

Following Asheville's lead

Growing green building across the state

BY RYAN MILLER
 All right, Asheville. As the North Carolina city with the deepest market penetration and strongest consumer demand for green building, the rest of our state looks to you for inspiration and leadership in green building. Many new homes built in your market are "green" certified. Award-winning green building companies call your city home. New developments are committed to being green from the start. Your residents don't just ask for green building, they demand it. But you know about your region's great reputation for green building already. WNCGBC has been leading this charge for 15 years now, but green building was cool in your region long before then. So, with such

a storied past of green building success and a continually growing green building future, what can other cities and regions learn from Asheville in order to grow their green building markets?
 For starters, Asheville's green building market is as great as it is due to the people that live there. Your residents understand the benefits of green building, pure and simple. Some of you do it to save energy, some to protect the environment and others just to lower your operating costs in that home or building. And because you all have been this way for so long, your real estate, appraisal and lending markets accept that green homes are worth more than others. Why is that important? Tangible

financial return on investment is a leading factor in developing and maintaining a green-building market anywhere in the country. Green homes offer greater financial return for the sometimes increased costs to make that home green in the first place.
 You have it; most other North Carolina cities don't. A survey of 3,682 actual and prospective purchasers by the National Association of Home Builders found that buyers would be willing to pay an average of \$7,095 more in the upfront cost of a house if that investment saved them \$1,000 a year in utility expenses.
 Another reason the Asheville movement is important is that a good green building market in-

volves an ecosystem of committed people and companies, all of which you have locally. This ecosystem takes:
 • Real estate professionals that are able to sell the short- and long-term features of green homes.
 • Appraisers that attach additional valuation to the home for its green features.
 • Lenders that provide lower interest rates due to lower mortgage default risks from the buyers of green homes.
 • Builders that are willing to invest extra time and sometimes money to make their homes green.
 • Homebuyers that are willing to pay a higher up-front price in order to reap the short- and long-term benefits of green homes.

As a point for comparison, in the case of North Carolina's strong solar market, which was propelled to the third most residential and commercial installed capacity in the country last year, state policies, rebates and incentives were the drivers of that growth. Yes, you folks in Asheville latched on and took advantage, with some of you participating literally decades before others, but the widespread industry growth and increase in consumer demand was a matter of policy, not raw consumer demand like what you all have for green building.

Another advantage to your green building market is the support of WNCGBC, which educates consumers and brings together

that ecosystem to organize market needs, market this important work to residents and help builders and businesses learn how to be green or become more green.

And since there's only one other organization like WNCGBC in the state – the Green Home Builders of the Triangle – other cities and regions could benefit greatly from an organization providing these types of services and benefits.

So, how will other North Carolina cities act on your successes to grow their green building markets? The two largest opportunities are to educate consumers and builders

vidual homes and buildings meeting this criteria, with about five percent coming from Asheville. That's not a high percentage comparatively speaking, but in a smaller market like Asheville, the quality, not the quantity, is what impresses other cities and regions.

Another initiative underway at NCBPA combines the previous two to drive green building further across the state. Our association is leading efforts to create new transaction processes that place green home features and valuation data in the right places to make this happen more accurately, faster and



about their available options and the benefits that come with them, and also to create reliable mechanisms – both financial and transactional – that ensure a higher market value for these green homes. Our association is taking the lead on these and many other market growth opportunities across the state, following your lead.

To improve consumer education across the state, NCBPA launched www.HomeEnergyNC.org in 2015 to centralize home energy usage and savings information for residents and builders. The site offers helpful tips and tricks, DIY checklists and resources, educational materials and much more.

Why home energy and not green building? In this case, the consumer-education angle is geared toward using less energy at home and saving money because of it. That's an important part of green building and a common entry point for homeowners and builders alike.

