

DIMENSIONS



NEWS and NOTES for the Professional Builder

NOVEMBER 2006

Improving Cycle Time

Builders are always looking for ways to cut cycle time, from even-flow production methods to on-site materials staging and just-in-time deliveries. Typically it's a matter of processes, not products, and one product may not save much time on its own. But a collection of solutions that reduce downtime, materials handling, miscuts, and waste can have a significant impact on the critical path, including:

Engineered lumber. Once limited to I-shaped floor joists, the industry for ELPs has exploded into almost every structural application, which improves the potential to shorten the framing stage. Imagine the labor and materials savings of a one-piece header that installs flush to the wall framing instead of plying some 2-bys together and shimming or shaving it to fit. Consider the hard cost benefits of using 24-inch on-center floor and roof joists instead of 2-by-10s spaced 16 inches apart, of stud walls that stay straight for cabinet installations without shimming or shaving, and of prefabricated, code-compliant shear panels that simply set into place, and you start to see the light.

Cordless tools. Professional-grade cordless tools not only match up in power and torque to corded hand tools, but enable more worker flexibility while reducing job site hazards. Like ELPs, the category has expanded into entire lines of tools, including caulking guns, recip saws, and impact hammers. The latest cordless tools use 24- and 28-volt lithium-ion batteries that are not only interchangeable among like-branded products, but



also run as fast and perform as well from the beginning of the battery charge to the end (and then recharge quickly) — all of which results in less downtime and higher production.

Dustless compound. Okay, maybe not dustless, but the newest drywall compounds are formulated to significantly reduce the dust and mess created from sanding ... and thus lessen cleanup chores and time. The newer muds are also lighter, further cutting labor costs and health hazards, and apply in fewer coats, saving time.

Expanded product lines of engineered lumber (top right) and cordless tools (center) can help reduce cycle time by saving time and materials, reducing job site hazards, and delivering better performance to mitigate callbacks.

IN THIS ISSUE

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 Partnership Profile | 6 Opportunities | 11 Our View |
| 4 Remodeling | 7 Technology | 13 Expert Advice |
| 5 Radar Screen | 8 LP Building Products | 14 Roundtable |

DIMENSIONS is a free newsletter distributed 6 times a year to industry professionals associated with BMC West. Please direct any comments or story ideas to Ken Rhoades via e-mail to rhoades@bmcwest.com.

Monterrey Homes, El Paso

A longtime local builder upgrades its specs to meet demand for semi-custom and energy-efficient homes among more sophisticated buyers.

To celebrate its upcoming 20th year of success in the El Paso market, Monterrey Homes decided to change the way it builds. Though still catering to a mix of move-down empty nesters and young move-up families, Monterrey Homes added a new twist by becoming a certified builder under the federal Energy Star program.

The shift, in fact, was part of a larger plan to evolve the company to meet a variety of changing market conditions as its ownership transitioned from one generation to another a few years ago. “The company was building 10-12 homes a year before we took it over [from our parents],” says Danny Salazar, vice president, who runs the operation with his brother Fernie, president, and sister Carmela Romero, the secretary/treasurer. “We knew we had to grow the business to meet our financial goals and sustain the business.”

In addition to boosting its annual volume to 30-plus homes a year since, the new guard at Monterrey Homes also changed



They're also better educated and more savvy, says Salazar, about their options. “Buyers are much more sophisticated now,” he says, thanks in large part to the Internet and the glut of home improvement shows on cable television. “They know financing, construction, and have a lot more ideas and the desire to customize their homes.”

To meet that demand, but also maintain control of the operation, Monterrey Homes moved what were typically upgrades and options — such as ceramic tile flooring, vinyl windows, and solid-surface countertops — onto the list of standard features. “Managing options and change orders is a hassle, so we decided to make a lot of things standard,” says Salazar. “It’s much easier for us from a production standpoint because the basic process is the same. A building is a building, whether it’s a custom or tract home.”

As it transitioned to the new ownership, the company also upgraded its back-office systems to further streamline the operation. In addition to automating several business functions, including accounting and its plan library, Monterrey Homes entered the Internet. “We’ve gotten good feedback about our web site from prospective buyers,” says Salazar. “It gives homebuyers a greater level of comfort that we’re a professional organization.”

That image is only enhanced by the builder’s decision to follow the Energy Star guidelines for achieving better



its focus from building standard spec homes to those with a high level of buyer customization, albeit in a controlled arena. “Most buyers rely on our library of stock house plans, which we modify on the computer to meet their particular lifestyle needs,” says Salazar. “This type of buyer demands that ability [to customize].”

efficiency and performance in its homes — which Salazar found wasn't a huge leap to achieve. "We were already so close [to complying] that it was an easy decision to do it," he says. "We just had to make a few small changes [such as upgrading its HVAC equipment], which we easily incorporated into our existing processes."

