

Automated Builder®

Since 1964
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May 2006

The No. 1 Engineered Housing Technology Transfer Magazine for Manufacturing and Marketing



FEMA says round and dome shapes may provide ultimate high wind safety



Empyrean homes offering ultra modern contemporary panelized homes



Builder Meinhart uses flexible Gastite tubing and saves 44 hours over iron pipe



Midwest Homes and Zanesville, OH officials score big with affordable home

Also in this issue:

- **AB's Exclusive list: Top modular residential home producers**
- **AeroGo: Harnesses air to move houses**
- **Will BluWood revolutionize wood industry?**
- **Ashland's IsoSet for engineered wood**

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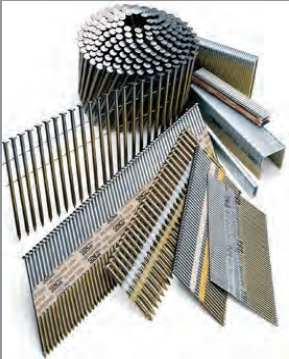
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AB Carlson's Column

Trade Deficit; Out-Foxing China? Fed Features Fumbling

By Don O. Carlson,
Editor and Publisher

In mid-April an editor of a West Coast newspaper who apparently didn't understand the situation ran a four column head in a five column newspaper on the business page stating, 'U.S. Trade Deficit Improves.' The sub-head read, 'February's Imbalance with China Drops to Lowest in Almost a Year.'

The somewhat myopic head writer in the text reported that in the month of February the Dept. of Commerce said that the deficit with our biggest trading partner, China, fell to '\$65.7 billion, a 4.2% decline from January's record of \$68.7 billion.'

And, he thought that was good? Ridiculous. The same article reported that the total U.S. trade deficit for our nation soared to a record \$723.6 billion in 2005 and, 'Our February trade gap was the third highest ever.'

So, what can be done about a soaring deficit with the People's Republic of China? We have often suggested that our trading government brain trust in Washington, D.C. should strongly jaw-bone the nation of China to import American homes as a means to sharply reduce the soaring deficit with that nation.

Is it even a possibility to suggest that Americans quit buying so many products from China? Hardly. Certainly not as long as the U.S.A. treasures a free enterprise system and embraces free trade for the entire world. What's more, it's a little tough to suggest to buyers in United States that they should be willing to pay anywhere from 10% to 40% more for the gismo built in the U.S. rather than the gismo of equal quality shipped into the U.S. from China.

However, it's certainly obvious that what they need in China is what we have plenty of and are best in the world at making - homes. Whereas there has been quite an explosion in residential construction in China, most of that construction is in high-rise apartments while the millions living out in the countryside are grossly under-housed.

Why could we not fill all of those containers that come here jammed with products from China and go back to China empty with our panelized homes, mechanical cores and all of the amenities that would work in their nation?

Would it make any sense to try to talk with the Chinese government and their exporters to consider loading their empty containers here with U.S. homes for even-handed benefits to both Americans and Chinese? Why not?

Fumbling Fed

We had hoped that the new chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board, Ben Bernanke, might chart a more sensible course than his predecessor, Alan (Yo-Yo) Greenspan, whose method of operation was to raise rates until housing hit the block wall of recession and then furiously back-pedaled.

It's always been a well known fact that if you raise interest rates enough, you will destroy the market for housing and the American economy along with it. Rather than cut back on the interest rates, Bernanke and the Fed Board in late March raised our interest rates for the 15th consecutive time. This made our basic-prime rates

climb to 4.75%, the highest since April 2001.

Remember what happened in 2001? Alan (Prosperity's Plunderer) Greenspan had raised interest rates seven times in a row, ran the housing market into a ditch and we went into a bone-crushing recession.

Housing - - and the 300 businesses and utilities which depend upon it - - is the engine that drives the U.S. economy. But, you can surely kill it with too-high interest rates.

Buildings that Fight Disasters

Elsewhere in this edition is an interesting article entitled, "Providing Hope for Near Absolute Protection" - - the Renaissance of the Monolithic Dome."

The story discusses research being done by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in its manual entitled 'Design and Construction Guidance for Community Shelters.'

The essence of the article is that a monolithic dome could by far be the best shelter to be inside when high winds hit.

FEMA points out that the, 'Very shape of a structure significantly effects how it weathers a storm.' They add that sharp corners and flat surfaces give the wind something to lift or push against, and buildings that are smoother and rounded survive better.

These conclusions are certainly not new. Decades ago in the tornado-country of the Midwest, smart farmers preferred to build round barns with little or no roof overhang. They learned the hard way that conventional rectangular structures were much more vulnerable to total destruction during tornadoes. The round barns survived because the winds tended to whistle right on by because there was 'nothing to grab.'

Some farmers even built hexagonal and octagonal buildings, and although they were better than the straight rectangular shapes, they still had corners that suffered damage when the tornadic high winds circled around them.

Without knowing whether it's a fact or a myth, the Eskimos seem to innately know that their round igloo shapes were more wind resistant than if they had tried to build rectangular structures from ice blocks.

Also, the nomads wandering the Asian Gobi Desert always built tent-like structures called yurts that were round in shape. Seems like the wind in the Gobi never stops blowing and to this day it drops dust all over Beijing and some even blows as far as the U.S.A.'s West Coast.

Perhaps the manufacturers of dome homes are onto something that needs to be given a little more respect and perhaps Buckminster Fuller in his genius knew what he was doing with the geodesic dome. Domes, by the way, cut heating and cooling costs over 30%.

Perhaps we should all be a little less prejudiced about our desire to live only in ranch homes, two-story homes and split-level rectangular homes.

After all, it's really tough to dribble, shoot and score with a square basketball as it has too much wind resistance.

Providing 'Near-Absolute Protection'-- The Renaissance of the Monolithic Dome

WASHINGTON, DC—Deaths, injuries and property damage caused by tornadoes and hurricanes can be prevented. That's the principle conclusion FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) reaches in its manual *Design and Construction Guidance for Community Shelters*. But, not only does the manual make that bold, sweeping statement, it goes on to say that structures strong enough to survive tornadoes and hurricanes can be built—then they actually tell us how to do just that.

FEMA claims their manual is a first. Prior to its publication there were no known buildings, fire or life safety codes or engineering standards that gave detailed information for the construction of protective structures.

David B. South, president of the Monolithic Dome Institute (MDI) says, "For years now, FEMA has been studying the after-effects of natural disasters. They have seen so much loss of life and destruction caused by tornadoes and hurricanes that they are now really encouraging people to build homes, public structures and especially community shelters with what they call near-absolute protection and they're setting a precedent by actually telling people how that can be done."

And, the educated consensus is that monolithic structures are the surest way to reach near-absolute protection at the present time.

So, what exactly is 'near-absolute protection?' FEMA defines it like this: *Shelters designed and constructed in accordance with the guidance presented in this manual provide 'near-absolute protection' from extreme-wind events. Near-absolute protection means that, based on our knowledge of tornadoes and hurricanes, the occupants of a shelter built according to this guidance will be protected from injury or death.*

The fact that people can have near-absolute protection is very important information for schools, mobile home parks or any community in a high-risk area.

"Just think how many lives could be saved, how much property damage could be prevented if every community had at least one school gymnasium or community center that could provide near-absolute protection," comments South.

FEMA encourages each community to do its own risk assessment to determine its need for a community shelter and suggests the steps that should be followed in making that assessment. One of those assessment tools is a 'Design Wind Map for Community Shelters.' This map presents four wind zones showing which U.S. areas are most prone to tornadoes and hurricanes.

Dr. Arnold Wilson, MDI's consulting engineer, elaborated on the importance of the Design Wind Speed concept. He said, "The forces on buildings caused by wind are related to

the velocity of the wind. Local conditions, such as mountains and valleys or trees or other buildings or open spaces, all affect the wind forces. When the forces on the building are known, the building can then be designed to withstand those forces."

According to FEMA, for a structure to protect its occupants during a high-wind event, it must be designed to withstand the wind's velocity and it must be constructed with a continuous load path.

Dr. Wilson explains this concept as well. He said, "When forces are placed upon a structure by wind or seismic events, the forces are transferred through all parts of the structure through continuous contact between its members. In other words, the exterior forces have a continuous load path through joints, connections, beams, columns, walls and slabs until the forces are transferred into the ground."

FEMA points out that the very shape of a structure then significantly affects how it weathers a storm. South agrees and says, "Angles, sharp corners and flat surfaces give the wind something to lift or push against—buildings that are smoother and rounded survive better."

Wind-borne debris, or what FEMA calls 'resistance to missile impact' is also important. To provide near-absolute protection, the building must be able to resist a missile blown into it.

A missile in this case could be a brick, tree limbs or even vehicles—just about anything in fact. FEMA has determined that if a structure can resist a two-by-four, weighing 15 lbs. and traveling at 100 mph horizontally or 67 mph vertically, it meets the strength requirements.

"A monolithic dome can do that easily," says South. "We had a semitrailer truck, fully loaded with rocks, careen down a hill and smash full-force into a dome. It knocked a hole in the shell, but there was no serious penetration, which means that people inside the dome were protected. But, other structures no doubt would have been leveled and their occupants either hurt or worse," concludes South.

And, in a hurricane, although water produces more pressure against a structure than wind, South says, "A hurricane does not exert enough pressure on a dome to be even noticed."

Dr. Wilson says, "When it comes to disaster survivability, the monolithic dome's aerodynamic surface and its steel-reinforced concrete, put it head and shoulders above most other structures."

Major industries, requiring near-absolute protection for their sensitive or volatile inventories, have been using domes for decades. Does it not make sense then, to take a proactive approach and consider constructing such structures as community shelters, in high-risk areas? It would seem to be a far more logical first step in terms of human and financial interests, than continuing year-after-year, with the same confusing reactive methods with which we've been bogged down.



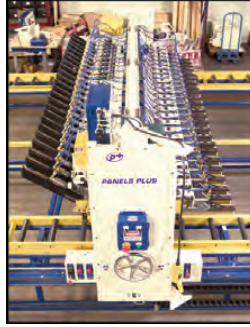
Lone Star Northwest Inc., in Portland, OR, uses a dome for dry powder cement storage.

For information on the Monolithic Dome Institute circle Reader Service 40.

AB New Products



Panels Plus—Semi-Automated Sheathing System, available as a single or dual-beam bridge—They refer to their business as the ‘one-stop shop for your manufacturing wall panel equipment.’ Panels Plus® has been providing services to the construction industry for over 15 years and they say that besides simply making semi-automated sheathing systems, they build technology into your craftsmanship. Their high level of quality, durable construction and list of features seems to support that claim. Their systems are customized to meet each customer's individual needs. And, the ‘common sense’ designs are based on decades of housing machinery and manufacturing experience. Panels Plus also includes prompt and dependable customer service along with installation and training. Circle No. 58



Preverco Introduces Engenius: Perfect Balance—Engineered Hardwood Flooring—Preverco, a leading manufacturer of high-end hardwood flooring announces the creation of Engenius, its new line of engineered flooring. Preverco's Engenius flooring is ideal for installation on many surfaces, such as concrete, concrete with radiant heating systems, O.S.B., plywood and a variety of acoustical membranes. Preverco's Engenius flooring has a unique 1/8" sawn wear layer with a 3/8"- 7 layer hardwood plywood, which is perfect for various climates, including: warm and dry environments, damp conditions and changing temperatures and humidity levels. While many hardwoods tend to shrink or expand in ever changing conditions, Preverco's Engenius series is built to withstand those temperature variations. Circle No. 59.