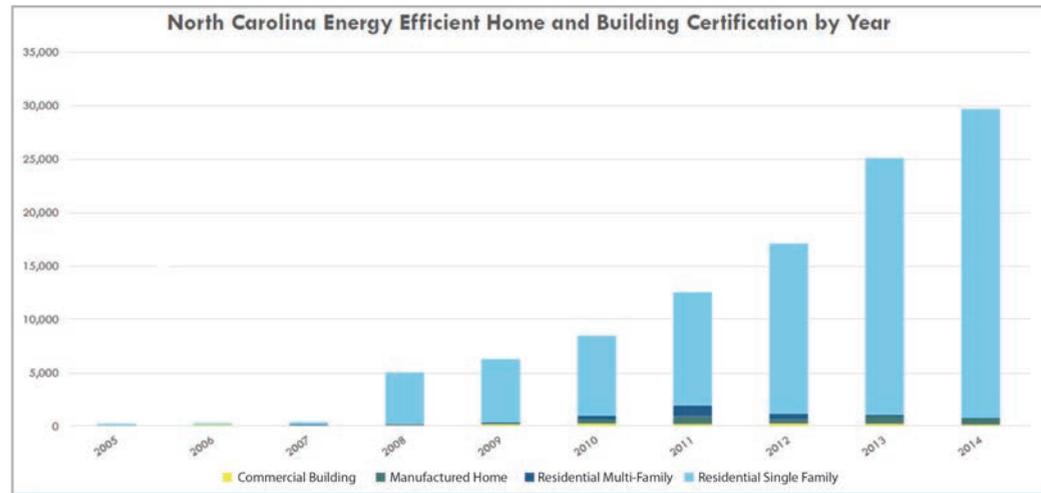
To improve the market value of green homes, last year NCBPA completed a first-of-its-kind study to inventory North Carolina's energy efficient and high performance homes and buildings built new or retrofitted in the past seven years. We found more than 121,000 indi-

better. Greening the MLS will help introduce current and new homeowners to the market for green homes, and increase their value as well, which provides greater return for both the homeowners and builders that invest in them.

So as we think about how Asheville came to be our state's leader in green building and what other cities and regions can do to grow their own markets, we must consider both sides of the coin. On the one side, an educated, motivated and wanting consumer base is vitally important. If homebuyers don't value green homes, they won't pay for them and builders won't build them.

On the other side, the real estate, appraisal and lending transactions have to give proper value to the added features, benefits and worth of green homes in order to support a sustainable market where the investors in these homes – both builders and homeowners – receive their return on investment as well.

Ryan Miller is the founder and executive director of North Carolina Building Performance Association (NCBPA), a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit trade association based in Raleigh serving North Carolina's home and building performance companies and professionals. Learn more about NCBPA at www.BuildingNC.org.



- Conservation Easements - Preservation - Bio swale Design - Rainwater Harvesting - Stream and Water Gardens -

OTTER & ARROW

LAND PLANNING
 (828) 551-1414

- Balance for Natural and Man-made Worlds -

We design your landscape in 3D!

3D Model

- Landscaping Services
- Native Plant Design
- Sustainable Design
- Permaculture
- Xeriscaping
- Stream Restoration
- Erosion Control
- Stormwater Control
- Master Plans
- County/City Permits

www.otterandarrow.com

Professionally licensed and registered Landscape Architects

- Master Planned Communities - 3D Design - Color Renderings - Green Space Connectivity - Stonework - Erosion Control -

Green Home Design

Contracting
 Construction
 Consultation

Permaculture & Ecological Landuse Planning

SEED is a Design/Build Firm offering:

- New Home Design
- Construction Consultation
- Renovation & Remodel Planning
- Custom home contracting & Construction
- Restoration/Remodels/Additions
- Permaculture Design
- Homestead Planning

828.768.6448
ecologicaldesign.net
info@ecologicaldesign.net

WHOLESALE GLASS & MIRROR COMPANY

WHERE SERVICE AND QUALITY COUNT

Everyone's Glass Needs

COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL, AUTOMOTIVE

Showers Framed & Frameless
 Mirrors & Mirrored Walls
 Table Tops
 Glass Shelves
 Kitchen Cabinet Glass

Family-Owned • 24 Hour Emergency Service
 419 Haywood Road, Asheville, NC 28806
 (828) 254-8665 • (828) 254-4511
WholesaleGlass@419HaywoodRd.com • WholesaleGlassAndMirror.net