It also helps that the builder's local LBM supplier offers a comprehensive inventory of products that meets Energy Star standards ... or is willing and able to source them. "Monterrey Homes came to us with its plans [to be an Energy Star builder], and we went out and found the products that helped them comply," says Joe Eck, an outside sales representative for BMC West's El Paso location. "There are some products that [we source] that only Monterrey uses."

BMC West, which provides takeoffs for all of Monterrey Homes' projects for lumber, panels, trusses, windows, doors, and millwork, now makes sure to incorporate both upgraded and Energy Star specs as a matter of course. "BMC West knows that stuff is standard and puts it in the takeoff," says Salazar.

Like many markets, the El Paso landscape is changing. Though still dominated by local builders (with building business growth coming from within rather than from outside the area), the market has seen a shift in development patterns and



is experiencing increasing competition for lots and land.

That dynamic has Monterrey Homes thinking of its next evolutionary step. In addition to gaining a license to build homes in adjacent New Mexico (specifically in a large master plan being developed just across the state line), and perhaps focusing its activities in the western side of the city to help further streamline its operation, the company is considering opportunities in multi-family housing and light commercial building, as well. "We're looking to diversify into other areas," says Salazar, "but housing will always be the focus."

Danny (right) and Fernie Salazar, along with their sister Carmela, have evolved the home-building business started by their parents into a highly respected semi-custom operation in the El Paso market.

"We've gotten good feedback about our web site from prospective buyers. It gives homebuyers a greater level of comfort that we're a professional organization."

— Danny Salazar, vice president, Monterrey Homes



Conquering Client Relations

Commit to a vision for exceptional client relations, listen to your clients, and follow through on your promises and processes.

Professional contractors currently perform 78 percent of the remodeling projects in the U.S.
— U.S. Census Bureau

Ask a dozen remodeling contractors to define “client relations,” and you’ll likely get a different answer from each of them — all of them valid. But on closer examination, those differing definitions probably come down to some pretty basic truisms. “Defining clear expectations regarding what the actual experience of having a remodel done and then exceeding those expectations are both keys to positive client relations,” says Paul Winans, CR, president of Winans Construction, Inc., a design/build residential remodeling firm in Oakland, Calif.

Achieving those goals requires a commitment to being selective about the types of jobs and clients a remodeler seeks and accepts, as well as how the firm responds to client questions and concerns; it can also be as simple as showing up on time, putting in a full day’s work, and cleaning up the job before pulling off the site. “Only say what you can and will do, [and] then make sure you follow through and get it done,” says Winans.

“Something always goes wrong on a remodeling project. Clients are buying the contractor’s response to a problem, not the absence of problems.”

— Paul Winans, CR, president,
Winans Construction, Inc.

Other client relations tips to consider:

- Identify and seek out the type of clients with whom your firm works well. Avoid those who will not allow you to be successful or aren’t a good match with your firm’s people and expertise.
- Listen to and write down what a client says, and make sure you are clear about what was said. Then, tell the client what is realistic and can be provided by your firm to meet that expectation.
- Find out a client’s expectations for responding to phone calls and/or



emails and exceed that expectation, such as responding to all calls within an hour and all emails by the end of the working day. With that, be a problem solver. “Something always goes wrong on a remodeling project,” says Winans. “Clients are buying the contractor’s response to a problem, not the absence of problems.”

- Work to create a true, complete scope of work and costs before starting the job ... and charge for it instead of allowing “free estimates” to earn the work.
- Define a clear vision of what distinguishes and drives your company, then make sure everything that you, employees, trade contractors, and suppliers do supports that vision.

By definition, home remodeling is unpredictable. Despite the unrealistic expectations many homeowners see on home improvement television shows, it’s a remodeling contractor’s job to help clients understand the true nature of the business, and that he and his entire supporting cast are committed to making the process run as smoothly as possible.

Ventilate right with next generation bath fans

If you spend \$30k remodeling a bathroom with state-of-the-art fixtures and expensive lighting, you may want to put some of the money into a ventilation fan. It is now possible to get a bathroom fan that can silently exhaust air from the entire house using as much electricity as a night light. Plus, installing a quiet and energy-efficient fan may actually keep homeowners healthy.

Running a bathroom fan may help combat certain molds and air pollutants, but experts recommend taking it a step further with whole-house ventilation, placing ventilation fans not only in bathrooms but also in hallways to constantly circulate a home's air flow. Stale, moist and polluted air moves out, allowing fresh air to move in.

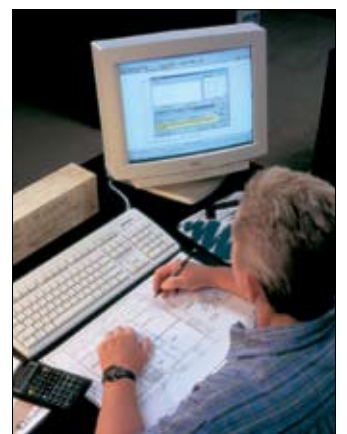
The latest findings by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) have found that natural ventilation methods, such as opening a window, may offer "a breath of fresh air" but don't provide adequate ventilation. Today's homes are built to improve energy efficiency, but these "airtight" homes have become under-ventilated and may actually cause health problems because of the stale air and the pollutants they retain, from cigarette smoke to cleaning product fumes. An efficient and effective home ventilation fan can contribute to a homeowner and their family's basic health.