Potlatch Corp., a leader in specialty and environmentally friendly wood products, introduces **EnStron**, a particleboard flooring underlayment made from 100% recovered wood fiber. EnStron offers builders an economical, solid-core panel that is ideal underneath floor covering products such as vinyl that require a smooth, consistent surface.

John VavRosky, marketing manager for Potlatch's wood products division says, “It's engineered to offer a more consistent surface with no core voids or flaws, so builders don't have to worry about bonding or surface telegraphing problems. EnStron also meets the strict HUD standards for strength and formaldehyde fuming.”

Unlike Luan plywood that is comprised of layers, EnStron is a solid-core integrated panel that is not susceptible to delamination. EnStron is up to 50% denser than most plywood underlayment. Circle No. 60.



SOMFY—Automatic Shutters and Awnings that Think (pictured - the exclusive Somfy tubular motor)—Instead of storm panels, security bars and expensive alarms, motorized rolling shutters provide an instant ‘safety-shield’ to your home when you desire and conveniently roll-up out of sight with the simple push of a button. Somfy's Decora RTS (Radio Technology Somfy) wireless wall switch offers single push button control of individual and/or groups of motorized rolling shutters. A single window or an entire household of rolling shutters can move up-or-down with a single touch on the Telis RTS transmitter. Motorized awnings add comfort to an outdoor living space while providing protection from the sun. Operating the awning is done via a transmitter, featuring the same RTS technology as the awnings. This system eliminates the usual point and shoot operation associated with infrared remote controls and this system has a working range of 65 ft. Additionally, the Eolis RTS wind control, automatically retracts the awning during windy conditions, whether you're home or away. Circle No. 61.

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Circle Reader Service No. 3

Empyrean Designs and Builds Contemporary Panelized Homes Dwell-ing in Modernism

By Paul Sedan,
Freelance Writer



Dwell magazine, a modern residential architecture publication, features their contest winning design for a modernist modular home. Resolution: 4 Architecture, a New York firm, designed the house.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN—Michael Harris has seen the future of panelized homes and the future is modern. Harris, President and CEO of Empyrean (refers to a heavenly dwelling place full of light), firmly believes that there is an increasing interest in modernism throughout the country. He feels so strongly about it in-fact, that he's resolutely committing his company to supply contemporary, factory-crafted homes to meet this resurgent demand.

Empyrean used to be known by its old moniker, Acorn Homes and Deck House (still used as the name of their in-house design group). But, in keeping with Harris' re-invented thinking, somehow this had to change.

"About a year-and-a-half ago we went through a soul-searching process to define what we were doing and how we were conveying that to our prospective clients," he says. "We found that about 80% of what we make was being designed from scratch by our staff of in-house architects. And, when we conducted some focus groups, it became clear that we needed to re-position ourselves from a building company that makes houses, to an architectural firm that builds what it designs," adds Harris.

The modernist approach that Empyrean now embraces received a boost some years ago from an interesting source—a magazine. In '02 *Dwell* magazine, a modern residential architecture publication based in San Francisco, CA, ran a competition that challenged architects to design a 2,000 sq. ft. modern modular for a young couple in NC. The budget was to be \$200,000 or \$100 per sq. ft.

The winner was a New York firm called Resolution: 4 Architecture, who developed a series of modulares that can be combined into dozens of configurations to accommodate a variety of needs and sites.

The house, located in Pittsboro, NC, was both more and

less successful. More—because it did produce a contemporary modular house that embodies modern design principles. And Less—because the finished product cost a whole bunch more than the \$200,000 budget.

Dwell's editor, Allison Arieff, says that even though the project went over budget, it did prove that you can successfully apply modernist design to modular buildings.

"This was really a concept car," says Arieff. "More modern modulares, at more conventional prices, can be expected. We're working to brand a series of *Dwell* homes," she adds.

And, branding *Dwell* homes they are. Log on to the magazine's website and you'll see that *Dwell* has teamed up with Empyrean, Resolution: 4 Architecture and Lazor Office (a MN-based architectural firm whose Flatpak house was featured in a prefab exhibit at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis) to offer the public what they call 'beautifully designed, highly functional and eminently livable homes.'

Currently there are three *Dwell* homes being offered. One designed by Resolution 4: Architecture (based on the one that won the magazine's competition), one by Lazor Office/Flatpak and one by Empyrean's Deck House/Next House.

The Resolution: 4 design is conventional wood frame while the other two are post and beam. All feature 2x6 plywood-faced wall panels (the Deck House/Next House offers a 2x4 option).

Exterior finishes range from site-applied cedar, cement board or metal siding (Resolution: 4 and Next House), to factory-applied Douglas fir, cement board, or steel panel siding (Lazor/Flatpak).

Harris says that the *Dwell* website has generated thousands of inquiries and he believes that with his previously established Acorn/Deck House network of 300 plus builders nationwide, he can build any of the three plans (or a cus-

tom variation on any of them) in any city where there is a customer.

"There's a lot of resurgent interest in modernism throughout the country," notes Harris. "This is evidenced by such things as Target store's employ of architect Michael Graves to design home furnishings and the growing popularity within many other nationwide chain stores," he adds.

Resolution: 4 Architecture's principal Joe Tanney, shares a similar enthusiasm. Since winning *Dwell's* contest, his company's website has had 'thousands of hits' from people wanting to know more about building an affordable, contemporary home.

The case for the marriage of modernist architects and the building prefabrication industry is not new. For many years it's been a sort of 'Holy Grail' for some. Yet the search has been littered with as many failures as successes. Konrad Wachsmann and Walter Gropius (of Bauhaus fame) started up the General Panel Corp. in CA, after WWII, in order to create cost effective systems for modernist prefabricated housing. However the firm barely got off the ground.

Frank Lloyd Wright postulated his Usonian House as a home that every man could build using specially designed pre-cast concrete blocks. Still, the project remained impractical.

Perhaps this time, the folks at *Dwell* and Empyrean, have it dialed-in correctly. In the past, architects and their supporters tried to market the factory-built method for homes that were modernist and affordable to the middle-class. Empyrean says that the typical cost of a two-story, 2,500 sq. ft. *Dwell* home is estimated at between \$175 to \$250 per sq. ft.

(excluding land). A sum that's hardly in the range for most of the middle-class, but well within reach for those who enjoy, relatively affordable, modernist design.

Meanwhile, the folks at Resolution: 4 Architecture, are quietly moving ahead with their plans to undertake the modernist approach using the vocabulary of modular construction. Significantly, they have a consultant on board, Greg Sloditskie, who has an engineering background and has worked for several modular manufacturers in the past.

Tanney believes this is vital, as it positions them as architects who are striving to understand the modular process and design within its parameters. So far, he says, they already have more than a dozen homes in the works in locales including Martha's Vineyard in MA, NY's Catskill Mountains and Long Island, MD, TN and VA.

Tanney says that although these homes will cost more than \$100 per sq. ft., they can still be built for the cost of a traditional home and for far less than the cost of building one of his modern designs using site-built methods.

Although the current demand for modernist homes is comparatively small, it's still an area worth watching. When a cup of coffee now includes choices like a double espresso with cinnamon, maybe a prefab design that borrows from the palette of famous architects, costs far less than a custom home and can be erected at a fraction of the time—is someday going to be an increasingly more popular option.

For more information on Empyrean Homes circle Reader Service 41.

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Midwest Homes Helping to Build the American Dream In Zanesville, Ohio's Inner City

ZANESVILLE, OH—It's called home ownership and it's the fundamental basis of the American dream. Although these days, many residents of Zanesville find it increasingly more difficult to afford that dream.

Author, Thomas Wolfe, wrote that you can't go home again, but don't ever tell Stacie Romine that. Born and raised on Keen Street, she recently took occupancy of a brand new home, just down the road a spell, from where she played as a child.

The City of Zanesville, in cooperation with Midwest Homes, worked to fulfill that dream for Stacie and her son, David.

Ken Corbin and Brad Morgan of Midwest Homes, turned over the keys to a new three-bedroom, two-bath manufactured home at 929 Keen St.

"This is not only wonderful for Stacie, but it's also a huge plus for our city," said Corbin, president of the company. "What we've tried to do is take an older part of the inner city and bring something fresh and new to it," he added.

The 1,312 sq. ft. ranch home features a number of custom amenities, including deluxe appliances, 2"x6" exterior walls, thermal-pane windows, a walk-up attic and a high-efficiency heat pump.

Putting the project together was a team effort with Midwest and the City of Zanesville. The project originated from discussions about the need for 'in-fill' housing in a community based, in large extent, on pre-1940 built homes.

"In an older city like Zanesville, we needed to find a way to re-vitalize the community by offering a quality new home, that was affordable," said Meg Deedrick, director of community development.

"Making affordable housing available for our residents with low to moderate incomes, was a key element to this project," added Deedrick.

Corbin and Deedrick got started by first selecting that 'perfect lot' from over 30 that were available. The Keen St. location was chosen based on access to a local city park and its proximity to



The 1,312 sq. ft. manufactured ranch home is delivered to its foundation at 929 Keen St. in Zanesville, OH.



Workers complete the detailed brick work and other finishing touches on site.



The finished product, a brand new, three-bedroom, two-bath, manufactured home.

the downtown area.

The next step was analyzing the various models that might be appropriate for the situation. The focus was centered around curb appeal, neighborhood blending and price comparisons. Commodore Homes of Pennsylvania also lent-a-hand based on their previous expertise with similar inner city projects.

"They had worked with a development in Mercer, PA that had similar characteristics to Zanesville," said Corbin. "Barry Shein, president of Commodore Corp. also helped with recommendations, including a front

entry with the custom front porch for typical narrow lots characteristic in older cities," adds Corbin.

During that same period of time Deedrick worked closely with the Mayor and City Council in preparing the project for it's final approval. "Midwest was willing to carry the financial risk, but we still needed City Council and Port Authority approval," she said.

"Midwest and the city made this a community project that utilized local suppliers and contractors. Even Lowe's home-improvement store, offered to pitch in by supplying the landscaping for the project," Deedrick added.

"This was quite the media event, newspapers, television and radio stations from all over the area were on-hand for the ribbon cutting," explains Corbin.

The Mayor, City Council members, local residents and contractors filled the street as over 100 people gathered for the big event. WHIZ-TV, the local TV affiliate, produced a 30-minute special that further boosted media exposure.

Carol Goff, president of Century 21 Real Estate, was the listing and selling agent. "Even the appraiser commented that this is the finest built manufactured home he's ever been in," said Goff.

Goff also noted how well the home was decorated by adding, "Midwest Homes did a wonderful job in making the model absolutely beautiful. The lighting, furniture, pictures and decor were done on a first-class basis."

Finding the right buyer was the next step. With assistance from the Ohio Department of Development's Community Housing Improvement (CHIP) Grant, the City's Community Development Department spearheaded a successful educational program for Zanesville residents. 'The Keys to Home Ownership' workshop included presentations by lenders, builders and home improvement companies.

"Home ownership is one of the most accessible ways to build wealth. When we increase access to this opportunity, we help build individual, as-well-as, community equity," commented Deedrick.



The official turning over of the keys—(left to right) Mayor Howard Zwelling, new home owner Stacie Romine, Linda Metz and Ken Corbin of Midwest Homes.

