

Builders get help going green

By [Dale Neal](#)

DNEAL@CITIZEN-TIMES.com

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ASHEVILLE — Building a “green,” or energy-efficient, home in the Asheville area is about to get easier with a new Web program to help developers, contractors and prospective buyers cut through the red tape and perhaps save a few trees felled for paperwork.

The WNC Green Building Council has just signed a deal with CastleKeep, a division of the Asheville-based BUILDERadius, which develops Internet platforms for the construction industry and inspection departments nationwide.

In the next month, developers who want to build an NC HealthyBuilt home can go through the Green Building Council’s Web site and file all the necessary paperwork. As they build, they can go through the checklist online for inspection follow-ups and certification, said Maggie Leslie, the program director for the WNC Green Building Council.

The timing is right as more builders become interested in the statewide certification offered locally through the Green Building Council.

“We have about 50 certified homes now, and several 100 more in the works, and all we have is a dinky Excel spreadsheet,” Leslie said.

The certification goes beyond energy efficiency and awards points for the use of alternative power sources, recycled building materials and other environmentally friendly design.

Biltmore Farms and other developers already using the CastleKeep program for design review as new homes take shape in planned communities can now add the HealthyBuilt Home program, explained Brett McCall, the business development executive for CastleKeep.

Sefton Patton of CastleKeep helped develop the Net-based platform “to bring the communities together on a technology level.”

“In our newest development at The Ramble, we’ll pay the fees for developers to take advantage of the HealthyBuilt Home certification,” said Paul Szurek, chief financial officer for Biltmore Farms. “The demand is starting to emerge as prospective homeowners become more aware of benefits of the certification. It’s not just a matter of savings, but a feeling of doing something the right way.”

Voluntary program offered locally

The NC HealthyBuilt Homes Program is a voluntary statewide program offered locally through the WNC Green Building Council and the Asheville Area Home Builders Association.

HealthyBuilt certified homes offer environmentally friendly design and construction in these areas:

- Site and landscape: Healthy outdoors by using erosion control and saving existing trees.
- Water efficiency: Lower bills with high-efficiency irrigation and plumbing fixtures.
- Building envelope: Lower utility bills by using high-efficiency windows and insulation.
- Heating and cooling systems: higher comfort with efficiency equipment and sealed air ducts.
- Appliances and lighting: lower utility bills by using Energy Star appliances and lighting.
- Indoor air quality: a healthy interior with nontoxic finishes and minimized mold.
- Materials: a low-maintenance home using durable, local and recycled-content materials.

Owners of a HealthyBuilt home can expect lower energy bills, including a 5 percent discount from Progress Energy, and state and federal tax credits for renewable energy and energy efficiency.

For more information or to register with the NC HealthyBuilt Homes Program contact: Maggie Leslie, WNC Green Building Council, at 254-1995 or [maggie@](mailto:maggie@wncgbc.org)

wncgbc.org.

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