Learn more about the concept of energy-efficient ways to ventilate your home using green technology at www.panasonic.com/ventfans.



TRUST THE "XPert"

- TJ-Xpert™ software is widely recognized and accepted by building inspectors.
- Builders can be confident in the design analysis that results in the specification of Trus Joist products for superior performance in a structural framing system.
- Features the TJ-Pro™ Rating System – the most sophisticated predictor of floor performance in the industry – which lets you compare performance for different joists, depths and spacings to maximize cost/value and construction efficiency.
- Framing layouts, material lists and pricing can be quickly changed, even at the job site, when last-minute revisions are needed.
- Reduces material waste, speeds job completion, and saves money.
- Certified TJ-Xpert™ operators are available in most BMC West markets.



Accessing Infill

“On a square-foot basis, there’s more potential profit with infill housing [than with suburban housing].”

— Rick Haughey,
Urban Land
Institute



Vista del Rio, a single-family infill project in Southern California (above) and Clare Apartments in Minneapolis (top right) are prime examples of utilizing available urban sites to create affordable infill housing.

Even without housing’s current slowdown, the idea of entering the realm of urban infill housing isn’t as far-fetched for single-family builders as it may have been a decade ago. Various economic, political, environmental, and demographic factors have expanded infill projects from high-rise condos into a whole range of housing types, including detached homes, to attract buyers looking for the new urban lifestyle in several cities and close-in suburbs. “It’s a nationwide phenomenon,” says Ed Tombari, a land use planner at NAHB. “There’s an infill market in every mid-sized city and above.”

But make no mistake: despite the potential to hedge a builder’s bets in more competitive environments, infill is a different venture from planned developments and even scattered-lot opportunities in the outer reaches of a metro market. As part of your market research consider the following indicators of a swelling infill market:

PUBLIC SUPPORT. An increasing number of local governments see infill as a way to revive the tax base and redevelop

industrial and vacant plots without requiring new infrastructure. Look for an approvals process that speeds urban development while making suburban developers wait or pay more, as well as a policy commitment or strengthening redevelopment agency to encourage



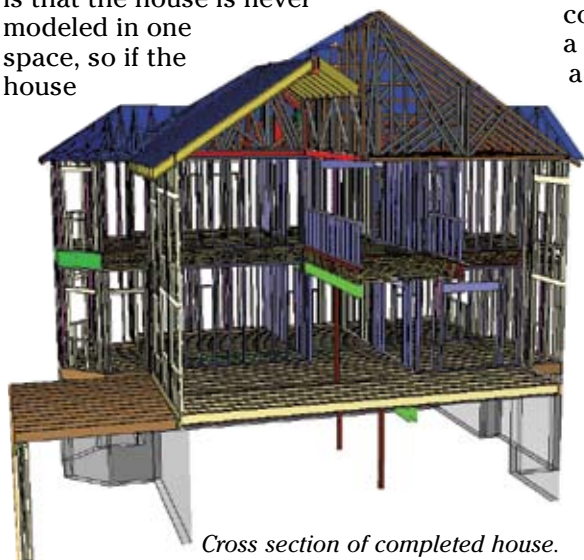
middle- and low-income housing. “There’s a lot of interest in diversifying into infill because suburban land is becoming more difficult to find and expensive to develop,” says Rick Haughey of the Urban Land Institute.

AVAILABLE LAND. The urban core needs a solid inventory of land, ideally brownfields (old industrial parcels) or bundled lots to create enough critical mass to make a housing development fiscally feasible.

DIVERSE DEMOGRAPHICS. Look for early retirees and young singles and couples, as well as working-class families attracted to an increase in urban employment. “Aging baby boomers are looking for homes that are near services, walkable and convenient,” says Tombari.

In addition, especially with regards to single-family detached projects, infill developers and builders would do well to maintain the architectural character of the urban neighborhoods they enhance. Matching the character of the existing homes helps sales and resales while also inspiring gentrification among existing homeowners. “It inspires others to invest in renovating their homes,” says Atlanta builder/developer Mac Bissette, which, in turn, boosts tax revenue, jobs, and other investment in the urban economy.

For years, the homebuilding industry has pursued software design tools for residential framing, but to date most available software has only focused on individual parts of the structure, such as floor, wall or roof systems. These separate software packages have provided construction benefits of course, but still with inefficiencies. The problem is that the house is never modeled in one space, so if the house



Cross section of completed house.

plan changes, separate designers have to make the changes in their own respective programs. Then the problems start, as multiple design versions create tangles in the communication of the changes, specs change, and mistakes occur in material lists and work-flow.