The first time Stacie Romine walked into the model she knew this was the one. "I loved it, the home was huge, had all the modern conveniences, yet looked like it was built to fit into the old neighborhood," she said. Romine sincerely thanked Mayor Zwelling and Corbin for making her dream come true, then added, "It's a beautiful home in a very lovely neighborhood and a good place to raise a family."

Just prior to receiving her keys, Reverend Keith Wyatt of the Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Zanesville, blessed the new home.

Tammac Corp. of Wilkes-Barre, PA handled the financing for Romine. Jeff Poth, president of Tammac, said he was



Members of Zanesville's City Council celebrate the successful conclusion of their efforts at the official ribbon cutting ceremony.

pleased that they could help.

"We are excited about being a part of the present accomplishment and are looking forward to bringing the American dream to other Zanesville residents," commented Poth.

Mayor Zwelling said he hopes this is only the first of many new home projects. "Affordability was the key," said the Mayor. "I want to thank Midwest Homes, Tammac Corp., our City Council and the Community Development Department for doing such a wonderful job. We've proven what planning and hard work can do to help create new energy for our great city. We look forward to doing it again," he added.

For more information regarding Midwest Homes circle Reader Service No. 42.

For more information regarding Commodore Homes circle Reader Service No. 43.

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Circle Reader Service No. 6

Builder Switches to Gastite And Achieves Dramatic Savings Both in Design and Installation Time



Builder Chris Meinhart makes flexible gas piping connections at the manifold at a custom home he was building in Willistown, PA. Each of the 3/4" Gastite lines coming off the manifold leads to a different gas fireplace or appliance.

MEDIA, PA—Custom builder Chris Meinhart, an 18-year veteran of the construction business, prides himself on his knowledge and use of innovative building materials and technologies. Flexible gas piping may be a relatively new item for some builders, but Meinhart's company—Hart Builders Inc.—made the big switch nearly a decade ago, abandoning traditional black-iron pipe in favor of Gastite® corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST).

Problem defined: "The hardest part of any gas-line installation job is sizing it properly and mapping out the pipe runs to all the various appliances," says Meinhart, explaining his reasoning behind the switch.

"The homes I build are so big, I'll have pipe runs extending up to 200 ft. from the manifold. I need something to make these long runs easier to install in the larger, increasingly complex homes I build," he adds.

Much of Meinhart's challenge stems from the changing design and proliferating amenities in upscale homes. In addition, rising land costs have forced custom-builders like himself to build 'up' rather than 'out,' notes Meinhart. That creates "a lot more corners and angles that gas piping must maneuver around to reach all the gas appliances in a modern home," he remarks.

The list includes not only cooking, space-heating and domestic hot water equipment, but also pool heaters and multiple fireplaces. "It's not unusual for me to run eight or ten gas-lines in a home," says Meinhart.

As a result, it has become increasingly difficult and expensive to lay these systems out with rigid pipe. Running up walls and down joists, a single black-iron gas-line from manifold to appliance could require as many as ten fittings to accommodate all the twists and turns.

With up to ten lines per home, Meinhart points out, "all the cutting and threading necessary to make those connections gets to be extremely time consuming and expensive."

Problem eliminated: CSST has virtually eliminated these installation hurdles while slashing Meinhart's installation time and overall costs for gas piping. CSST is easily manipulated—not with cumbersome tools or heavy machines, but simply by hand—over, under, or around any obstacle to a pipe run.

Instead of ten connections in a typical 100 ft. line, Meinhart has two: one at the manifold in the mechanical room, the other at the appliance. A specially designed brass fitting, engineered specifically for the Gastite system, provides a secure, metal-to-metal seal, with no O-rings or gaskets. The only tools needed are a small tube cutter, a utility knife and a common wrench to tighten the fittings.

Gastite addresses an important safety issue as well—leaky joints in the line. Fewer connections translate into fewer potential leaks. That, in turn, means no more running from one joint to the next, up and down a run, looking for leaks during the post-installation testing phase.

"For a house with 70 or 80 black-iron fittings, that's a lot of time and cost. CSST eliminates all that," explains Meinhart.

One-man gang: Meinhart actually prefers to install the product by himself. Because Gastite is so lightweight, a 250-ft. reel of 1/2" tube weighs only 38 lbs. Working alone at a 10,000 sq. ft. home in Edgemont, PA, Meinhart needed only 16 man-hours to install eight lines, or 530 ft. of CSST. For the longer runs, he used wider tubing: 1" tube for the pool and spa, 3/4" to the home's four gas fireplaces. Half-inch tubing works everywhere else.

Had Meinhart done the house in black-iron, he would have needed two additional installers to help with the cutting and threading, with the trio requiring nearly three days to finish. Meinhart pegs the time at 22 hours total, or 66 man-hours with black-iron—44 hours more than what he needed with Gastite.

No more black-iron: The substantial labor savings are more than enough to offset the higher initial cost of CSST versus iron. That net savings, achieved job after job, is why Meinhart sold all of his pipe-cutting and pipe-threading equipment long ago.

"CSST is more expensive than iron," says Meinhart, "but I save a lot more money in the long run on labor, and those costs are rising faster than product prices," he adds.

Meinhart includes what's done on the drawing boards, as well as the job-site, as labor costs. "Unlike iron pipe, CSST spares me all those long hours of head-scratching design work, trying to map out how I'm going to run my gas pipe around all the obstacles. CSST makes it easy and I never have a problem when I'm done," he concludes.

For information on Gastite CSST circle Reader Service 44.

Sometimes the best way to solve a problem...



is to avoid it.

STAY ON-TIME AND ON-BUDGET WITH GASTITE FLEXIBLE GAS PIPING

Gastite flexible gas piping runs over, under or around any obstacle, and you don't need an army of installers to do it. With only two connections per run and no cutting or threading, labor savings are dramatic and costly delays, eliminated. Your projects stay on schedule. Your buyers stay happy.

Gastite also saves you long hours of systems-design work by offering layout options not available with traditional black iron pipe. Last-minute appliance change orders can be quickly accommodated, minimizing both cost and hassle. Post-installation testing is never a problem.

As a builder, you want your projects to run as smoothly as possible. Count on Gastite flexible gas piping to help you get the job done fast and right.

Call 1-800-662-0208 for an appointment with a Gastite representative.



Gastite now on



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Springfield, MA 01104 www.gastite.com

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Circle Reader Service No. 7

BluWood by WoodSmart Solutions Inc., Poised to Revolutionize the Industry

A Factory-Applied, Two-Step Treatment for Lumber That Protects Against Moisture, Mold, Fungi and Termites

BOCA RATON, FL—The term ‘revolutionary’ is bandied about freely these days, applied to anything even hinting at being new. The aim is primarily to snag our often diluted consciousness, if only momentarily. BluWood on-the-other-hand is the real deal and it’s already begun to revolutionize the way we build.

Builders and home buyers can’t afford to ignore the devastating consequences of rot, fungi and wood-ingesting insects to wood. Builders also need to control moisture that could damage wood materials. You can’t prevent materials from coming into contact with moisture, but you can prevent lumber in components from absorbing too much.

When excess moisture enters porous building materials, like wood, the materials become vulnerable. Exposure to moisture can occur before, during or after construction.

Unpredictable weather, transportation, varying job-site conditions, humidity, leaky pipes, water intrusion from roofs, chimneys, windows and doors, HVAC and condensation problems are all potential contributors. Builders need all the help they can get.

How it works

The Perfect Barrier system is factory-applied to all sides of the wood components—dimensional lumber, engineered wood, OSB, trusses, plywood, etc.—in two parts: First, a proprietary infusion film is applied. The film allows trapped moisture vapor to escape while keeping liquid water from penetrating. It bonds with wood fibers at the cellulose level and also resists mold and mildew growth on treated surfaces, and over time, migrates deeper into the wood for sub-surface protection.

Second, the DOT (environmentally safe - disodium octaborate tetrahydrate) wood preservative is applied. The preservative resists decay and infestation from fungus and wood-destroying insect, including subterranean and Formosan termites.

The BluWood reaction with wood is immediate. Once a treatment is dry, generally in about an hour, all components can be exposed to the weather for up to six months.

The Perfect Barrier system does not add heavy metals, carcinogens, aldehydes, or solvents to the treated material. Also, it has tested non-corrosive to hot-dipped galvanized steel, truss plates and fasteners.



Where to use it

BluWood is approved for interior and exterior use in residential, light commercial and factory-built structures. The Perfect Barrier system can be used on a wide variety of wood and engineered wood components, from studs to sheathing. BluWood also may be used for exterior above-ground applications, including siding, fencing, decking and trim, provided that it is further protected from the weather by paint, stain, or sealer.

Frequently asked questions

How is BluWood different from the many competitive products?

The most effective method of preventing mold growth is to prevent water/moisture absorption. This is difficult to achieve. Unlike other mold preventive products that are available by job-site application, BluWood is applied to lumber, panel products and EWP by closely monitored quality assurance guidelines. Licensed factory application insures complete and consistent coverage that doesn’t interfere

with the construction of the building and provides a life-time limited warranty.

Will BluWood be effective if mold is already present on the surface of the materials to be treated?

Yes, a powdery dust and stain may still remain, but the surface will have insignificant levels of microbial organisms and the warranty will be in affect.

Do job-site end cuts, electrical and mechanical cutouts need to be treated?

Normal job-site exposed surfaces don’t require treating for the warranty on mold growth. They do require that all end cuts and cutouts be treated in those areas of known Formosan termite infestation.

BluWood is currently distributed in FL, TX, NC, SC, VA, and GA, with plans to expand into LA, AL, MI and CA within the year.

For more information on BluWood circle Reader Service 45.





BLUWOOD[®]

THE COLOR OF PROTECTION.[™]

Mold, fungus and termites are costly enemies. BluWood is a powerful defense. A precisely controlled factory treatment is applied to all surfaces of wood components using the proprietary Perfect Barrier System. The result, BluWood treated components, are protected before, during and most importantly after construction. Approved for above-ground roof and floor trusses, roof, wall and floor sheathing, framing and engineered wood components. BluWood is backed by a lifetime limited warranty. To find out more visit www.bluwood.net or call WoodSmart Solutions, Inc. at (561) 416-1972.

What they are saying:

"With Perfect Barrier System treated BluWood components, we believe that we are giving our clients a better building and giving our company additional protection."

*Jeff Harrington
Harrington Construction
Myrtle Beach, SC*

"Building a unique and custom home requires that we stay in the forefront of technological advancement. With Perfect Barrier treated BluWood components we not only create a better environment for our owners, but also ensure that their investment will continue to appreciate."

*Bob Lee
President
Robert Morgan Fine Homes
Charleston, SC and Charlotte, NC*

"Mold and wood-eating insects are two of Florida's biggest building issues. With BluWood, we're protected."

*John Dukovac
President
La Maison Homes
Sarasota, FL*

"Perfect Barrier System's BluWood has added a new dimension to our business. A way to differentiate us from the norm and increase our value proposition to our customers by offering a product that will keep them safe and protected from mold, mildew and termites."

*David Hall
President/CEO
Deltec Building Systems
Asheville, NC*

Circle Reader Service No. 8



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Ashland Inc. Produces Adhesives That Deliver Greater Flexibility For Engineered Wood Product Applications

By the Ashland staff



Isoset adhesive is the recognized leader in the manufacture of I-joists, structural finger jointing and glulam beam applications.

