

## Green firsts in the Triad

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Special to the News & Record

Sunday, September 5, 2010

We've seen the proof of the nation's increased environmental responsibility through changes in individuals' habits, as well as new corporate efforts and government initiatives. The National Association of Homebuilders has embraced this responsibility with a comprehensive green building program called the National Green Building Standard.

This standard is the guide used by many builders across the country to design sustainable green homes and communities. It's also the only residential green building program in the U.S. endorsed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The program covers a wide range of projects, including new single-family and multi-family homes, renovations, additions and subdivisions. Any project that has been certified through the NAHB green building standard has been designed and constructed to address site design, resource efficiency, energy efficiency, water efficiency, indoor air quality and owner operation. A critical component of the program is the required third-party verification that guarantees the work was completed as designed.

Our Triad Green Building Council has been very active in promoting and implementing this program, and we have had many wonderful successes and a few firsts in the state of North Carolina.

- Southern Evergreen in Summerfield is an award-winning design build firm that has earned the first NAHB green renovation certification in the state. The firm's renovation of a Fisher Park home, originally built in 1917, returned the house to its authentic state and modified it to be a high-performance green home. Green features include wall spray foam insulation, tankless water heating and an Energy Star designation. "Historic preservation is the ultimate form of recycling," says Nora Miller of Southern Evergreen.
- Matthews Enterprises in Lexington achieved the first NAHB green addition certification in North Carolina for work on the Carolina Cancer Services home. "Not only do we have a beautiful facility, but it is a much more functional one. We took an old house and made it as energy efficient as any new home. That, in turn, helps us pay the bills of our clients who are battling cancer," says executive director Caron Myers. "The satisfaction to me is that we completed a project that is third-party verified," says contractor Zane Matthews. "We've addressed indoor air quality. We used recycled content components. We used local resources and subcontractors."
- My company, Silverstein Construction Corp., also has achieved an NAHB first. Our Sanford's Creek neighborhood in Colfax was awarded the first NAHB green subdivision certification in North Carolina. A key factor in this was Sanford's Creek "rural preservation zoning," which requires 50 percent of its land to be set aside as common area. This zoning is central to maintaining the land's natural features, including a hardwood forest, a creek that surrounds much of the property, and a nature trail shared with the community's neighbor, the nonprofit equestrian Horse Power Therapeutic Learning Center. Minimizing environmental impact during construction of the roads and associated infrastructure, including attention to erosion and avoiding significant flora and fauna, are a few of the certification requirements.

- Ricci Builders of Forsyth County achieved the milestone of building the state's first home to earn the NAHB Emerald certification, the highest level in the program. This ridgetop home in Stokes County generates its own power through a combination of planning and design supported by geothermal heating and cooling, solar hot water and photovoltaic electricity generation. Rooftop rain water is diverted into a cistern to provide landscape irrigation. Bookcases and stair treads were built from trees harvested from the home site. And sustainable materials such as cork floors and concrete countertops were used.

I am very proud of the efforts of the Triad Green Building Council. Through educational and networking opportunities we are contributing to the "greening" of our Piedmont region. The efforts of the builders described above are significant, and we commend their accomplishments. Our goals will not only be about firsts, but will also be measured in the number of green sustainable home projects completed in the future.