New developments in design software are now appearing to the industry that combine these structural systems into a single, whole-house design file. Using a single file, builders can now use these new software platforms to work with their suppliers to optimize framing from ridge to sill plate, coordinating the design and material performance of the entire residential frame, to build a higher quality house with increased efficiency.

With unified design of the entire structure that optimizes the compatibility of materials in all the structural systems, whole-house design software helps builders improve efficiency and profitability in several ways: cost-savings are increased

New-Generation Design Software Improves Structural Framing

Cont. on pg. 10

Two Great Products ...



One State-of-the-Art Insulation System!



ATS combines Fomo™ closed-cell polyurethane foam and specially designed Guardian Fiberglass Insulation to create a unique insulation system. The 1/2" layer of spray foam is applied inside the wall cavity prior to the installation of a fiberglass batt that results in an increased level of thermal resistance and virtually eliminates air infiltration.

- Specially Designed Fiberglass Insulation
- Virtually Eliminates Air Infiltration
- Installs Easily in Difficult to Insulate Areas
- Foam Fills All Gaps and Voids
- Excellent Sound Control
- Higher R-values





DURABILITY MEETS BEAUTY

People are talking about LP® SmartSide®.



LP® SMARTSIDE® ADVANTAGES

Durability, Craftsmanship, Beauty, and Value

LP® SmartSide® products allow you to add a level of craftsmanship that is often cost prohibitive when using cedar. Nearly 1.5 million homes over the past 7 years have been covered with LP SmartSide products.

Adds Craftsmanship

- Installs using standard woodworking tools
- Lightweight and typically installs faster than fiber cement products
- Extra long 16' foot pieces for up to 33% fewer seams

Adds Value

- Backed by LP SmartSide 7/30 Warranty, which provides a 7-year, 100% labor and replacement feature and a 30-year fully transferable warranty

Looks Beautiful

- LP SmartSide cuts like wood, installs like wood, and most importantly looks like wood
- Pre-primed for optimum paint adhesion

Durable

- Manufactured with the SmartGuard® process, a special zinc borate-based treatment designed to help LP SmartSide products resist fungal decay and termites
- LP SmartSide products incorporate an advanced resin that adds exceptional durability and increased weather resistance
- A special overlay resists moisture and acts as a primer for exceptional paintability

WHAT IS LP® SMARTSIDE?®

Choosing LP® SmartSide® lap siding and exterior trim is a great way for you to add real craftsmanship to your home. It is an affordable alternative that offers you the natural look of real wood without many of the problems commonly associated with wood. That's because LP SmartSide products are highly engineered and designed to withstand tough environments.

All LP SmartSide products are backed by one of the best warranties in the industry. Now that's smart!

LP® SMARTSIDE?® IS NATURALLY BETTER

Whether you choose LP® SmartSide® siding for its incredible curb appeal or ease of use, you'll surely appreciate the value it adds to your home.

Preferred by Builders

- LP SmartSide's great looks add curb appeal and sellability
- LP SmartSide products allow you to add the natural look of wood
- LP SmartSide products are lightweight and easier to work with than fiber cement



Preferred by Homeowners

- LP SmartSide products offer the warm, natural beauty of wood without many of the problems commonly associated with real wood
- LP SmartSide products are easy to maintain and provide protection in tough environments
- LP SmartSide offers a more inviting appearance with its deep, textured, wood grain finish



Stay Cooler. Save Money. LP OSB Radiant Barrier TechShield.

LP TechShield radiant barrier sheathing is an easy, cost effective way to increase a home's energy efficiency in hot climates and create a more comfortable living environment. It prevents up to 97 percent of the sun's radiant heat, absorbed by the roof, from entering the attic, so homes stay cooler and attic air conditioning units operate more efficiently.

- Reduces energy consumption
- Installs just like regular roof sheathing
- Releases trapped moisture
- Highly effective in hot-weather climates

WILL LP® SMARTSIDE® PRODUCTS SAVE ME MONEY?

LP® SmartSide® products are rapidly gaining popularity over fiber cement products because they are easier and faster to work with, and require no special tools. And with extra-long 16' pieces, you'll have up to 33% fewer seams and less waste.

LP SmartSide has many advantages over fiber cement, and price is one of them. To see how much you can save, try the on-line Savings Calculator at <http://www.lpSMARTSIDE.com/Inner.aspx?content=SmartSaveFiber>.