DUBLIN, OH—Isoset® adhesive, Ashland Inc.'s innovative adhesive, has been specially formulated for engineered wood product applications. Isoset adhesives applied in I-joist, glulam beams and structural finger jointing wood applications provide manufacturers with high-strength, structural bonds. It cures fast, cleans up easy and dries in a neutral wood color offering an alternative to traditional phenol-resorcinol-formaldehyde, or PRF type adhesives.

Ashland's unique adhesive family of technologies delivers greater flexibility for engineered wood product applications. Isoset has three distinct product offerings that can be utilized to best fit your specific application.

First, their Emulsion Polymer Isocyanate or EPI is a water-based latex resin reacted with an isocyanate crosslinker. It is 50% solids, cleans up with water and cures under ambient conditions, hot press or radio frequency.

Next comes their newest Isoset technology the Polyurethane Emulsion Polymer or PEP adhesive. It is a unique two-component system using polyurethane prepolymer as the 'A' component and a latex emulsion as the 'B' component, or crosslinker. This chemistry is essentially two resins working together to bring exceptional performance. Both technologies carry all North American and European Building Code approvals.

Isoset adhesives provide excellent resistance to moisture, elevated temperature and creep, making it an ideal choice for engineered wood products. Their adhesives are the recognized leader in the manufacture of I-joists, structural finger jointing and glulam beam applications. They provide high strength and cost effectiveness.

For I-joists, Isoset delivers industry leading performance that is free of formaldehyde emissions, cures fast and dries neutral to the wood color. Isoset provides an average shear strength that is anything but average. For finger-jointing applications, Isoset yielded a 97% failure rating in the wood and away from the joint in third party testing.

In glulam beam applications, Isoset adhesive is an economical, fast and versatile choice. Various other millwork applications also provide a good fit for the Isoset adhesive family.



In North America, Isoset adhesives are approved under all major industry specifications such as the International Code Council (ICC) and the Canadian Construction Materials Center (CCMC) for the manufacture of laminated structural products. In addition, the performance of Isoset has been reviewed, scrutinized and approved by international agencies. The German Institute for Building Technology has granted the General Building Code Approval Z-9.1-422. Isoset also meets the requirements of the Japanese Industrial Standard 6806K for class 1, grade 1 adhesives.

Ashland manufactures its Isoset adhesive in facilities located in White City, OR and in Columbus and Ashland, OH and distributes Isoset adhesive to locations around the globe in containers to fit the needs of their customers. Their laboratories offer some of the most modern, comprehensive testing the industry has to offer.

This gives Ashland the opportunity to evaluate, test and develop meaningful data in working with engineered wood products using Isoset adhesive. Not only do they bring industry leading products to market, but when you use Ashland's Isoset adhesive, you also get industry leading technical service to back it up. Their technical service to technical sales ratio is an industry leading 1-to-1. No one can match the level of onsite technical service provided by Ashland Specialty Chemical's Specialty Polymers & Adhesives business group.

Ashland is a global leader in the pressure sensitive and structural adhesives marketplace. Bottom line, Ashland delivers for your engineered wood product application adhesive needs with more than a quarter century of proven engineered-wood laminating experience.

For information on Ashland's Isoset adhesive circle Reader Service 46.

ISOSET[®] Adhesive

For all your structural needs!



I-Joists

- High Performance Strength
- Neutral (Wood) Color Glue Line
- Fast Cure Rate
- Cost Effective
- Strong Technical Support
- Formaldehyde Free

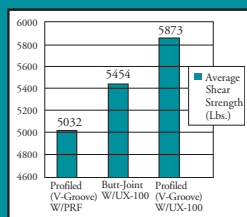


Finger Jointing¹

- Finger Joint Tension Strength Testing
- Average 8,300 PSI
- Type 5 & 6 Failure Mode



Butt-Joint¹



Accreditations

- International Code Council (ICC)
- Canadian Construction Materials Center (CCMC)
- DIBt
- JIS K6806

Ashland's ISOSET adhesive provides many solutions to meet all your engineered wood needs. ISOSET adhesive dries neutral to the wood color and provides an amazing bond with a fast cure rate. For more information, contact an Ashland product manager at 1.614.790.1623.

¹Testing conducted by independent third party

ASHLAND[®]



Circle Reader Service No. 9

Senco fastening solutions asks: Are All Fasteners Created Equal?

By Bill Womacks, Senco—manager of product management

CINCINNATI, OH—Many people in the housing/building industry are talking about fasteners these days. At Senco®, we happen to feel that's a good thing. Important issues such as withdrawal values, strength, code compliance, performance and collated strip durability are gaining prominence in the industry. The discussions are also helping the industry's manufacturers make decisions that will pay dividends in terms of productivity, quality and customer satisfaction.

These, however, aren't new issues. Senco has been talking about them since its proprietary Sencote® fastener coating hit the market in the late 1980's.

Unfortunately, the debate was relegated to the backburner in the early part of this decade as generic manufacturers and cost pressures forced the commoditization of the fastener industry. Contractors, retailers, tool manufacturers and even building inspectors are now realizing that you usually get exactly what you pay for when it comes to fasteners.

At Senco, we're actively encouraging this shift in attitude. Based on our vast experience on jobsites all over the U.S., Senco has developed the **5 Reasons** campaign. This national, multi-media program, illustrates our diligent efforts to educate the industry's manufacturers, professionals and DIYers about the five key characteristics that distinguish high-quality fasteners.

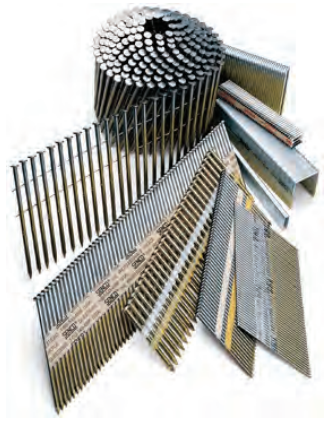
- 1. Less broken collation:** Better packaging and better collation minimizes waste and inconvenience.
- 2. Fewer tool jams:** Yes, cheap fasteners can cause equipment jams. Invest in quality fasteners, reduce downtime and improve worker productivity.
- 3. More completed drives:** Partial or incomplete drives mean re-work. Do the job right the first time.
- 4. High withdrawal values:** Quality fasteners mean better holding power and fewer service calls to address issues like squeaky floors or fasteners backing out causing bumps.
- 5. Code compliance:** Senco engineers demand absolute adherence to code specifications and manufacture fasteners within the tightest acceptable tolerances.

In addition to Senco's exhaustive quality and performance research, some of the most compelling information in support of the **5 Reasons** campaign comes from users themselves.

One such story involves a general contractor in South Carolina, who forces all of his sub-contractors to use Senco fasteners. According to that contractor, "I don't want to hear a bunch of belly-aching about downtime because of tool jams and misfeeds. This takes away one of their big excuses for delays."

Over the next few months, Senco's **5 Reasons** campaign will appear in Senco's educational materials,

Senco's proprietary Sencote® coating, has set industry standards for both driving performance and holding power.



advertising, product packaging, training programs, trade show graphics and retailer point-of-purchase materials.

For more information on Senco circle Reader Service 47.



**Less Broken Collation
Fewer Tool Jams
More Completed Drives
Highest Withdrawal Values
Absolute Code Compliance**

**HOW MANY REASONS
DO YOU NEED TO BUY THE BEST?**

You may think off-brand fasteners save you money. Truth is, if you knew how many ways those fasteners actually cost you more, you'd always demand SENCO® no matter what brand of tools you own. Why? Because SENCO fasteners – especially those with our exclusive easy-drive, stay-put Sencote® coating – routinely set industry standards for quality, performance and value. And in the long run, anything less will cost you more.

SENCO®

Circle Reader Service No. 10

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Circle Reader Service No. 11



30-Year Old Chinese Trading Firm: Plans Direct-From-Factory Multi-Product-Container Shipments to U.S. Home Plants

Mixed Containers May Contain Vinyl Tile, Wood-grain Flooring, Bath Vanities/Storage, Or Doors, Siding and Quality Cabinetry at Low Prices

COLUMBUS, OH—Having already attracted significant attention and sales to America's 'big box' stores, Coast to Coast Building Supplies, Ltd., has announced a national effort to market their 'direct-from-China-factory' products to U.S. home producing plants.

Heading up the approach for U.S. home building factories is Don Lane, director of sales, engineered building manufacturers, with offices in Flat Rock, NC. Principals at the Coast to Coast organization include Ken Kuo, (pronounced Kwa), U.S. vice president and Jon Jabour, national sales manager, at the Columbus, OH offices. President of the company is Nelson Kuo, with offices in China and Hong Kong.

"Because we are able to assemble full or some mixed containers with building materials at our affiliated factories in China to the order of U.S. home producers and then ship them directly to home producers," says Ken Kuo, "we are able to sell our products at prices ranging from 15% to 20% below those normally available locally."

The Coast to Coast organization has been in operation for more than 30-years importing building products from the People's Republic of China and other Pacific Rim nations for sale to U.S. customers. Quite literally, scores of containers have been shipped directly to the so called 'big box' stores across the U.S. from the firm's distribution warehouses located in the East, Midwest and Western U.S.

"Our personal relationships with Chinese factories has enabled us to insist on particularly high-quality in the building materials which we purchase for distribution and sale into the U.S.," says Ken Kuo. "We have worked with various factories for many years and we are satisfied that our product quality has reached the 'peak performance' position so we are confident of an enthusiastic reception by the U.S. manufacturing plants."

Among the products available now through Coast to Coast are vinyl tile, 12"x12" and 18"x18" sizes in a variety of patterns, plus wood-grain simulated flooring sizes ranging from 4"x36" to 6"x36". All of the square tile and larger simulated wood configurations are available either with plain or adhesive backs. Also available is laminate flooring with genuine wood finish looks which require little labor to install.

"We are pleased to be able to announce," says Kuo, "that we have assembled more than 300 patterns of tile in every conceivable pattern and color to specifically fit the geographic tastes of the people across the United States. Additionally, we can create specialized patterns for new floor systems on demand."



HP1806



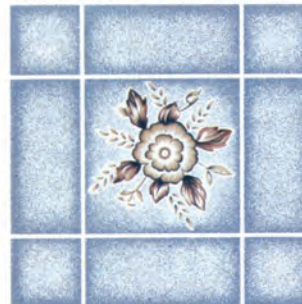
HP1806-1



HP1813-2



HP1814



HP1809



HP1810



HP1817



HM2017



HM2130



HM2131

Above are views of a few of the 300 different patterns of floor tile available from Coast to Coast Building Supplies.

continued on page 26

Automated Builder®

 Coast to Coast
Building Supplies, Ltd.
Announces Availability of
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Direct Chinese-Factory-to-Your
Home-Factory Container Shipments
Will Allow 15% to 20% Price Cuts

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for geographic tastes in the U.S.A
-

- ✓ Present Product Availability:
- ✓ Floor tile & laminate with over **300**
colors and patterns
- ✓ Interior wood panel doors
- ✓ Exterior doors in wood or steel
- ✓ Vinyl siding & tile ✓ Bath & kitchen
cabinets

Coast to Coast Building Supplies, Ltd.
750 Twin Rivers Drive, Columbus, OH 43215
☎ Phone 614-221-8860 Fax 614-221-8805

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好
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Chinese
Good Luck
Symbols

Specialty
Orders
Accepted!

Circle Reader Service No. 12

Lane explained that the laminate flooring products in all types are available in thicknesses ranging up to 8mm and 12mm compared to the normal U.S. thicknesses which run around 6mm or 7mm. Additionally, the flooring materials are available with vapor barriers and sound deadening under-layments for the highest satisfaction in use in all types of shelter, residential or commercial.

