation. Attendees packed the rooms for a full schedule of green building-related seminars, and an introduction to the highly anticipated NAHB National Green Building Program boasted standing-room-only crowds. Green building may very well be the next big thing.

The products and program mentioned above are just the tip of the iceberg of both innovative and green products on the market that can increase both the enjoyment of your home as well as its value. In the upcoming weeks you too will have the opportunity to see innovative products and home designs. Keep an eye on this column to find out where and when.