

<http://dj.com/news/en/11146939.html>

Seattle's Daily Journal of Commerce
July 17, 2003

Master Builders teaches green homebuilding

- *Over 2,500 local homes have been certified green*

By ROBIN ROGERS
Built Green

While the major universities around Washington think mainly in purple and gold, or crimson and gray, the Master Builders Association University has its students thinking in "green."

As part of its new curriculum, the MBA University has created a Built Green Department to help educate consumers, builders and associated industries on what "green homebuilding" means.

So what is green homebuilding? Green homes save energy and water, use fewer resources to build, improve indoor air quality and are developed in a sustainable way.

Green homes are constructed using green building products, including recycled content materials such as decking, insulation and concrete, and lumber that has been harvested sustainably or salvaged from older buildings.

Green products include water savers such as low-flow faucets and shower heads, and energy savers like Energy Star-qualified appliances. Still other products, like paints, adhesives and alternatives to composite wood cabinetry, help to eliminate or reduce harmful/toxic chemical off-gassing.

Green buildings can also contribute to lower maintenance and operating costs with the installation of durable materials like ceramic tile, 40-year roofing, or building envelope upgrades such as improved insulation or windows.

National trends

A wave of green is sweeping the nation in both residential and commercial building. According to the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB), green homebuilding programs, such as Built Green, certified more than 13,000 homes in 2002.

In the commercial arena, the U.S. Green Building Council has certified almost 60 commercial projects through its LEED Green Building Rating System and nearly 800 more have applied for green building certification.

In a 2002 poll conducted by the NAHB, 57 percent of residential builders said that environmental goals are extremely important to them. Those builders anticipate change in three

major areas: open space and natural corridors for wildlife, water conservation and stormwater mitigation.

The same poll indicates consumers are willing to pay significantly more up front for energy efficiency upgrades that will reduce monthly bills. Many lenders, including Countrywide Home Loans, Fannie Mae and others, have recognized this trend and now offer special financing for purchases of green homes.

The NAHB is not the only organization supporting green building on a broad scale. National organizations such as the American Institute of Architects continue to support green building by holding national competitions that focus on green projects. In 2003, the AIA Committee on the Environment chose a residential project as one of the top 10 architectural and “green” design solutions that protect and enhance the environment.

Local green

Seattle and King County have been at the forefront of environmental issues for many years and green building is no exception. The Puget Sound region already has some of the most stringent building codes in the country, so programs such as Built Green add environmental value to conventional standards. In both the public and private sectors, the region has been actively involved in the green building movement.

The local Built Green residential program is one of the most successful programs of its kind in the nation. In January, the NAHB presented Built Green with its 2003 “Program of the Year for New Programs” award based on the unprecedented growth of the local organization.

Since its inception in 2000, the program has certified over 2,500 homes in King and Snohomish counties. The local Built Green program is one of the most comprehensive in the country and covers all types of residential construction. The program allows any type of residential project to become certified — from new single-family custom, production homes, remodels and additions to multifamily housing and entire developments.

The public sector has also been very involved in the movement as local municipalities have been proactive in adopting green building principles. In October 2001, King County announced its Green Building Initiative, which directs that all buildings the county constructs, remodels or renovates promote the use of green building practices. The initiative also directed that county departments support the use of LEED methods and techniques in the construction of their facilities.

Recently, King County passed the Low Impact Development/Built Green Demonstration Project Ordinance. This law authorizes variances for three experimental development projects that demonstrate innovative design and development techniques that reduce negative environmental impacts while maintaining housing affordability. The three demonstration projects, located in Renton, White Center and Vashon Island, will illustrate that green building and low impact development practices can be applied to multiple income level housing.

Local utilities, such as Puget Sound Energy, Seattle City Light and Snohomish County Public Utility District, have initiated green programs such as “green tags” that allow consumers to support the development of green power generated from sources like wind and solar.

Education

In response to the increased interest in green building, the MBA of King and Snohomish Counties established its Built Green program with support from both King and Snohomish counties. The mission of the program is twofold: to educate the public on environmental topics related to the building industry; and to provide training to builders and remodelers on sustainable building practices.

In an effort to meet those objectives, MBA University, through the Built Green Department, will launch an educational program beginning this summer. Courses are planned around the entire Built Green program in these areas:

- Construction methods that yield long-term energy savings.
- Site planning.
- Jobsite recycling.
- Sales and marketing of green homes.
- Indoor air quality.
- Vegetated roofs.
- Native landscaping.
- Green building materials.

Until recently, many green building products have not been available through mainstream suppliers, often making them more costly. The good news is that green products can now be purchased in general building supply stores such as Dunn Lumber, and specialty stores such as Environmental Home Center in Seattle. As green products become more readily available, prices have dropped to become competitive with conventional materials.

What you can do

If you're a builder or remodeler, you can join the Built Green program and take advantage of the growing demand for environmentally sound homes. If you're in the market for a home or a homeowner looking to remodel, ask your builder or Realtor about Built Green.

Course catalogues for MBA University are available by calling Robin Rogers at (425) 451-7920. For more information, visit www.builtgreen.net.

Robin Rogers is the director of the Master Builders Association Built Green Department.