The surface finishes of the tile, according to Sales Manager Jabour, runs the complete range from hand-scraped appearances, to all types of textures, to satin-shines and embossed wood-grains with high-gloss finishes. There is one variety of a ballroom-type flooring with a v-groove pattern at the edges. Additionally, many varieties are available for high-traffic commercial areas.

"We believe that we are able to match just about every wood, tile or stone design available any place in the world," says Jabour.

Other products available for immediate complete or mixed container shipments into the U.S. include doors, both exterior and interior, and KD bathroom furniture including both vanities and storage cabinets. The finishes on the furniture are high-quality as is the workmanship. The company is also completing a line of ready-to-assemble (RTA) furniture. The ready-to-assemble furniture line also will include kitchen cabinetry and a choice of hardwood including oak and maple. Vinyl siding is available now as is PVC piping.

Whereas the company has been in business for 30-years importing building and other products from China to the U.S., they make the point that they have concentrated the last 3-½-years on arranging for the products of greatest interest to the in-plant manufacturers of homes and commercial buildings. The officers of the firm state that all of their products are ISO Certified for international trade, including the ISO 9001 and the ISO 14001. The 9001 designation is for quality system certificates and the 14001 covers their environmental management system.

Coast to Coast points out that container-sized orders may include multiple patterns of different types of flooring products, piping and siding. Also, the firm makes the point that they are quite willing to consider large orders of products for the home tailored to specific manufacturer's needs.

For more information from Coast to Coast Building Supplies circle the appropriate numbers on the Fast Fax page:

- Floor tile products circle No. 48.*
- Simulated wood floor patterns circle No. 49.*
- Interior doors circle No. 50.*
- Exterior doors, wood and steel circle No. 51.*
- Plastic piping circle No. 52.*
- Vinyl siding circle No. 53.*
- Laminate wood grain flooring circle No. 54.*
- Special orders circle No. 55.*



Here are illustrations of some of the bath furniture available from the company for immediate shipment to the U. S. along with a selection of laminate flooring.

***Automated Builder* Announces: The 2006 *AB* Home Builder Directory III**

VENTURA, CA—In response to constant requests, Automated Builder magazine will compile a directory of engineered home builders currently doing business in North America.

The directory will include HUD-Code, modular and panelized home producers. It will list contact information and geographic market areas served by state(s), province(s).

The new *AB* Directory will appear in a special report in Automated Builder targeted for publication in the June '06 edition and on our international Web site.

The listing is free to all engineered home building producers who fill out the *AB* Directory Listing Form provided below and return it to the offices of Automated Builder by mail or fax before the publication deadline of May 20, 2006.

***Automated Builder* 2006 Engineered Home Builder Directory for Buyers**

Please fill in the following fields and

FAX to: 805-642-8820

Or MAIL to: Automated Builder, 1445 Donlon St., Suite 16, Ventura, CA 93003

DEADLINE: January 10, 2006

Company Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Sales Contact _____

Web Site URL _____

E-mail _____

Type of Housing: HUD-Code _____ Modular _____ Panelized* _____ Other _____

Est. Price Range – From _____ To _____

Market area served, by state: _____

Do you ship overseas? Yes _____ No _____ If so, list nations _____

* Specify here the type of system: wood, steel, concrete, log, dome, plastic, SIP, ICF or other.

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MARKET AREAS: Northeast and Mid-Atlantic Regions

Circle Reader Service No. 100

*System Built
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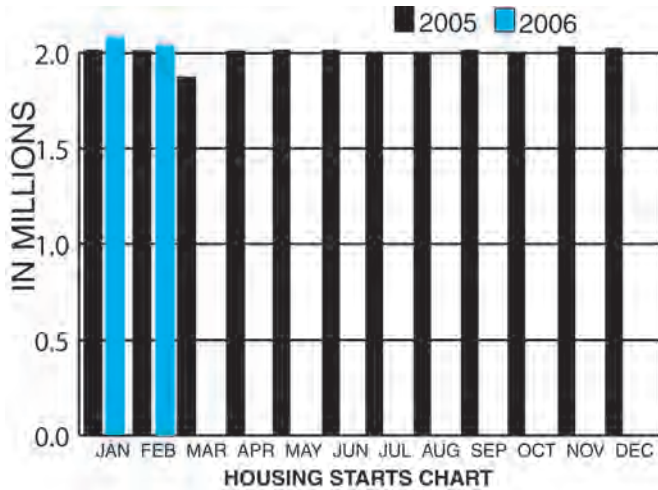
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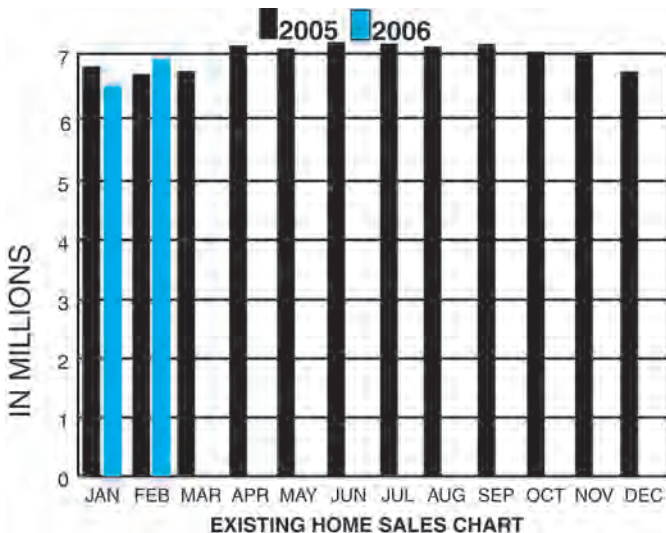
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Housing Starts Ease Down in February

WASHINGTON, DC—Privately owned housing units authorized by building permits in January were at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 2.14 million. This is 3.2% below the revised January rate of 2.22 million but is 2.5% above the February '05 estimate of 2.1 million.

Single-family authorizations in February were at a rate of 1.64 million, this is 3.0% below the January figure of 1.69 million. Authorizations of units in buildings with five units or more were at a rate of 417,000 in January according to the U.S. Census Bureau's estimates.



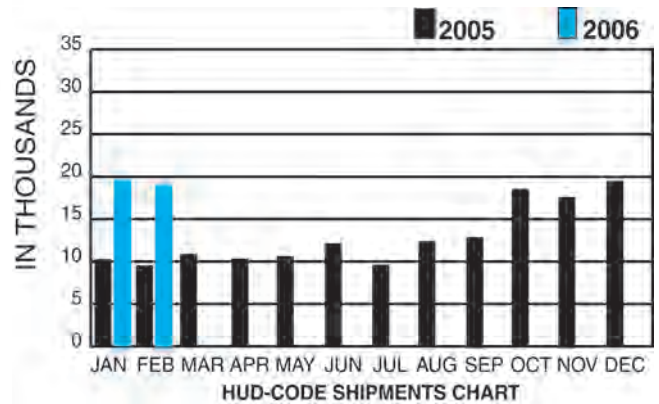
Existing Home Sales Rebound in February

WASHINGTON, DC—Existing home sales rose in February following five months of decline, indicating a stabilization is taking place in the market, according to the National Association of Realtors®.

Total existing home sales—including single-family, townhomes, condominiums and co-ops—increased 5.2% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 6.91 million units in February from an upwardly revised pace of 6.57 million in January, but were 0.3% below a 6.93 million unit level in February '05.

David Lereah, NAR's chief economist, said mild weather appears to be responsible for some of the gain. "Weather conditions across much of the country were unseasonably mild in January and likely were a factor in higher levels of buyer activity, which boosted sales that closed in February," he said.

"Higher interest rates had been tapping the brakes, notably in higher-cost housing markets since mortgage interest rates trended up last fall, but we're seeing signs of stabilization in the market now with the sales rebound. Home sales should level-out in the months ahead," he added.



HUD-Code Shipments Down Again Slightly for February

WASHINGTON, DC—HUD-Code total shipments were down slightly in February, at 18,438 units, according to the Institute for Building Technology & Safety (IBTS). This is approximately a 6% decrease from the January level of 19,707 total units shipped. The three leading states are FL with 2,349 floors, CA with 1,680 and TX 1,280.

Construction Spending Shows Strong, Balanced Growth

WASHINGTON, DC—"The latest report on construction spending shows the industry is hitting on all cylinders with strong, balanced growth," said Ken Simonson, chief economist for The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC). Simonson was reacting to a Census Bureau report that construction spending in February was at a record seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$1.19 trillion, up 0.8% from January and 7.4% from February '05.

"Not only was the overall total up strongly from a year ago, but all major segments showed similar growth," Simonson commented. For the first time since the '01 recession, private non-residential construction led the parade with a 9.6% increase from the year-ago pace. Private residential construction was 7.1% higher and public construction, 6% higher.

"The year-to-date, or two-month, totals actually provide a more meaningful comparison, given the extremely mild weather in January and more seasonal conditions in February," Simonson add. "On a two-month basis, there were several segments that showed exceptional growth. Shopping center construction leaped 61%, after swelling nearly 40% in '05 and 25% in '04. Hospital construction grew 22%, while manufacturing and commercial warehouse construction

AB Newslines

climbed 20%. The previously lackluster office segment was up 18%," concluded Simonson.

Add Real Estate to the List of Industries Being Forever Changed by the Internet

SEATTLE, WA—Buying a home the old fashion way, driving around for hours in a real estate agent's car, hoping for the best and girding for the worst, is on the outs.

The new process goes something like this, you are alerted to a new listing online, you check out the pictures on your computer, then drive over for a real-life look and often within 24 hours you're making an offer.

Home listings—once printed out in books available only to real estate agents—are obtainable to everyone online, accompanied by increasingly sophisticated photographs and virtual tours.

A growing number of online services also are cropping up to help people do things like judge house prices, survey neighborhoods and evaluate school districts, long before they ever snap the seat belt in their agents' cars. With the nation's housing boom expected to cool in some areas, experts say such offerings will only increase.

Champion Enterprises Acquires Highland Manufacturing From Norwest Equity Partners

AUBURN HILLS, MI—Champion Enterprises, Inc., a

leader in factory-built construction, announced that it has acquired Minnesota-based Highland Manufacturing Co., LLC. The debt-free transaction is valued at \$23 million in cash and will be immediately accretive to Champion's results.

Highland Manufacturing, a leading regional manufacturer with a significant presence in the north central U.S., produces both manufactured and modular homes from a single factory in Worthington, MN.

More than 60% of its current production is modular, representing its most significant growth area over the past several years. Greg DeGroot will remain president of Highland and join Champion's western region management team. Highland's expected '06 sales are approximately \$32 million.

"This acquisition is another important step in furthering the strategy to expand our modular market share. By acquiring Highland, we will increase our manufacturing, distribution and builder/developer coverage in several key states currently under-served by Champion," said William Griffiths, chairman, president and CEO of Champion.

With Softwood Legal Victory in Sight, Canadian Government Urged to Hold Firm

WASHINGTON, DC—With U.S. consumers and Canadian lumber producers poised to achieve a final victory in the cross-border lumber dispute, the National Association

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of Home Builders (NAHB) called on the Canadian government to hold firm in pursuing its legal challenges.

"NAFTA panels have repeatedly and unanimously ruled that Canadian producers are not subsidized and that U.S. lumber producers are not threatened with injury from Canadian softwood lumber imports," said Jerry Howard, executive vice president and CEO of NAHB.

