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Green Expert Perspective: Building Green Today

Don Ferrier
Ferrier Custom Homes

What have you been up to since we interviewed you in 2006?
We finished Heather’s home two years ago. It was a prototype with LEED-H guidelines and NAHB green building guidelines as they were being developed and as part of the NCBF Building America program. [We also completed] the Vaught Home, west of Fort Worth." We were honored to win our fourth Energy Value Housing Award—the most energy-efficient home in a hot climate.

Don Ferrier
President
Ferrier Custom Homes

Don Ferrier is a third-generation builder, who has focused on energy-efficient construction with structural insulated panels since 1984. In 2006, MHC profiled Ferrier’s landmark project, Heather’s Home, in the Residential Green Building SmartMarket Report. This fall, Scott Lewis, director of editorial research at McGraw-Hill Construction checked in with Don to get his insights on best practices in green residential construction and to see how his green custom home business has evolved.

What are some of the most important elements of green homes today?
Insulation is key. We’re using structural insulated panels (SIPs) for the exterior envelope of the house in 95% of our projects. One of the great things about SIPs is that your air infiltration has drastically diminished, so your house is airtight.

What is your take on the green building market today?
I think that it is alive, well and thriving. [At Ferrier], we have more design clients than we have ever had. [MHC’s] SmartMarket Reports do the best job in capturing where we are. A few years ago, I remember one saying this will be a tidal wave of change in the way that builders will build, and some builders don’t even realize it is there. [Green] continues to grow at a more rapid rate. Building across the U.S. is suffering unless you’re a green builder.

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