



Cabarrus building industry plans to go green

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CONCORD - The Cabarrus County Building Industry Association is launching a green building program that could make energy efficient homes the next housing trend in the region.

However, going "green" is a move that building officials say will also add to home builders' bottom lines while helping the environment and customers.

"If I couldn't make money doing it, I couldn't do it, no matter how much I believe in it," said Chad Ray, a Wake County home builder who has focused on building energy efficient homes and working with the North Carolina Green Builder Association. "We all have to learn to do more and use less."

On Thursday, the organization played host to a member-wide meeting to launch the green building program, and are now gauging members as to the next steps they want to take.

According to the National Association of Home Builders, green building will grow from 2 percent in the country's construction market in 2005 to about 10 percent in 2010 - representing a difference of up to \$30.8 billion.

Stephen Hartsell, vice president of the CCBIA and with SSC Construction, said he first got inquiries from customers about building green homes a couple years ago.

He said the idea of "green building" is one becoming very popular with business and homebuyers alike.

"I knew what it was," Hartsell said. "I know what nuclear physics are, but it doesn't mean I know how to do it."

Hartsell said there is no builder certified as "green builder," but that each home is judged on an individual basis.

For a large home Hartsell developed in Mooresville, he said about 85 different areas cited to make the home environmentally efficient - a daunting number for a builder fresh to the green building market.

Ray suggested that home builders start small when building green homes.

For instance, Ray and his building company Olde Heritage make it a goal for each of their homes to meet Energy Star Builder standards, which he said saves about 35 percent on power bills and is better for home emissions.

He also said that recycling work site materials, like wood and cardboard, is an important start in the "green" process.

To give builders some ideas as to what products are available to save building costs, a representative with Dow Building Associates also spoke on Thursday, highlighting some energy efficient products.

Scott Cummings, with Dow, said that building energy efficient homes through changes in insulation just takes a little more forethought on the part of builders.

“It doesn’t cost more, it just costs a little more intelligence,” Cummings said.

Once new insulation products are in place, he said builders could make more money on the home by selling it as an upgrade to customers and seeking energy efficient tax credits from the government.

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