"The best way to overturn the duties, achieve free and unfettered access to U.S. markets and receive a complete refund of the billions of dollars that Canadian firms have paid to date is for Ottawa to continue to pursue its legal cases to their conclusion," added Howard.

Gastite Announces Key Leadership Changes

SPRINGFIELD, MA—The Gastite Division of the Titeflex Corp. has announced new positions for two long-standing Gastite executives. Mark Harris has been promoted from Director of Operations to General Manager and Carmin Lattell has been promoted to Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

Harris has been with Titeflex for 17 years, hired originally as Engineering Manager. Lattell joined Gastite in 1998 as National Sales Manager.

CertainTeed Selects Terre Haute, IN For New Manufacturing Facility

VALLEY FORGE, PA—CertainTeed Corp., one of North America's leading building products manufacturers, announced today it has chosen Terre Haute, IN, as the site for a new production facility to manufacture fiber cement siding.

During a joint press briefing this afternoon at the Terre Haute Economic Development Corp., CertainTeed officials joined IN Governor Mitch Daniels to announce the company will build the 300,000 sq. ft. facility on a 115-acre parcel in the Vigo County Industrial Park. The facility is expected to employ 100 people when completed in the second half of '07 and up to 145 when it is at full capacity.

Currently, CertainTeed operates fiber cement manufacturing facilities in Roaring River, NC and White City, OR.

"The strong growth and market acceptance of our fiber cement product line necessitated the need for a new plant, strategically located in the Central United States," says Peter Dachowski, president and CEO of CertainTeed Corp. "Terre Haute is the perfect location because it allows us to service our Central U.S. customers more effectively while tapping into the State's highly skilled workforce," added Dachowski.

FEMA Guidelines Lowers Cost of Katrina Rebuilding

NEW ORLEANS, LA—Federal officials issued unexpectedly lenient new guidelines for rebuilding the flood-damaged homes of New Orleans, potentially allowing tens of thousands of homeowners to return to their neighborhoods at costs far less than they had feared.

Under the new guidelines issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, many homes may still have to be rebuilt at least 3 ft. off the ground, or risk getting no federal reconstruction money or insurance. FEMA officials gave no word on specifically why they chose the 3 ft. figure.

The lesser requirement assumes that area's damaged levee system will be solidly reconstructed. To that end, federal officials also announced that most of the system's 36 or so flood walls—the walls that sit on top of levees in places where massive earthen structures are not practical—would be demolished and replaced. The cost of which the Bush administration said it would actively seek from Congress.

84 Lumber Closes 67 Stores and Opens 125 New Ones

EIGHTY FOUR, PA—84 Lumber Co., the country's largest privately owned building materials retailer, announced it would close 67 stores in 19 states, including 12 stores in Pennsylvania, but plans to open 125 new stores in faster-growing areas in at least 20 states.

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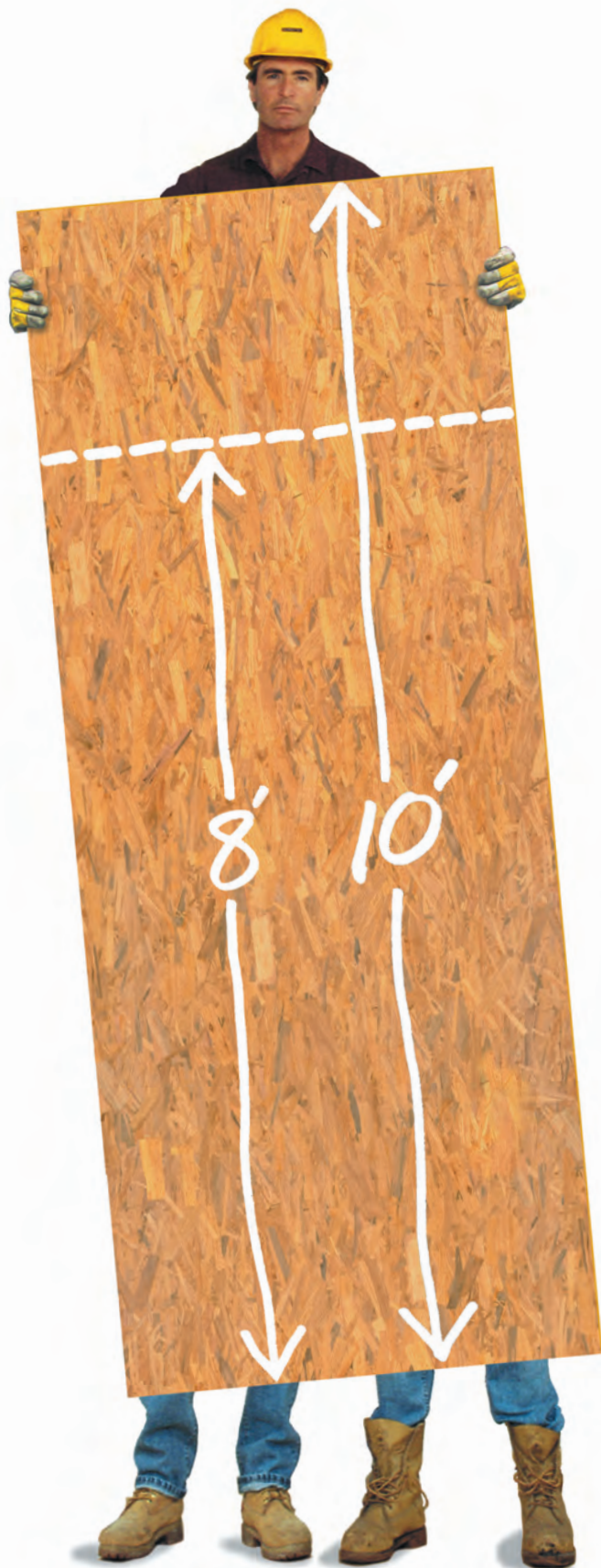
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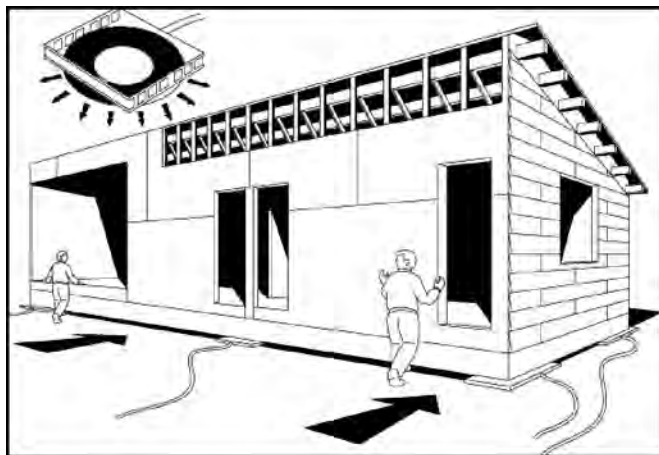
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SEATTLE, WA—For over 40 years, AeroGo has been a world leader in the design and manufacture of load moving systems for industry, construction, manufacturing and aerospace. In fact, many of the largest and most respected corporations in the world have discovered AeroGo, even NASA shares complete confidence in this system for moving massive, yet very often, sensitive payloads.

Since 1967, when AeroGo received the rights to patents developed by the Boeing Commercial Airplane Co., their engineers have continued to perfect this relatively simple, though incredibly effective, Aero-Caster technology.

AeroGo designs and manufacturers Aero-Caster® products that are used to literally ‘float’ temporary structures, factory-built homes and commercial buildings on a thin film of nearly frictionless compressed air.

The thin film of air provides an ultra-low friction, low height and omni-directional alternative to wheels, tracks or rails. AeroGo’s Aero-Caster Load Modules are currently being used by many manufacturers in the modular production industry to move structures, safely and efficiently, through their assembly lines.

This is what Don O. Carlson, the editor and publisher of this magazine, had to say about AeroGo back in '04:

“In the early days of factory fabrication of box-like structures (modular units), there were few ways to move those heavy weights along production lines. There was much gnashing of teeth over systems indented in the floor, which always gathered wheel stopping chips and rails, which led to inevitable tripping. . . Fortunately, most of those days are gone and there is a system which eliminates all of this—air.”

One of the immediate, major advantages of Aero-Casters, is the fact that the whole system is capable of operating on the same 90 psi compressor that’s used to power a factory’s pneumatic tools. Generally only 25 psi per-caster (contingent on the overall load), is required to make the system work.

Another huge plus is that two, or a maximum of three people, is all that’s needed to push individual modular units exactly where you want them and in any direction you choose.

Aero-Casters come in a variety of sizes, fabrics and models to fit virtually any object or weight. Therefore they can be configured and engineered to fit nearly any load-lifting application. AeroGo has launched cargo ships, moved 4,500-ton stadium sections and transported aerospace rocket boosters.

In basic terms, the Aero-Caster principle works like this. Prior to inflation, the load is solidly supported on landing-pads. These landing-pads protect the Aero-Caster’s torus bag from being crushed or damaged when the load is at rest. When the load is ready to be moved, air is applied to the Aero-Caster and the torus bag inflates, creating a seal against the floor surface and raising the load.

When the air pressure within the plenum chamber is sufficient to offset the load’s weight, air slowly and evenly escapes between the flexible torus bag and the floor. The load is then floated on a thin, cushion of air—.003" to .005" thick.

The virtually zero-friction and omni-directional movement allow the operator to precisely place and align the load in a limited work space. The low profile of the load module requires less than 3" of total clearance. During load movement, stress is so evenly distributed, that potentially expensive structural reinforcement is usually not necessary. And, the system won’t damage floor surfaces.

Another innovative and handy load moving product to have around a modular building factory is the Aero-Pallet Systems™. This system utilizes the same Aero-Caster principle on a smaller scale. The Aero-Pallet is designed to allow one person to move heavy loads safely and proficiently.

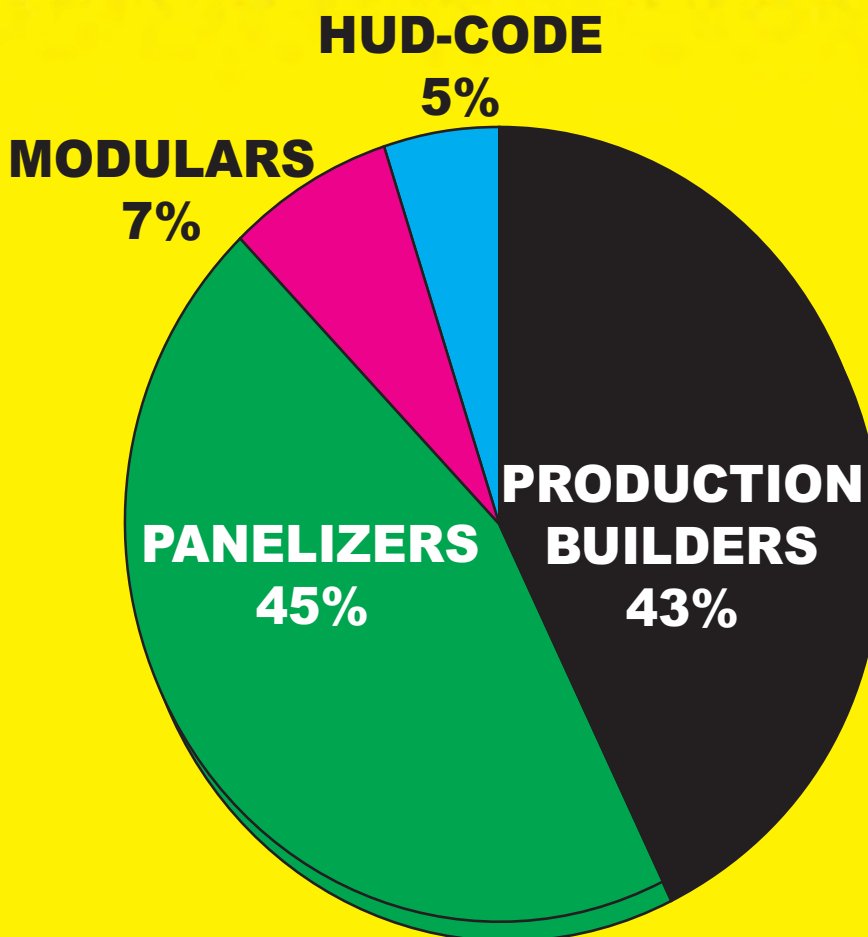
The Aero-Pallet Systems can replace forklifts, cranes, pallet-jacks and conveyors at a fraction of the cost. Pound-for-pound, you can move loads more cost-effectively compared to other alternatives. The Aero-Pallets also work with standard shop air and there are no moving parts that require regular costly maintenance.

