

Santa Fe REAL ESTATE Guide

Artisan/craftsman/**builder**

JANUARY 2007 VOLUME 10, ISSUE 10

Guidelines for building green

by Kurt Faust

With all the hoopla around “Green Building” these days it is hard to know just what all the issues are. There is a comprehensive guide, “Green Home Building Guidelines,” that highlights ways in which a mainstream homebuilder can effectively weave environmental concerns into home design and construction.

The guidelines were developed by the National Association of Homebuilders with input from all the major building materials sectors as well as groups such as the National Association of Counties, the American Institute of Architects, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Energy.

The guidelines are divided into six primary sections:

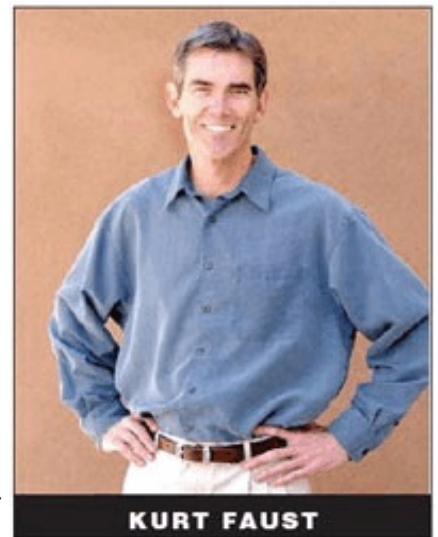
Lot Design & Development deals with such issues as saving trees, storm water retention, and passive solar heating and cooling. This is a good illustration of how beginning with end in mind improves overall success, solar orientation being a prime example.

Resource Efficiency is concerned with reducing job site waste, recycling materials, and understanding the embodied energy; this is best determined by a life-cycle analysis of raw material acquisition, manufacturing process, homebuilding process, its impacts during operation and maintenance, and finally during demolition and reuse.

Energy Efficiency deals with the energy consumption during the life of operating the home. A new initiative calls for all new buildings to use half the fossil-fuel energy they would typically consume, and to be “carbon-neutral” by the year 2030.

Water Efficiency concerns water used for food, cleaning, and landscape irrigation. Strategies to reduce consumption include recirculating hot water systems, instant (point-of-use) water heaters, Energy Star dishwashers and washing machines, water-efficient showerheads and faucets, ultra-low-flow toilets, drip irrigation, rainwater catchment, and gray water re-use systems.

Indoor Environmental Quality seeks to minimize and manage potential sources of pollutants. Big sources are



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the mechanical room, the garage, products using formaldehyde, and the plywood and particle board used for the walls and cabinets, and any place mold can accumulate.

It is wise to seal off the mechanical room and garage from the interior spaces and avoid using products containing formaldehyde. Use cement-based backer board for tile installations and be diligent about keeping water out of the insides of the walls.

Operation & Maintenance by Homeowner is the crucial final element and a big opportunity for the builder to educate the new owner about alternatives to toxic cleaning substances and lawn and garden chemicals and point out water and energy-saving practices.

By reducing a home's environmental footprint a homeowner can lower operating costs. The owner will enjoy increased comfort due to fewer drafts, better humidity control and better indoor air quality, and will benefit from enhanced durability and less maintenance based on the longer-lived components and systems utilized.

You can download a copy of the Green Home Building Guidelines at <http://www.thegbi.org/newmexico/>

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