COMPLEMENT YOUR ARCHITECTURE WITH A FULL PRODUCT LINE



SmartSide
Lap Siding

Lap Siding

- Deeply embossed with natural cedar grain texture
- Installs like wood, but resists rotting



SmartSide
Panel Siding

Panel Siding

- Extraordinary sheer strength allows nailing directly to studs
- Pre-primed surface for exceptional paint adhesion



SmartSide
Soffit

Soffit

- The ultimate alternative to MDO and plywood soffits
- Offers the strength of lumber, plus weather and termite resistance



SmartSide
Trim & Fascia

Trim-Fascia

- The perfect complement for lap siding, fiber cement, hardboard, vinyl, or wood cladding
- Can be crosscut, mitered and sculpted for great design versatility

COMPARE FOR YOURSELF

LP® SmartSide® Vs. Vinyl



- Offers a richer, more natural wood texture and resists dents, unlike vinyl siding
- Flexibility of dramatically changing the look of your home by painting it a different color
- LP® SmartSide® often costs less when using a combination of lap siding and panel siding

LP® SmartSide® Vs. Cedar



- The borate-based SmartGuard® process adds long life and durability
- LP® SmartSide® products are easier to maintain than cedar

LP® SmartSide® Vs. Fiber Cement



16' Length

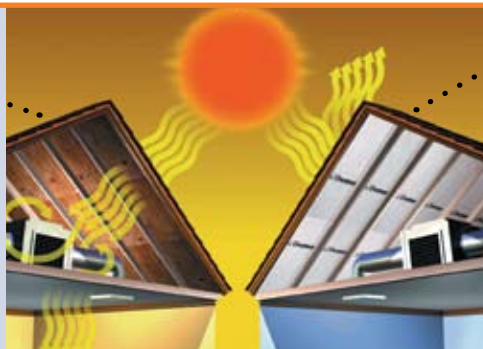
12' Length

- Extra-long 16' pieces finish a home with up to 33% fewer seams
- Lightweight and installs with standard woodworking tools
- LP SmartSide siding packages often cost less than fiber cement packages
- Installs on average, up to 12%* faster than fiber cement siding

**Results taken from NAHB Research Center, "Time Motion Analysis," November 21, 2003, conducted in Texas cities. Actual product pricing and installation times will vary.*

Without TechShield

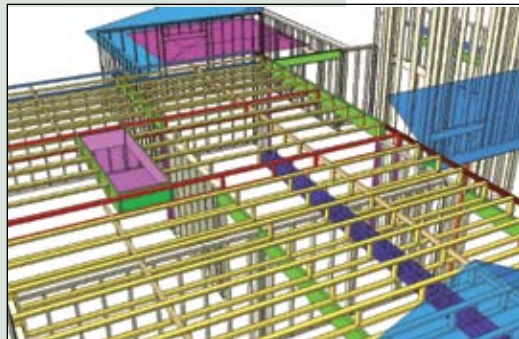
- Heat and radiant energy are absorbed into roof deck
- Heat builds up in attic
- Heat transfers to living area
- Lower and lower settings are required to achieve comfort level
- Energy usage climbs



With TechShield

- TechShield sheathing, with its thin laminated aluminum layer, prevents up to 97% of the radiant heat in the panel from radiating into the attic
- Attic temperature is reduced by as much as 30%
- Less heat transfers to the living space
- Value of home may increase

Continued from page 7



Trussed floor with opening and HVAC run.

as material specs are better matched to load requirements without overbuilding, construction cycle time is shortened, and job site waste is reduced. Another benefit from using whole-house design software is that it allows builders greater flexibility to adapt to the nuances of local codes, construction

techniques and material usage, and to set them into future design templates to save time on plan reviews and tighten quality control.

With the development of better design software, the homebuilding industry continues to improve its technology. As one example, OptiFrame® software has developed a family of design software working in conjunction with one another to create a whole-house design. iLevel™ Javelin™, one of the programs of the OptiFrame family, allows the

designer to work with floors and walls. When that design is complete, the file can be sent to the truss designer using TrussFramer, another member of the OptiFrame family. The truss designer will then apply the roof section and finish designing the trusses, applying all the loads through the whole structure.

“When designed and built correctly, the structural frame works as a whole unit, rather than as separate floor, wall or roof sections,” says Ken Wiley, vice president of strategic services for iLevel, Weyerhaeuser’s unified residential structural frame business.



Completed whole house design.

Learn more about iLevel™ Javelin™ software at www.iLevel.com.

AGED BRONZE FINISH. AGED TO PERFECTION. CRAFTED FOR A LIFETIME.



SCHLAGE

Add a touch of old world charm with the classic look of Schlage’s Aged Bronze Finish.

