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# HomeBuildingNews From The Floor

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## All aboard! The green building train is about to leave the station

By Ron Jones  
From the Green Builder Magazine  
April 2007

All aboard! For anyone who may have lingering doubts about the validity of that statement, I offer as evidence two separate but related events that took place in Orlando during the 2007 International Builders' Show and the NAHB Board of Directors and Committee Meetings.

The first event was in the form of a press release issued jointly by NAHB and the International Codes Council



dential building performance.

The resolution outlines the association's plans to address these issues by various means and strategies, but the last line of the document is the most important for builders: "Be it further resolved that NAHB proactively seeks to contribute to efforts to reduce GHG emissions by establishing a national green building program."

I believe that these two bellwether events will be remembered in future years as important milestones in the transition from conventional to green building practices as the "normal" way to build and remodel homes in this country.

I also believe that if you plan to



INSIDE LINE

By Jim McCauley,  
VP for Government Affairs

### What's in a name?

We see stereotypes all around us, and I think it's safe to say that everyone is prone to knee-jerk thinking at some level. I mean, what is the first thing that comes to your mind when someone says "loggers"? How about car salesman? Unions? Politician? Lawyer?

In my lobbying experience on behalf of HBA, I often confront stereotypes about our members, our issues and the building industry. Home builders produce homes for families and build neighborhoods for communities, meeting the metro area's continued growth needs and representing a major economic force in the region. However, "home builder" can still conjure a negative image for some people.

The political winds have shifted in

### 8 UP FRONT



Ostercraft Homes #63.

## Ultimate Open House a huge success

Plans underway for even bigger show next year

Thousands of prospective buyers looking for a wide selection of homes found their answer in the hugely successful, first ever Ultimate Open House<sup>SM</sup> New Home Tour held April 20-22 and 27-29.

The event was free to attend, and participating builders reported large numbers of home shopper traffic during The Ultimate Open House event.

"We have received such good feedback from the builders that participated this year," said Ultimate Open House Chairman Margie Tucker, of Crown Construction. "Several of the builders are reporting multiple sales due to this one event, and I believe the residual effects will be felt for months to come."

#### Tour featured a wide variety of homes

Thirty-seven HBA builders showcased 77 new properties across the Portland Metro area. The show featured many single-family detached homes, but also condos, townhomes, infill homes, small subdivisions, mixed-use projects, and even available lots. Entries were spaced throughout the region, from Scappoose to Canby and Forest Grove to Gresham. Prices ranged from the low \$200s to more than \$1 million. The Tour truly showcased a wide variety of styles, locations and price points.

#### Traffic numbers were phenomenal

Post-event survey results from participating builders found that, in comparison to an average open house, traffic during the UOH was at least double for 79 percent of those responding. Many said traffic was 4, 6 and even 10-times or more than normal, with many reporting 50 to 100 people per weekend, and several reporting more than 100. A few builders reported more



#### Testimonials from participating builder surveys

"This is the best return on your advertising dollar!"

"We made at least 3 sales from the UOH weekends...that shows how effective the tour was."

"The amount of traffic generated by the UOH is significantly more than what can be achieved by traditional open houses; that alone is worth it."

"It really helped bring in people who had never heard of our company and show them what we can do."

"Exposure of product and company is worth the entry fee."

"Traffic definitely increased in our neighborhood during the show."

this year's event. By partnering with KGW and the Oregonian, the HBA was able to drive a large number of potential home buyers to show properties across the Portland Metro area. The campaign also included extensive use of the Internet through the official Ultimate Open House Web site and Oregonlive.com. A public relations blitz included radio, television and newspaper ads around town leading up to the event. Niche promotional vehicles were also used, including a pay-per-click service through Google and placement of ads on local movie theater screens.

In addition, more than 300,000 guidebooks were distributed as part of the partnership agreement with the Oregonian. Guidebooks also were available in Tour homes and at several Fred Meyer locations. The signage used to guide the public to the homes also helped increase exposure for the event - more than 400 signs were placed across the metropolitan area.

#### HBA Anticipates Huge Growth in 2008

With the success of this year's show, the HBA has firmly initiated what it believes will be a great member benefit - a tour that pushes interest and drives traffic to help builders market themselves and sell homes. A recap meeting was held in May to discuss the successes and participants provided good feedback on improvements for next year's show. Plans are already underway for next year's Ultimate Open House, and based on early feedback, the show will be even bigger. Attendance should also increase as the show has now developed some brand recognition and has proven to consumers that it delivers



Legend Homes drew crowds with a "Home Giveaway"



The Shelburne Co.'s house in NW Portland was featured



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