



Focusing on Green Building

By Walt Hibner, Executive Director
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Building in concert with the environment isn't a new concept for homebuilders. If you have ever visited SunWatch Village, the 800-year-old village built by the Fort Ancient Indians just along the Great Miami River just south of downtown Dayton, you would gain a better understanding of how these first homebuilders in our area were very resourceful. Even the early settlers who built their homes on uninhabited prairie strategically chose home sites to minimize wind exposure, maximize sun exposure or live near a water source.

Today, a growing number of home builders are taking environmentally-friendly and cost-effective measures like these and combine them with modern technologies in the "green building" movement.

The home building industry coined the term "green building" in the late 1980s. Since 1990, roughly 61,000 homes were built using local green building program guidelines. Now, more than 100,000 homes have been built throughout the United States in regionally appropriate, market-drive programs.

This week the Home Builders Association of Dayton hosted a meeting to gauge the interest of green building. The members responded very well. Almost twenty percent of our builders were at the table to discuss what they can provide when it comes to building green for their home buyers. There were also representatives from cabinet suppliers, heating and air conditioning companies, window distributors and our friends at Dayton Power & Light and Vectren. Collectively, they realize that consumer demand for energy and resource efficient and cost effective homes is rapidly increasing.

In response, the group has decided its three main purposes should be to provide education for HBA members, promote green building to home buyers and research joining the NAHB National Green Building Program. The program would give its member homebuilders a framework for building green and homebuyers the reassurance that their house is being built in "authentically green" program.

The national program is based on the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines, introduced in 2005 to offer market-driven solutions in seven areas:

- **Lot Preparation and Design:** careful planning can reduce a new home's impact on vegetation, soil and water, while enhancing its long-term performance.
- **Resource Efficiency:** framing techniques, home designs and construction waste management practices can help builders get the most from building materials.
- **Energy Efficiency:** creating a building envelope and incorporating energy efficient mechanical systems, appliances and lighting can help homeowners save money on utility bills.
- **Water Efficiency and Conservation:** finding ways to conserve water, both inside and outside the home, can also help homeowners reduce utility costs.

- **Occupancy Comfort and Indoor Environmental Quality:** managing moisture and ventilation can help homeowners live and breathe in a more comfortable indoor living environment.
- **Operation, Maintenance and Homeowner Education:** before turning the keys over to the new homeowner, builders provide homeowners with instructions on how to optimally operate and maintain the new house.

We are excited about bring this new program and environmentally-friendly home opportunities to the Dayton home buyers. Earth Day isn't until April, but we hope you will think about buying a green home today.