Handcrafted Quality

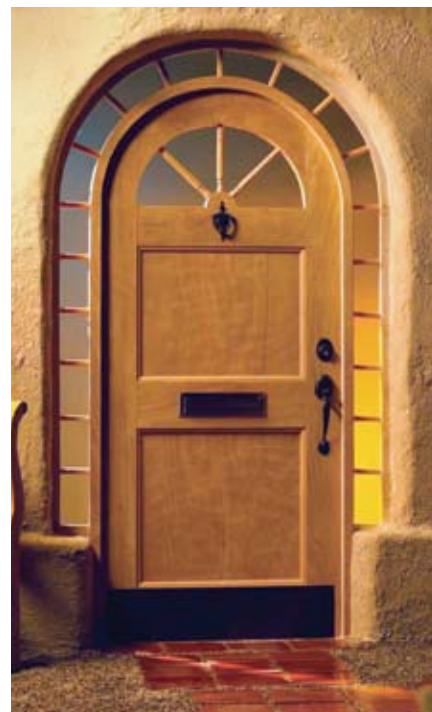
- An elegant finish without the upgraded price, created with today’s finest custom homes in mind.

Designs for Any Home

- Complements any home design, from Tuscan, Yucatan and Spanish, to Arts and Crafts, while matching a wide variety of existing plumbing and lighting fixtures.

Lifetime Warranty

- Backed by lifetime limited finish and mechanical warranties
- No tarnish or corrosion
- Easy installation and consistent performance



Though it attracts visitors of all ages, the Discovery Center of Idaho (DCI) in Boise is a place for kids. The only one of its kind in the state, DCI invites and encourages interaction with its many exhibits, allowing visitors to truly experience various science, engineering, and other industrial arts first-hand to gain a greater appreciation of their place in our world.

So when CBH Homes, Idaho's largest homebuilder, approached BMC to co-sponsor a new DCI exhibit about the built environment, we jumped at the chance. Entitled "Structures: Explore the Elements That Build our World," the six-month, multi-faceted exhibit not only seeks to educate kids (and their parents) about various building sciences and structural components, but enabled us, with CBH Homes, to support a great community resource.

The visionary and talented staff at DCI came up with the concept for the exhibit and then approached CBH Homes as a logical choice to support it financially and as a marketing partner and consultant. "The Structures exhibit ties in with our plans to build a new, larger

facility downtown," says DCI executive director Janine Boire. "CBH Homes came immediately to mind as a partner, given their presence and impact in this [Boise area] market."

As such, CBH Homes (formerly Corey Barton Homes, which closed nearly 1,700 homes last year, placing it among the top 60 of the nation's largest builders) is often tapped by local community service organizations for support. But the DCI exhibit was a no-brainer. "We build homes for families, so this was a great opportunity to serve that market in a different way," says Holly Haener, CBH Homes' director of sales and marketing.

Subsequently, CBH Homes asked BMC West to co-sponsor the exhibit. For similar reasons as the builder's, our interest was



Under CBH Homes' supervision, kids and families were treated to a fleet of construction equipment as part of the "Structures" exhibit promotional event series.

Continued on page 12



Builders and architects are looking to the past for inspiration, and Craftsman- and Bungalow-style homes have never been more popular! Coffman Stairs' new Traditional and Contemporary families of stair parts are the perfect fit for the builder, designer or homeowner seeking authenticity and value in replicating the look of a simpler time. New styles of box newels complete the package!

www.coffmanstairs.com





For one weekend event supporting the “Structures” exhibit, kids and families were invited to build doghouses from kits, which were then donated to the local humane society.

Continued from page 11 immediate. In addition to our financial support for the exhibit and its marketing, BMC West consulted with DCI’s staff to refine and expand the exhibits, including a visit to our Boise location to get ideas and view some building products that might be used in the hands-on displays.

The exhibits include components such as plated trusses and I-beams, which help visitors understand “behind the wall” elements of a house and their value to quality construction. Other interactive demonstrations — all developed in-house by DCI staff — allow kids to build and test the structural integrity of bridges, build a freestanding structure from the ground up, and experience new building materials. “We’re always looking to educate kids about this stuff,” says Kirk Harwood, BMC West’s Southwest Idaho area manager, who

spearheaded our effort. In addition, CBH Homes has planned and hosted a trio of weekend events to support the exhibit and further expose local residents to the science center. Events included a marshmallow-building contest, the construction (and subsequent donation) of doghouse kits donated by BMC West, and allowing kids to experience various pieces of construction equipment — all geared to educate and excite them about the industry.

Open since mid-September and scheduled to run six months, “Structures” has been a qualified success. “People keep coming back because you can do something different every time,” says Boire. She reports that DCI membership and visits from existing members and the general public are all greater than the same time last year, which helps the center sustain its mission and continue to grow as a valuable community resource.

For more information about the “Structures” exhibit, visit www.scidaho.org.

INTRODUCING A NEW

Tru-Defense System for Patio Doors

The Tru-Defense System offers you guaranteed performance and protection, with components that maximize the seal between the door and frame to virtually eliminate air and water infiltration.

Flush-glazed Low-E Glass offers a solid one-piece panel and glass construction to resist weather — no doorlite screws or plugs.

High Heat Composite Frames and Mulls are rot free and moisture resistant.

NEW Astragal with dual-durometer triple seal boot design secures the door tightly to the sill providing a superior seal between the door panels and the sill.

