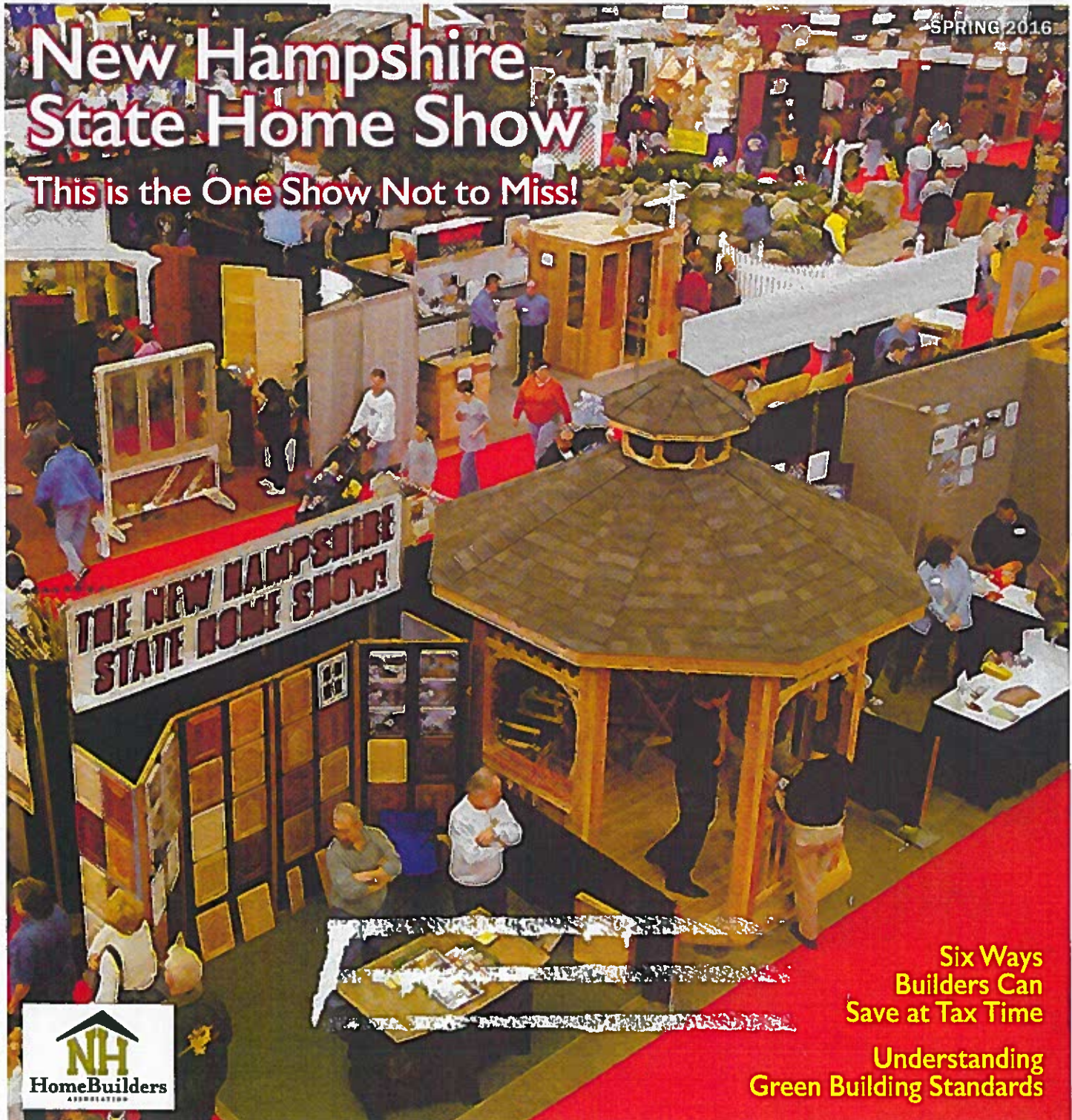


GRANITE STATE BUILDER

LOOK
INSIDE
HOME SHOW
EXHIBITOR SPOTLIGHT

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION



Six Ways
Builders Can
Save at Tax Time

Understanding
Green Building Standards

PROFESSIONALS COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE



Avoid Greenwashing – Know the Valid Programs

Sometimes a simple world like “green” can have very fluid, complex or confusing meanings, and that leaves room for misunderstandings and even abuse – something the industry commonly calls “greenwashing.”

There are different approaches to making a building “green,” including attention to energy efficiency, renewable energy systems, all-natural, non-toxic, super-durable, or local materials, or combinations of all of the above.

