

Growing a Greener Mississippi

"Growing a Greener Mississippi" was created by the Mississippi Home Corporation (MHC) to promote GREEN building in the affordable housing community. The contest required a single-family builder (a tax credit developer could enter a single unit within a tax credit development) to plan and construct a home that met the Bronze Level of the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB) "GREEN" Building Guidelines. Since the contestant was required to build a home with a sales price not to exceed \$175,000.00 MHC put no other restrictions on the builder as he had to develop a product that would sell in the affordable housing market place. To peak builder interest in the contest prizes were to be awarded as follows: Third Place \$20,000.00, Second Place \$30,000.00 and First Place \$50,000.00. Seven (7) entries were received from around the State of Mississippi.

The competition was announced at MHC's Annual Housing Conference in January, 2009 and the builder had to receive a Certificate of Occupancy from the local governing authority by November 6, 2009 and final certification from NAHB by December 4, 2009.

The second week of December five (5) GREEN oriented judges toured the 7 entries to determine a winner. The homes were judged based on: (1 Judges GREEN scoring, (2 Craftsmanship, (3 Architectural Design, (4 Interior Design, (5 Site Selection and (6 Judge's Discretionary Evaluation.

MHC was attempting to reach several goals through this competition:

- (1 to raise builder awareness of GREEN construction and prove that it could be accomplished in affordable housing markets;
- (2 to make the buyer or renter aware of the benefits of a GREEN home over traditional construction;
- (3 to raise public awareness of GREEN construction and builders that provided that type of construction;
- (4 to provide MHC with cost of GREEN construction that would benefit MHC other programs, i.e. tax credit housing.

Based on comments from contestants, MHC believes that these goals have been accomplished:

"I just closed my house in July and it sold for 125k it was listed at 142k I basically let it go at my cost to get it off the books. I don't think it was just the price it didn't have a garage and that was the only negative comment I had. Everyone loved the house other than that. Had alot of interest in it just don't think the general public is educated enough about the green to realize the energy efficiency side of it. I did sell a presold off of it built the same exact way just with a garage and in a different subdivision. I wanna say it cost me approx. \$9566 more to build green

100

HFA: Mississippi Home Corporation
Entry Name: Growing A Greener Mississippi

I built it, just as an experiment to get closer to the holy grail of a net zero home for under \$100/SF.” Billy Lilly, Builder, Oxford, MS.

As best MHC can determine this is the first contest in the country that has required the builder to actually construct a home, particularly in an affordable price range. Many contests have been run requiring the planning of a GREEN building and not actual construction and sale. MHC has gained local and national recognition for the competition. MHC hosted an awards ceremony to announce the winners of its competition and maximized the benefits of media exposure for the contestants and their green homes. As a result MHC has received local and national recognition for the unusual competition.