NEW High Dam Sill with counter sunk screws provides a flush surface for full contact with the door bottom to seal out air and water.

NEW Door Bottom Sweep features dual bulbs with dual fins that sit tightly on the sill to prevent air and water infiltration.

NEW Corner Seal Pad with an innovative design (patent pending) creates a pocket that effectively prevents water infiltration.



In the last few decades, the housing industry has turned the proverbial battleship around, from building leaky, under-insulated shells with drafty windows to modern homes (at nearly every price point) that offer better comfort, efficiency, and value. Name another industry that is so diverse yet has seen such positive changes on a national scale in the last twenty-plus years.

The green building movement is sweeping through the building industry with a force unmatched by anything in American building history. It has gained tremendous popularity and media attention because people are genuinely concerned about the obvious stress we are putting on the planet.

But I also think green building has gained momentum so quickly because so many builders have been building green all along; they just didn't know what to call it. Additionally, it can be very profitable to build green — the premium products cost more, and the markups are better — and, well, let's face it, we're all in this to earn a good living. Maybe the industry didn't turn the battleship on a dime; in fact, it may have already been headed in the right direction.

Green building is primarily about the thermal envelope of the home and how the house's solar orientation affects heating and cooling loads. You can "trick out" the house with loads of green accessories — and some are indeed required, especially for indoor air quality.

But the greenest house you can build is one that uses less fuel for its heating

and cooling (also called its "carbon footprint"). Sure, you need to watch the chain of custody of the lumber, and the VOC levels of the finishes and adhesives. Lighter colored shingles, water consumption, and rainwater runoff management are crucial. But if you have a house that uses low-flow toilets to consume half the water of its neighbor, yet burns twice the fuel to cool the home, you are not being very green, even if you can afford the gas bill.

Builders who have been building quality homes with good orientation strategies, high-integrity building envelopes, quality windows, and high-efficient HVAC systems have been green builders all along. They just may not have seen the value in that market distinction until they recently realized that people will pay a premium for green homes.

Today's building technology is racing along to make these homes even greener, even more comfortable, and even more affordable. As an editor who reads a dozen green news sources each week, I can assure you we are in the middle of a green-building renaissance. But we started from an advanced position, and now going green and benefiting from the premium values of green homes may be only a matter of fine-tuning an already solid homebuilding process, while looking for the latest affordable technologies to offer customers eager to work with us to save the world.

And that's not a bad response to offer your kids when they ask, "what do you do for work?"

Quality Builders Have Always Been Green



By John D. Wagner,
editor-in-chief,
Green Builder magazine

John Wagner is the author of nine books and more than 1,000 articles about homebuilding. Green Builder magazine is distributed nationally each month to more than 95,000 homebuilders and contractors in the U.S. The third-largest magazine in the homebuilding sector, Green Builder is the only national magazine to offer practical information about green and sustainable building practices for U.S. homebuilders. For more info, go to www.GreenBuilderMag.com.

For more information about green building and related topics, consider the following resources:

- Green Builder magazine (GreenBuilderMag.com)
- American Lung Association Health House program (www.healthhouse.org)
- Building America (www.eere.energy.gov/buildings/building_america)
- Energy Star (www.energystar.gov)
- Environments for Living (www.elfhome.com)
- Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) (www.usgbc.org)
- National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Research Center Green Building Guidelines and Local Green Building Councils (www.nahbrc.org/greenguidelines)
- iGreenBuild.com

An insider's look into Custom Building

Roundtable Participants:

- **Jim Murphy**,
president, *Jim Murphy & Associates*,
Santa Rosa, Calif.
- **Steven Washburn**,
president, *Washburn Custom Builders*,
Tucson, Ariz.
- **Guy Loisi**,
managing principal,
Rowland Luxury Homes,
Scottsdale, Ariz.



Jim Murphy (above) has gained a reputation in the North Bay Area for his high-quality custom homes, but also delves into light commercial work.

Custom building (and builders) is a breed unto itself in the housing industry, in some ways counter-cyclical to the production realm and always with a hands-on, personal approach to the business. We asked a trio of leading custom builders about their place in the industry, the challenges they face, and how they manage the varying expectations of each homebuyer.

Q: How will housing's general downturn impact your business and/or custom builders?

Jim Murphy: Approximately half of our projects are ultra high-end custom home projects, and we have that work scheduled out for several years. We don't anticipate much of a downturn, because we [custom builders] are not as affected by the current economic pressures.

Steven Washburn: Custom builders don't get too up or down with the market. When buyers want a house, they go ahead and build it.

Guy Loisi: The luxury market, in which we operate, has remained unphased by the general downturn; in fact, we are experiencing variations of new business such as the development of luxury resort villas and condominiums.

Q: What's the biggest challenge facing your business, and how are you addressing that challenge?

