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Building the future

The 2008 homebuilding forecast



Eco Custom Homes

By JEFF GUNDERSON

Eco Custom Homes builds high-performance custom estates in Atlanta using sustainable materials and designs. Company president and founder, Jeff Dinkle, started Eco Custom Homes after becoming interested in Green building principles following courses he took seven years ago through EarthCraft, a residential Green building program of the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association. The program is also in partnership with Southface Energy Institute, a non-profit corporation which promotes sustainable

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energy and environmental technologies.

"Green-building really sparked my interest and I ultimately moved into the luxury market, building \$1 to \$4 million dollar custom homes," says Dinkle. "In the high-end market, there are increasingly more buyers that want high performance out of their homes."

Incorporating energy efficiencies into building practices will become much more important in 5

to 6 years, says Dinkle, as Georgia is anticipating moving to a deregulated electric power system, which will result in considerably higher utility bills. "Builders who don't embrace energy efficiencies are only doing a disservice to their clients," says Dinkle. "Pretty soon homes are going to be marketed based on their energy rating."

One of his company's recent Atlanta projects is Forrest Manor, a five-bedroom high-performance EarthCraft gated estate located on a 1.3-acre wooded lot. The home is built in brick and stone Tudor-style with 10-foot-high ceilings, a full chef's kitchen, and a large master bedroom with a sitting room and fireplace. The home includes Green building features such as a Tech

Shield Roof, an airtight building envelope with less than 3 percent leakage, tankless hot water, high-efficiency Lennox Furnaces and extensive use of sustainable products such as paper-based countertops, engineered wood framing and concrete with a minimum 25 percent fly ash. The home also includes extensive landscaping with irrigation supplied from a rainwater harvest system. Forrest Manor has a HERS rating of 52,

which means it is anticipated to use 48 percent less energy than a similar home built to current code.

"We consistently try and push the envelope," says Dinkle. "Green building is still an evolving industry and so it is important to do trial and error with different products in the market. It's important to find the highest quality products and designs." ■



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Builder Profile

Eco Custom Homes' president and founder
Jeff Dinkle.

