

Buyers wanted: certified green homes

□ MARY LOVE □

Asheville has been a leader in the green building movement for the past decade.

During the “boom” period, certified green homes announced their arrival with amazing speed and were soon the golden child of new home construction. During the recession, certified green homes sold quicker than standard code build homes. This trend was similar throughout the nation in cities that promoted green building.

As the housing market starts to grow again, green building is becoming an important factor nationwide. A McGraw Hill 2014 report, Green Multifamily and Single Family Homes, states, “The market share of green building is expected to grow 26 to 33 percent by 2016.” Certified green building programs, such as Green Built NC, have been in the housing market long enough now to show increased value. Consumers are demanding energy efficiency and good indoor air quality. As more information about green building becomes available online, consumers are valuing third party certifications and Green Multifamily and Single Family Homes, states they are willing to pay up to three percent more new construction.

Certified green homes are still a fraction of the total Buncombe County market, however, it accounts for

about half of the new home construction underway inside the city limits. West Asheville currently has the highest demand and many of the new homes are sold before completion. Locally, as well as nationally, as consumers start to demand green building, more builders are willing to make the shift due to code changes and increasing affordable and availability of green products.

Another important green building trend deals with existing homes. During the housing recession, many homeowners decided to remodel instead of sell. Those homes are now going on the market and more consumers are concerned about energy efficiency as well as cosmetic improvements. Green Multifamily and Single Family Homes, reports that consumers are willing to pay up to five percent more for green improvements on existing home as long as those improvements can be verified.

Once again, Asheville and the Western North Carolina Green Building Council (WNCGBC) are leading the way by creating the Green Gauge Program. The program allows existing homeowners to use a standardized evaluation to determine how “green” a home is currently and how “green” it can become with certain improvements.

WNCGBC oversees the program and trains certified auditors to ensure professional third party ratings.

Green Gauge participants can receive an Energy Performance Score (EPS). EPS is an energy auditing system similar to the miles-per-gal-

qualified contractors, incentives and potential financing opportunities. This assessment will help Realtors, buyers and sellers know about var-



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lon rating for the auto industry. EPS provides an estimate of actual home-energy consumption based on a detailed analysis of the home as well as related carbon emissions. It shows homeowners where they rank in comparison to state average.

The Green Gauge Report provides valuable information and suggestions about how to green the home along with easy access to

ious green features that are often difficult to quantify. The Green Gauge Program will provide valuable documentation to support increased value of green remodeling.

Mary Love is the team leader for Love The Green Team and Director of the Green Division for Keller Williams Realty Asheville. She can be reached at 828.279.6723 or marylovethegreen@gmail.com.



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