Murphy: The two biggest challenges are the shortage of skilled labor and the lengthy approvals process. We actively pursue opportunities provided

by job fairs, work directly with local construction training programs, and recruit workers directly from high school. To address the approvals process, we stay in close communication with architects, consultants, planners and government agencies to streamline process as much as possible.

Washburn: Now that the market is slowing down [for production housing], we've been better able to meet our schedules and reduce our cycle time because subs aren't stretched so thin. We actively keep our finger on the pulse of regulatory issues, but it's not a one-shot deal. We understand the need to fund infrastructure [for growth], but we don't want to become tax collectors for the government.

Q: What changes are you seeing among your homebuyers?

Loisi: We have definitely experienced many homeowners desiring an attention to detail and authenticity to their products, such as imported items and commissioning artists for in-home works.

Washburn: We're seeing a lot of demand for low-voltage [structured] wiring and





for green-building products such as photovoltaics, insulated concrete forms, and high-performance windows and doors. It's a combination of an intelligent choice and social responsibility [on the part of our clients].

Q. What is your “niche” or market distinction, and how do you sustain it?

Murphy: We've built and remodeled ultra high-end custom homes for more than 30 years, and nearly all of them now come to us by word of mouth. Our best customers are focused on value and the process over lowest initial price. And, our reputation for uncommonly reliable performance [in residential] has provided an edge for us in the commercial arena.

Loisi: Our niche is custom, built-to-suit residences. We are also currently branching out to build custom residential resort villas. We sustain that business by establishing our demographic and marketing it from all angles, including various media conduits as well as mass mailing/emailing campaigns.

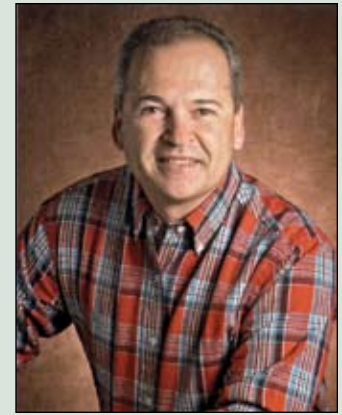
Q. What are your keys to effectively managing homebuyer expectations?

Washburn: Most clients only do this [build a custom home] once in their lives, so they really don't know what to expect. So, I wrote two books (*The American Dream*, vols. 1 and 2) that walk

them through the process, from land and location through warranty work [after closing]. That information allows them to crawl into our brains a bit, empowers them, and calms their anxieties.

Loisi: We believe that our clients are first; we go through extensive efforts to ensure that all of their needs are met in regards to the construction of their home. We are also firm believers in synergy and teamwork among the employees in our organization, ensuring that everyone pays attention to the details. We also send out weekly project reports with photos of the home's progression.

Murphy: Once we join our customer's building team, we make it our job to help them achieve their vision without them compromising for our convenience. One aspect of our financial stewardship is our sophisticated estimating, accounting, and project management systems.



Steven Washburn (above) actively monitors and participates in regulatory issues in his market to help strike a balance between growth and infrastructure costs.

Guy Loisi (below) has taken innovative steps at Rowland Luxury Homes regarding green-building practices and products.



Finally, an opportunity to position your company for greater success and profit in a changing world

- A 2½ day interactive immersion in rethinking your business and dealing with uncertain economic conditions.
- For owners and executives of mid-sized home building companies, constructing between 30 and 300 homes per year.
- Held at the American Club in Kohler, Wisconsin, the only AAA five diamond resort in the Midwest. With four world class golf courses and reserved tee times.
- Participation is limited to 120 attendees.

Home Builders Network **STRATEGIC THINKING**



Featuring key thinkers from inside and outside the industry

Combines presentations from leading strategic thinkers, multiple round tables, and hands-on business school case studies of real world homebuilder problems.



Al Trellis, well-known industry consultant, speaker, and columnist



Barry Schwartz, author of *The Paradox of Choice: Why More is Less*



John Brandt, CEO MPI Group and former editor of *Industry Week Magazine*

For Mid-Size Builders

May 16-18, 2007 • Kohler, WI

Registration – \$1,295 per person

Registration includes meals and all sessions. Does not include hotel registration or transportation.

For registration information visit www.HBNnet.com.

Inside this issue of **DIMENSIONS**

- **Improving Cycle Time**
- **Conquering Client Relations**
- **Infill Opportunities**
- **New Generation Design Software**
- **Educating Kids**
- **Quality Green Builders**
- **Insider's Look into Custom Building**



BMC WEST

A BMHC COMPANY

The BMC West Family of Companies Serving You:
BMC West Building Materials • BMC Building Materials • BMC Truss & Components
BMC Millwork • Abilene Lumber • Lone Star • Marvin Windows Planning Center
Arizona • California • Colorado • Idaho • Montana
Nevada • Oregon • Texas • Utah • Washington

PO Box 70006 • Boise, ID 83707-0106
208-331-4300 • 208-331-4366 (fax) • www.bmcwest.com