



# Green Renovation on the Rise

By Ted Cater, EarthCraft House

Many home owners are looking to upgrade their houses and now are jumping on the green bandwagon to do so. The 2007 McGraw-Hill Construction "The Green Homeowner" SmartMarket Report forecasted a significant increase in green renovations, and by 2010, the market will total \$60 billion. The report goes further to predict that \$20 billion to \$40 billion of that amount will be from residential green renovation.

The current opportunity for remodelers and renovators to talk green starts with educating the home owner about what green means, so two local green building and remodeling experts were asked for their advice on talking "green" to their clients. According to Carl Seville, owner of Seville Consulting, the home owner needs to understand the importance of energy savings. "Usually the home owner wants to talk about non-toxic products, but I

talk about the other interiors such as lighting, ENERGY STAR-qualified appliances, low-flow water fixtures, the importance of air sealing and quality insulation work. Once home owners are convinced to do an energy upgrade, they feel like they get money back when the utility bills arrive."

"I like to tell people to do it right, so do it green or do it wrong," says Matt Hoots of The Hoots Group. He got into green building standards through the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program. "We got called from a home owner to solve a moisture problem, and a few months after we completed the job, he called us back up to say his energy use and bills had decreased dramatically. I told him, 'Of course you did. We don't go into a job without doing it green,' so he got an energy upgrade, too. Baseline green building doesn't have to cost more."

"When someone asks me what green features they should work on first, they always talk about the kitchen and bathrooms," continues Seville. "I tell them that prior to the granite countertops and cabinet upgrades, they are far better off with an energy upgrade. They should fix the big problem first...with a proper building envelope."

Hoots said a few of his home owners have been worried about the VOCs from products used in renovation, but he's also tried to ensure that the other products the consumer brings in after the work is completed also are

formaldehyde free. "I've had a builder bring in a couch full of VOCs into a green remodeling job, and the fumes were awful. You'd think the builder would know better, and that builder was me!"

"You know" reflects Hoots, "if I were still working for my previous builder, I'd have been out of work a few months ago. The break came from doing energy upgrades on people's homes, and I started my own renovation company. Honestly, if I wasn't building green I'd be out of business."



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