



# HINTS FOR HOME BUYERS

## Certification Program Frames The Future For Home Building

(NAPSA)—Woodwork, window treatments and wall colors. Framing isn't exactly on every new homebuyer's mind, but as the bones of the home, framing is one of the most important components in new home construction. Now, thanks to a new initiative, many new homeowners will see improvements in the manner in which their wood-framed home is constructed.

A new Certified Trade Contractor program was announced at the International Builders' Show. The program sets quality assurance guidelines that are field-tested to improve framing quality, reduce builder and contractor costs and ultimately raise homeowner satisfaction. For those considering a new wood-framed home, the new initiative will make a good choice an even better one.

"For 400 years, wood has provided an unmatched combination of strength, flexibility, durability, availability and affordability—and wood is our only renewable resource that comes from growing and abundant forests," said Kelly McCloskey, president and CEO of the Wood Promotion Network (WPN). "This program will help new generations of home builders and buyers continue to take advantage of the benefits of wood construction."

The WPN is piloting the program in conjunction with the NAHB Research Center. In developing the program, the NAHB



Research Center measured and analyzed the business performance of three framing companies, working in conjunction with some of the nation's biggest builders, including Pulte, Centex, Del Webb and K.B. Homes.

Participant companies realized a 50 percent reduction in construction defects. The companies reported three reasons for the reduction in defects—employee accountability; a constant reinforcement of the company's commitment to quality; and continuous improvement.

By reducing construction defects, contractors and builders were also able to realize several significant business benefits, including improved productivity, workforce development, builder satisfaction and expected durability, and a reduction in expected losses due to natural disaster. Ultimately, the improvements in the finished product and the cost-savings that are realized by a

more efficient process are all passed on to the new home buyer who chooses to frame with wood.

"Builders want to put together the best possible product because they want their customers to be completely satisfied with their new homes," said Hank Zolkiewicz, a manager in Contracting Services for Del Webb. "The Certified Trade Contractor quality assurance system is a great step to making both parties satisfied."

The Certified Trade Contractor program will be implemented throughout the United States in the coming months. In each new market, builders will develop new quality management practices through a system that ensures that qualified personnel perform the framing work, using the right materials, tools, work procedures and equipment. Framers will also pinpoint quality hotspots and take action to prevent recurrences of defects.

"The long-lasting result will be to build our homes better, faster and at a reduced cost," said Jim Hoffner, regional quality assurance manager, K. Hovnanian. "When builders keep their costs down, we're able to add value for our customers."

For information on the Certified Trade Contractor program or the Wood Promotion Network, contact the NAHB Research Center's Toolbase Hotline at (800) 898-2842 or visit [www.beconstructive.com](http://www.beconstructive.com).