How do you ensure the home you are building is “green?” The first step is to figure out what “green” means to you and why, and then how those attributes can be integrated into your project. Working with a certified third-party professional with expertise in the appropriate program is the next step. Here are some of the more popular and effective programs:

Energy Star: Energy Star is the longest running and perhaps most recognized home certification program to focus on efficient use of energy. Started in 1992 by EPA, it is designed to encourage the construction of energy-efficient homes beyond standard code requirements, including air-sealing, insulation, HVAC, duct sealing, windows, appliances, and lighting. The most recent version of the program, version 3, incorporates a robust third-party review of the HVAC system’s design and installation along with a section on water management. Builders must become Energy Star partners by viewing a webinar, passing a short on-line quiz and signing a partner agreement. In NH, most utilities support the program and offer cash incentives for building to Energy Star standards.

A Home Energy Rating Score (HERS) Rater reviews plans before construction starts, providing valuable feedback and a preliminary HERS rating, 0-100 (or beyond), the lower the score the better. A score of 100 is given for a home that meets basic energy code. Energy Star homes must achieve 80 points or lower. The rater performs inspections after insulation but before drywall and again at construction’s end. The recognized Energy Star certificate is then issued. energystar.gov

NGBS: The National Green Building Standard (ICC-700 NGBS) is the ANSI approved



Home Innovation
NGBS GREEN VERIFIER

green building program of the National Association of Home Builders and is now operated by the Home Innovation Research Lab. The current 2012 version of the program is being replaced by the 2015 version. The Public Comments Report (PCR) of the second draft was just released and is being used to create the final version of the standard to be released later this year. Different versions of the standard are available for new single and multi-family homes as well as for remodeling projects. Points are awarded in categories such as Lot Design, Resource Efficiency, Energy and Water Efficiency, Indoor Environmental Quality and Operations & Maintenance. A user-friendly spreadsheet is completed by the builder (or other party) and is then provided to a local “verifier” who performs the required third-party site verifications. The website has a searchable database of verifiers. homeinnovation.com/green



LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design is the green building rating system of the U.S. Green Building Council, which considers important energy use; water use; toxicity, origin, and recyclability of materials; land use and impacts from landscaping; walkability; and other attributes. LEED achievement levels include: Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Several rating systems are available for different building types including single, multi-family, mid-rise and commercial projects. The rating systems go through exhaustive public comment sessions and are balloted every three years by USGBC membership. The new version (v4) can be used now while the previous versions may be used until October 2016. Similar to the NGBS, points are awarded in similar categories with four levels of certification available, with special focus on Durability and Energy Use. Energy Star version 3 is a required “prerequisite” for the Energy category. In the commercial versions of LEED, the documentation process is quite extensive; documentation for the residential versions is much simpler. Instead of relying on an intense paper trail, the LEED for Homes

programs rely on third-party "Green Raters" who perform periodic site visits verifying claimed measures. Green Raters then submit the documentation to a LEED for Homes Provider who reviews it as an additional quality assurance step before submitting it to the USGBC. A call between the Provider and USGBC reviews the documentation and certification is often awarded at that time. Interested builders can also become LEED for Homes Accredited Professionals by passing an exam. usgbc.org/leed



Passive House: Passive House originated in Germany and is now available in the U.S. The focus of this program is very aggressive energy savings and does not incorporate the other categories of "green" construction of the programs described above. Certified Passive House Consultants advise about the program's requirements and to perform the required site verifications. Interested builders can become Certified Builders by taking the Passive House U.S. Institute's training which is being offered in Vermont in March 2016. phius.org

Regreen: Regreen is a joint program by the **REGREEN** American Society of Interior Designers and **ASID & USGBC** the USGBC. The program is specifically for remodeling projects. The Regreen Residential Remodeling Guidelines is a free document to download that is easy to read and is full of examples from other

projects. Regreen Trained professionals can be located in the online database. regreenprogram.org



IECC 2015: While not a rating system, the 2015 version of the International Energy Conservation Code will likely do more than any of them to reduce energy use and costs for N.H. consumers. It is calculated that homes built to it will use 17 percent less energy than homes built to the 2009 IECC that N.H. currently requires. The state's Building Code Review Board has recently reviewed it and other interconnected building codes and sent it to the N.H. State Legislature for adoption. The International Code Council, along with other partners, has promised a steady improvement in the energy code to ensure total cost-of-ownership remains affordable in the future. shop.iccsafe.org

These programs, most requiring third-party verification, ensure builders provide high quality, healthy, energy-efficient and environmentally-friendly housing to clients. ▲



Paul Leveille is the High-Performing Buildings Coordinator for Resilient Buildings Group, Inc. which is a majority-owned subsidiary of the Jordan Institute, a non-profit organization focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy public policy, program design and administration, and project implementation. www.ResilientBuildingsGroup.com



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