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**Home Channel News**

# **BUILDING FORWARD**

## **REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS' SHOW**





# Industry reacts to major trends



While attendance was off the record pace of recent years, builders were looking ahead to a rebounding market and trends affecting business.

Orlando, Fla. — Builders and vendors were looking to the future at the International Builders' Show held here last week. They're expecting the market to rebound — hopefully later this year, maybe in 2009. And as they toured the exhibits here on the show floor, they also saw glimpses of future trends.

The green theme was extremely pronounced, as the National Association of Home Builders launched its National Green Building Program. Home technology trends with implications for builders were a hot topic. And so was a move on residential-focused companies to venture in varying degrees to light commercial construction.

On the following pages, Home Channel News editors track each of these stories, and also offer a variety of new products from the floor.

Meanwhile, pro dealers in attendance were building relationships and promoting their services in traditional fashion. At the Carter Lumber booth, for example, executives spoke about a clear focus on the small to mid-size builder, but also an expansion on light-commercial accounts.

Joe Appelman, president of Stock Building Supply, promoted a service-oriented message. "We think that there are still a lot of people who don't know we can do this," he said, pointing to an elaborate kitchen design set up in his booth. Stock and Ferguson, sister companies under the umbrella of Wolseley North America, are deep in an initiative to find synergies between the two brands.

The official opening ceremony keynote brought out political consultants Mary Matalin and James Carville, a married couple on opposite sides of the political spectrum. Matalin earned applause when she told the crowd that she was proud of the National Association of Home Builders for its decision announced Tuesday to freeze all contributions to federal congressional candidates through its BUILD-PAC political action committee. The action was based on the belief that Congress and the Bush administration have not done enough in the past six months to address the housing sector, and the freeze will remain in effect until further notice.

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A panel of economists participated in one of the more well-attended educational seminars, in which NAHB chief economist David Seiders described a relatively optimistic forecast. In his picture, the housing market will see an upturn either in late 2008 or early 2009. Further, the American economy as a whole will avoid recession, partly as a result of the economic stimulus plan.

Of course, many stats presented were bleak. One chart showed building permits in all 50 states — every single state showed some degree of decline compared to 2005. “The wildcard in 2008 is the number of houses in foreclosure,” said Seiders. “It’s very difficult to estimate.”

The show also revealed a wealth of product innovation. Cases in point:

- Georgia-Pacific showcased “Nautilus” — an OSB panel with a pre-applied weather resistant

barrier. It eliminates the need for house wrap and resists rain and moisture during the construction period, which helps avoid mold problems.

- Dow displayed its “Styrofoam SIS” — Structural Insulated Sheathing — a three-in-one solution that combines structural shear bracing, insulation and water-resistant barrier protection in one product. It is made from up to 80 percent post-consumer recycled content.

- LP released its laminated strand lumber (LSL) called “SolidStart,” which it’s making at a converted OSB mill.

Attendance was described by the NAHB as down 11 percent from record highs of the 2006 show, and some attendees said they observed a noticeable decline in traffic. Still, IBS generated 1,900 booths at the show that overwhelmed most visitors. Next year, the show heads to Las Vegas, after four straight years in Orlando. ▲



Above: The “Professional Builder” Show Village showcased a variety of building materials and home styles in a parking lot of the convention center. Below: DuPont displayed a number of new colors for its Corian countertops. The Terra Collection contains recycled content and can contribute towards credits in U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED rating system.



Players warm up for the City of Hope charity golf outing. At the post-round reception, Masco’s former president and COO Alan Barry was recognized as the 2008 City of Hope “Spirit of Life” honoree. “You can’t get this industry out of your blood,” he said.



# New products from the Builders' Show

### SKIL Power cutter

SKIL, of Mt. Prospect, Ill., debuted its 3.6V Lithium Ion Power Cutter. The cordless tool features a circular, rotating blade that can cut through materials up to 1/4-inch thick. Aided by the AutoSharp blade system, the tool can cut through a number of materials, including carpeting, carpet padding and wallpaper. In addition, the power cutter features the SKIL Smartcharge System, which allows it to be plugged into the charger indefinitely without damaging the battery. For more information, visit [www.skil.com](http://www.skil.com) or call (877) SKIL-999.



### Plastpro Wrought iron glass and frames

Plastpro, of Livingston, N.J., introduced Wrought Iron Glass and Wrought Iron Frame accents to its Rustic Door Collection. The Wrought Iron Frames are customized by hand, resist rust and corrosion and come with a powder coat finish. Wrought Iron Glass is available in Priscilla and Camelia

designs. The Priscilla design is matched with bubble glass, and the Camelia accent is paired with elegant waterfall glass. The Wrought Iron Frame features 'thermally broken' technology, which creates a barrier between the inner and outer frame to keep the cold out in winter and the heat out in summer for higher energy efficiency. For more information, visit [www.plastproinc.com](http://www.plastproinc.com) or call (800) 779-0561.



### Mythic Paint Zero-VOC paint

Mythic Paint, of Hattiesburg, Miss., featured its non-carcinogenic, latex paint, which has no volatile organic compounds (VOC) and no toxins. Mythic's paint production process improves the latex paint at its core, rather than removing tox-

ins from the paint at a later stage, which can adversely affect paint's performance. The paint is available in a 1,232-color palette. For more information, visit [www.mythicpaint.com](http://www.mythicpaint.com) or call (888) 714-9422.



### Grand Hall Hybrid water heater

Grand Hall, of Garland, Texas, showcased its Eternal hybrid water heating system, which uses patented counter-flow design and multi-pass heat exchanger technology that maintains an 86 percent thermal efficiency rating. It emits just 5ppm NOx (Nitrogen Oxide), a harmful greenhouse gas — well under the regulated 55 ppm NOx. The heat exchanger configuration

allows for consistent water temperature and pressure. For more information, visit [www.eternalwaterheater.com](http://www.eternalwaterheater.com) or call (877) 934-7455.

### Peachtree Doors and Windows Replacement windows

Peachtree Doors and Windows, of Mosinee, Wis., introduced its 700 Series Replacement, or pocket, Windows, which are available in easy-tilt double hung, casement, awning, single slider and picture styles. The three sill options are Flat, Intermediate (8-degree slope) and Maximum (14-degree slope). The varying sill slopes provide additional visible glass and a clean exterior finish. For

more information, visit [www.peachtreedor.com](http://www.peachtreedor.com) or call (800) 732-2499.