For more information on the Aero-Go Systems circle Reader Service 56.

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The Market:
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The Seven Segments of Engineered/

HUD-Code (Mobile) Home Manufacturers 5%



Ever since the passage in 1976 of the U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development Manufactured Home Construction & Safety Standards (HUD-Code), exterior frame construction of mobile units has been on par with site-built homes, and HUD-Code homes are now generally safer dwellings. HUD-Code homes are made by approximately 90 companies operating about 300 factories using techniques similar to modular methods but with generally lighter construction and always with a metal chassis as part of the floor system. It is believed that double-section HUD-Code homes which look like site-built homes will account for most low-cost housing in the future. HUD-Code homes are sold through dealers on display lots or from model homes in subdivisions. In 2005 about 150,000 HUD-Code homes were sold, and over 70% of those were double or multi-section units.

Modular Home Manufacturers 7%

There are about 200 modular home manufacturers that make assembled sections of housing inside factories. Most modular units are made in complete, box like sections, and multiple-section units and stack-on units are common. Modulares are the strongest of all frame homes built, and are 95% complete when they leave the factory. They are sold direct or through local builders or builder/dealers. During 2005 about 212,000 modular homes and apartments were sold.



Panelized Home Manufacturers 45%



The panelized home manufacturers are the biggest and most diverse segment of U.S. housing. They include: 1) Hundreds of conventional panelizers who sell their packaged homes through builders and builder-dealers; 2) Log home builders, over 200 strong, who sell direct or through dealers; 3) The mass merchandiser chains and local lumber yards and home centers who perform all functions of a package home producer; 4) Producers of dome homes and other alternative systems including light-gage steel, lightweight concrete, foam-core panels, foam blocks—plus component firms who cross over into package homes. In 2005 the estimated 3,500 panelizers collectively built about 1.377 million units, slightly exceeding the production builders.

Production Builders 43%

These companies usually build single-family homes and low-rise apartment buildings in subdivisions near major metropolitan centers. More than 95% of the nation's 7,000 large production builders use factory-fabricated roof trusses. Use of other factory-made components, such as floor trusses and wall panels, is growing rapidly because of soaring site labor and construction loan costs. Some of the biggest production builders operate their own component factories. However, all production builders sell their homes directly to end buyers rather than through builder/dealer networks, which distinguishes them from panelized home manufacturers. In 2005, production builders sold about 1.293 million units.



Component Manufacturers



These are independent companies that operate factories and make components mostly for sale to production builders. Component manufacturers almost invariably (96%) make roof trusses, 87% make floor trusses, 40% produce wall panels and 4% machine and pre-hang doors. They also make gable ends, corners, tees, stair systems, cupolas, agri-buildings, garages, metal-plate connected rough openings for windows and doors, and other components. Output of the nation's 2,200 component manufacturers is not figured in units because they sell mostly to production builders counted above.

Home Building Today

Special Unit Manufacturers



Special unit manufacturers are in-plant builders of commercial structures of all types. There are about 170 of these companies who build an average of about 1,665 structures per year. They sell direct or through dealers and also lease their units. Their output, usually built to more stringent commercial building codes, includes classrooms, offices, banks, hospitals, construction offices, equipment shelters, restaurants, kiosks, jails, airport terminals, strip shopping centers, and dozens of other commercial buildings. This industry is growing fast as owners and investors discover the speed, cost and quality advantages of specifying modular commercial structures. It must be remembered that all the previously mentioned housing producers also build commercial buildings. Total output of

commercial structures by both in-plant special unit and housing companies was estimated at 322,000 units in 2005.

Mobile/Modular/Panelized Dealers

Builders and dealers for HUD-Code (Mobile) homes, modular homes and panelized homes account for sales of 56% of all housing. Sometimes called "builder-dealers" for modular and panelized homes, they may sell for one or several manufacturers. Normally they sell homes only in a given territory, and it is their responsibility to prepare the site, do foundation and utility work, and supervise completion work on the homes after delivery. Most HUD-Code home dealers sell units from display lots, mobile home communities or both. A growing trend among HUD-Code home dealers is to sell models in conventional real estate subdivisions.

Factory-Built Housing's Bright Future:

THIS INDUSTRY IS GROWING SWIFTLY. From the late 1930s when modern engineered home building companies started emerging in New England and the Midwest, HUD-Code, modular and panelized home companies have grown to where they now produce 57% of all single-family homes and low-rise apartments. This does not count the industrialization of site-built homes where 96% use factory made roof trusses, and a rapidly growing number use pre-hung doors, floor trusses, wall panels and other components.

WHY THE FAST GROWTH? Faster construction time, lower costs and better quality. While site builders may need from six to 12 months or even more to build a house at a job site, industrialized builders need only one to three months to finish a componentized home, six to eight WEEKS to finish a panelized package home, and only one to three weeks to finish a double-section HUD-Code or modular home! Speed means fewer material cost increases and less or even no cost for construction loan money. Precision factory fabrication methods also delivers vastly better quality in construction.

WHO BUYS THE PRODUCTS? Home builders or factory fabricators themselves. Independent research shows *Automated Builder* reader companies build an average of 925 homes per year; and they buy - 1,769 entry doors; 4,281 prime windows; 940,053 sq. ft. of house wrap; 2,938 kitchen cabinets; 53,661 sq. yds. of carpeting; 206 fireplaces; and 245 air conditioners; plus other products.

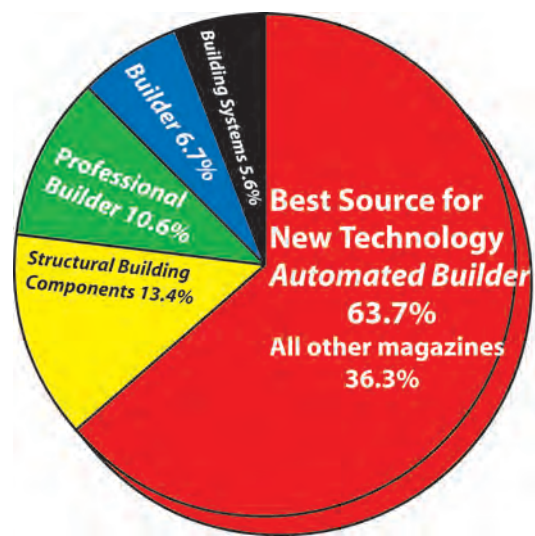
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2. **USE PIN-POINTED DIRECT MAIL.** *Automated Builder* advertisers are entitled to use our precise lists of production builders, panelized home manufacturers, HUD-Code (mobile) home manufacturers, modular home manufacturers, component manufacturers and all dealers. Selections can be made by type of company, titles of individuals, dollar-volume size of firms, and any geographic mix.
3. **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SPECIAL MERCHANDISING PACKAGES.** *Automated Builder's* special merchandising packages include the Test Market Package, tailored direct-mail, and 12 "2-for-1" editions each year.

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2005 AB Research Survey Shows Outstanding Response to *Automated Builder* Advertising

VENTURA, CA—*Automated Builder* Magazine once again proved to have a remarkable level of performance in delivering results to its advertisers while continuing to lead industry competition in its coverage of new technology and international housing developments.

The report also revealed a consistent, loyal and involved readership with long-term familiarity with the magazine's content, approach and coverage.

A survey taken by Research USA, Inc., Chicago, IL among *Automated Builder*'s readers found that an outstanding percentage of the building industry's top management regularly reads and responds to advertising in the magazine.

The survey report notes that, "Reader responsiveness is very high. More than four out of five respondents took some action as a result of seeing an advertisement in the magazine in the past 18 months."

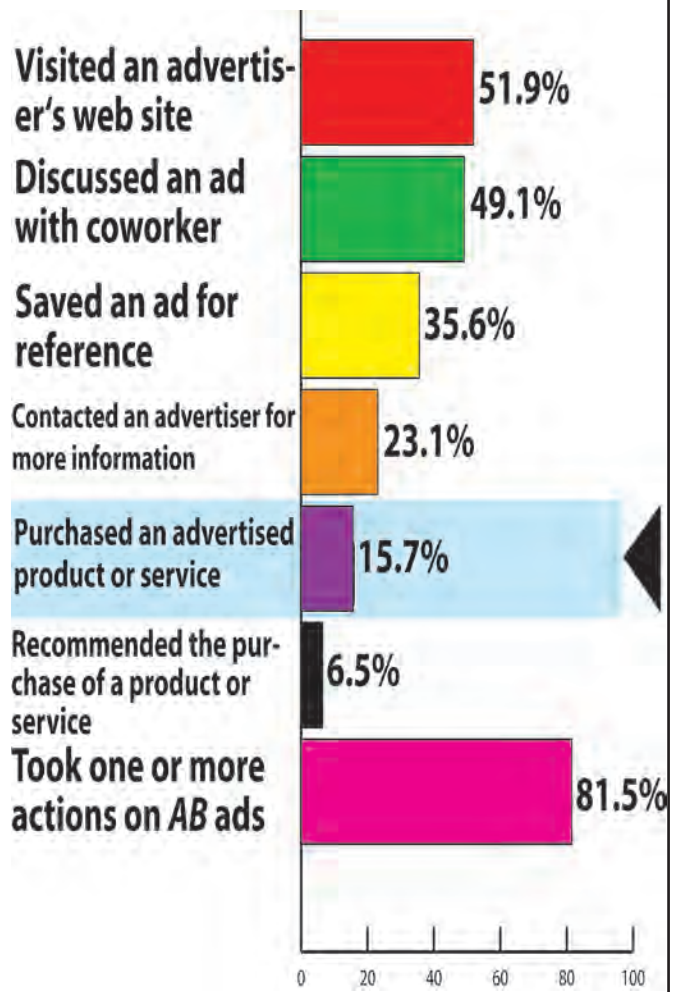
The names used for the survey by Research USA during February and March represented six types of engineered building industry members. They were: panelized home manufacturers, HUD-Code, modular and combination mobile/modular home manufacturers, production builders and component manufacturers.

As a result of consistent readership of the engineered building industry's flagship magazine, 81.5% of respondents took some action as a result of seeing advertising in *Automated Builder* – with over one half (51.9%) visiting an advertiser's Web site. Almost 16% bought the advertised product.

