



## Green homes

Expect more conservation-sensitive dwellings to become a way of life

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In 2003, the National Association of Home Builders published a report, "Building Greener, Building Better: The Quiet Revolution," describing the trend by home builders to build "green" homes. These are homes that are constructed to maximize the use of energy-efficient systems, building practices and materials.

Today, four years removed from that report, the notion of a quiet revolution is as outdated as an old-fashioned icebox. Today, home builders are pushing the trend, building more green homes than ever before and working to create a national green building standard.

The National Association of Home Builders is at the forefront of the green building revolution and working to create the first ever national green building standard. Working with the International Code Council, home builders are developing a residential green building standard that will be completed by early 2008.

Upon completion, the American National Standards Institute will certify the development process, ensuring a consensus-based guideline. This standard will encourage home builders to make regionally-specific and affordable green building choices.

The standards will maintain the flexibility of the existing National Association of Home Builders green building guidelines by allowing home builders to create their own specific set of features to achieve resource and energy conservation.

Creating a standard will serve as a measurement tool for green building programs, allowing state and local programs to determine how they score compared with the national standard. This gives credibility to and improves the reputation of effective local programs, which ultimately helps to increase participation. In addition, if jurisdictions don't yet have a green-builder program in place, the standards will allow home builders to certify their projects as green through the National Association of Home Builders proposed national green building program.

For decades, home builders have been making tremendous strides to build environmentally friendly new homes. However, in the last few years, the incorporation of green building practices has dramatically increased. Access to education material for builders, growing consumer awareness and the movement toward a national standard are accelerating green building's acceptance rate and moving it into the mainstream.

A recent survey concluded that more than half of the home builder members with the National Association of Home Builders will be incorporating green practices into the production of new homes by the end of 2007.

According to a survey administered by McGraw-Hill Construction, one of every two homes built in 2010 are expected to use green designs.

Nationally, there are more than 50 state and local green building programs. About half of these programs are based on the National Association of Home Builders' model green home building guidelines. Many local or state home building

associations and local jurisdictions have region-specific programs that meet the needs of their community and climate.

In California, home builders have formed the California Green Builder program ([www.cagreenbuilder.org](http://www.cagreenbuilder.org)). It has become the largest green building program in the Golden State.

Voluntary programs such as the California Green Builder program encourage a green design and construction process, increase consumer awareness and offer training to help builders incorporate green features into homes. They also emphasize the importance of homeowner education in maintaining the efficacy of a green-built home.

Most important, the programs provide minimum standards for building green while offering flexibility in how resource conservation is achieved. This enables home builders to keep green-built homes affordable.

Not long ago, having an official green building program was an insider's topic. Energy and resource conservation has been steadily increasing, but now it is part of the American conscience. Today, local governments across the country are adopting voluntary green building programs, and the creation of the national green

building standard will only increase participation.

What was once seen as a quiet revolution in building design is now a green explosion. With a new standard soon in place and a significant need for new homes to accommodate population growth, green building will soon become more than a standard -- but it will be a way of life.