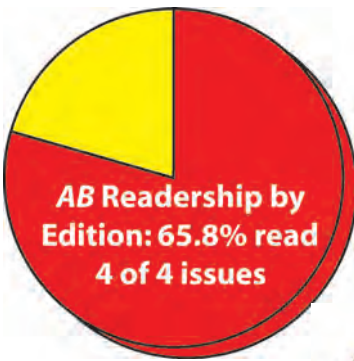
Equally important is the nature of the magazine's readership, which is overwhelmingly composed of top management (see chart above) with the authority to make purchasing decisions.

Once again, *AB* dominated the competition in its coverage of new technology and international housing developments – one key to its dominant position among industry publications. Nearly two thirds (63.7%) of the survey respondents chose *AB* as the leader among five builder magazines for its reportage of new technology and 69.4% chose *AB* as the

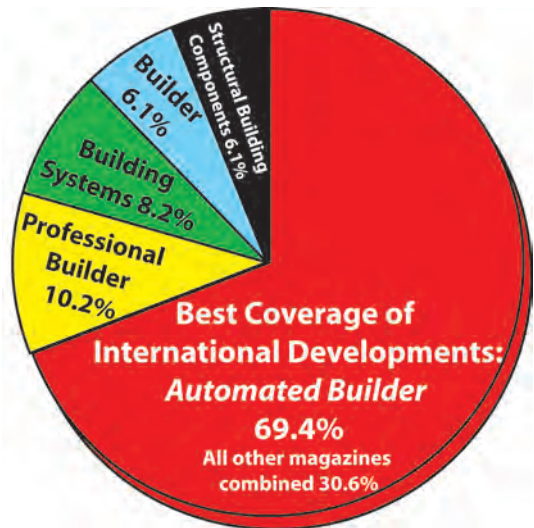
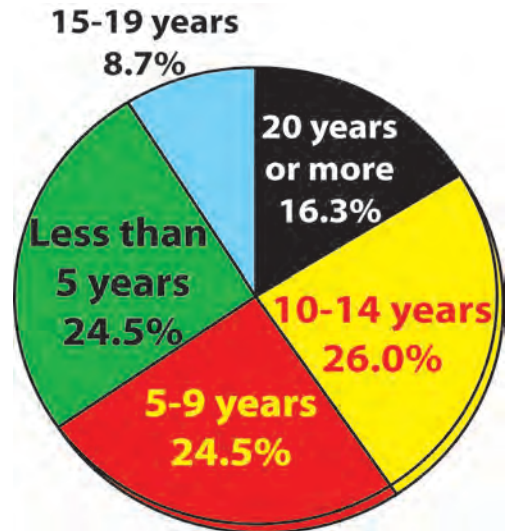
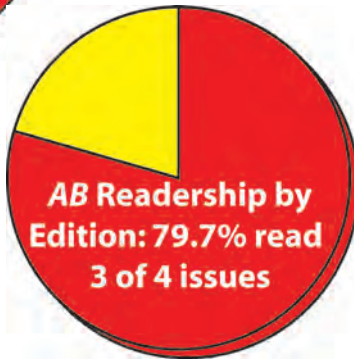
Actions taken by *Automated Builder* Readers as a result of seeing Advertising in *Automated Builder*



Number of years a reader



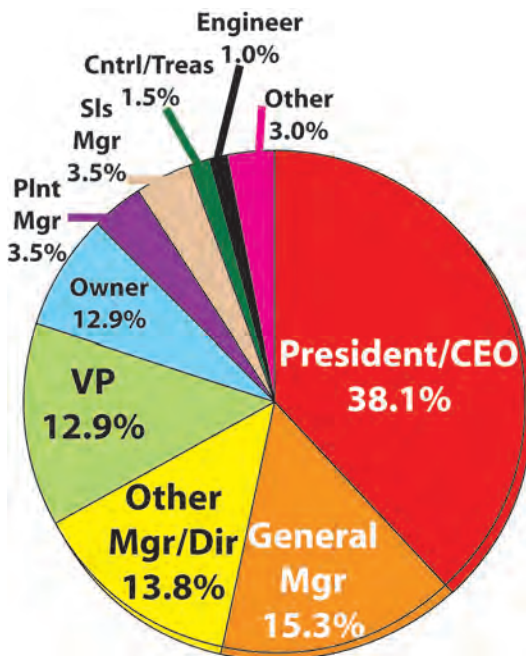
18 Month Time Frames



best in covering international developments.

Survey respondents have been readers of the magazine on an average of 10 years, and 75.5% have been readers for five years or longer. Some 79.7% are regular readers who read three of the prior four issues and nearly two-thirds (65.8%) read all four prior issues during an 18 month time frame.

This year's survey showed that *AB* has an average of about three readers per copy, over 74,000 total and over 40% of the readers save their copies for reference after reading them. This longterm and consistent commitment of *Automated Builder* readers to the publication explains why advertising appearing in its pages will be seen, evaluated and acted upon by the decision makers in the industry.



AB Fast Facts

Average *AB* reader company firms build and sell 925 homes each year.

16.3% of *AB* readers have received and read the magazine for over 20 years.

Average sales volume of *AB* reader firms is \$104.6 million per year.

AB has about 3 readers per copy for a total of over 74,000.

Automated Builder would like to thank Research USA Inc., and the readers who took the time to respond to the survey for their cooperation.

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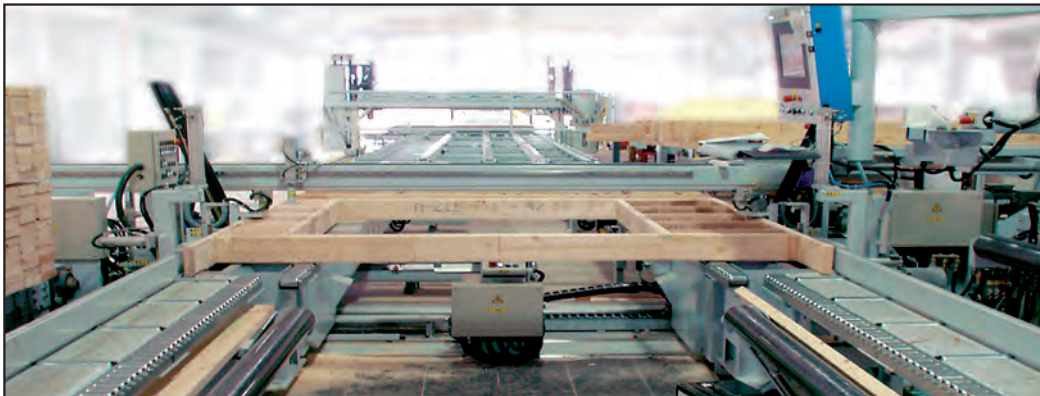
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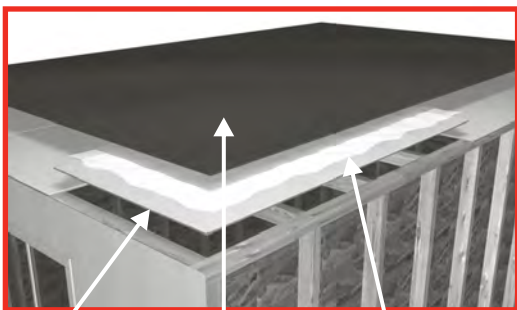
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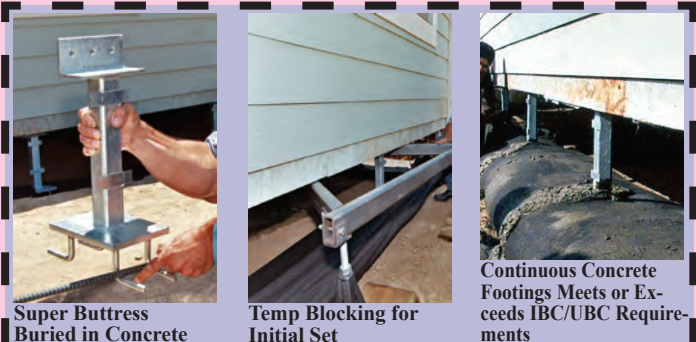
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Factory Service Technicians
Service Managers

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MAY 2006

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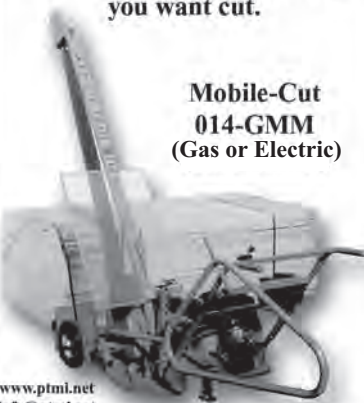
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AB Coming Events

MAY

16-18 SmallWood 2006 at the Sheraton Richmond West Hotel, Richmond, VA. Information at: 608.231.1361 ext. 208 or www.forestprod.org/confsmallwood06.

JUNE

7th NHC 75th Anniversary Conference 'Gala' at National Building Museum, Washington, DC. Information at: www.nhc.org

11-12 2006 Parkowner Symposium at The Venetian Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, NV. Information at: 949.380.3304

20-23 PCBC® '06, at the Moscone Center in San Francisco, CA. Registration begins late Jan, at www.pcbc.com

25-28 Forest Products Society Conference 60th Anniversary in Newport Beach, CA. To register contact Julie Lang at 608.231.1361 ext. 208 or conferences@forestprod.org

JULY

16-18 MHI's Summer Meeting at the Capital Hilton in Washington, DC. Information at: 703-558-0400

AUGUST

13-16 '06 ACEEE Summer Study on Energy Efficiency in Buildings, at Asilomar Conference Center, Pacific Grove, CA. Information at: 302.292.3966

SEPTEMBER

6-7 2006 North Carolina Manufactured Housing Show at Charlotte Convention Center. Information at: 770.587.3350 or showways@attglobal.net

OCTOBER

4-6 2006 Building Component Manufacturers Conference (BCMC), at Houston, TX.

11-12 NHC Policy Conference, at the Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL. Information at: www.nhc.org

29-31 MHI's Annual Meeting at the Starr Pass Marriott Resort & Spa, Tucson, AZ. Information at: 703-557-0652, Mike O'Brien

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- ☐ Mobile/Manufactured Home Mfr.(20)
- ☐ Modular Home Mfr. (46)
- ☐ Combination Mobile/Manufactured and Modular Home Manufacturer (25)
- ☐ Office/Commercial/Industrial or other Special Unit Mfr. (26)
- ☐ Production Builder or Builder/Developer who makes or builds with components (30)
- ☐ Components Mfr. of roof or floor trusses, wall panels, stairs or other components(40)
- ☐ Recreational Vehicle Mfr. (27)
- ☐ Marine Home Mfr. (28)

2. DEALER OR DEALER BUILDER

- ☐ Mobile/Manufactured Home Dealer (44)
- ☐ Modular Home Dealer (43)
- ☐ Combination Mobile/Manufactured and Modular Home Dealer (45)
- ☐ Panelized/Prefab or Pre-Cut Home Dealer/Builder (47)
- ☐ Office/Commercial/Industrial or other Special Unit Dealer (48)

3. OTHER RELATED INDUSTRY GROUPS

- ☐ Supplier (Mfr. of Building or Construction related products), Wholesaler or Distributor (71)
- ☐ Architectural Engineering, Design Firm or Consultant (50)
- ☐ Land, Subdivision or Mfrd. Home Site Developer (60)
- ☐ Association, Government, Financial, Insurance or Related Educational or Service Organization (70)
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