Making Homes More Resilient
The real price of enhanced protection
In this issue of *Engineered Wood*, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of our LP® SmartSide® Trim & Siding. It always seems that anniversaries, birthdays and milestones tend to make us reflective. Looking back on the collective 44-year history of LP Building Products, it’s amazing to consider the changes and advancements that the organization has seen over the years as the leader in high-performance building solutions designed for use in residential, industrial and light commercial construction. As any businessman or woman worth their salt can attest, it’s hard to stay competitive without an understanding of the market and the consumers within it. It’s vital to stay current with trends and—if you’re lucky enough—have the foresight to identify trends when they are swells in the distance rather than breakers on the shoreline. The same foresight goes for understanding your audience—be it customers, distribution channels or regulatory agencies. Also in this issue, we explore several topics that are affecting, or affected by, the design and building industry. One topic—age—is covered in two ways. First, we highlight a Milwaukee-area high school that has built a curriculum to prepare students seeking to enter the industry through roles in construction and architecture (“The Knights of Construction,” page 03). On the other side of the spectrum, “Builders Who Specialize in 55+ Communities” (pages 16–17) explores changes in residential construction. Though typically associated with their MTV roots, some Gen Xers are already in this buyer age bracket (how’s that for a reality check?).

We also talked with urban planners to get a better understanding of the fragile balance between growth and infrastructure as today’s communities evolve (page 20). How do growing communities keep the pace (and peace) amid the “Spaghetti Junction” that is caused by local and regional governments, neighborhoods and businesses intersecting? The experts review some likely—and unlikely—role models doing it right.

As growth in urban areas continues to flourish for many parts of the country, we also talked to a builder who, conversely, is drawing people further and further away from the urban core in “Marketing to the ‘burbs” on pages 14–15.

Keep reading this issue of *Engineered Wood* magazine for more articles on building and design trends and news. As always, we encourage you to send your feedback and ideas for future stories. Email us at editor@engineeredwoodonline.com to share your insights into what’s driving growth and change across the industry.

**KRISTIN H. NELSON**

**MANAGING EDITOR**
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Builders Who Specialize In 55+
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**Curb®**: An energy-saving solution for your home

Curb found an energy-saving solution to help homeowners and renters take control of their electricity bills. It is a home energy monitoring system that can be used in a home, condo or apartment and provides energy insights and tailored reports on how you are using energy and how to lower usage. To set it up, just connect Curb’s sensors to the central hub that routes electricity to the household’s appliances and devices (also known as the breaker box), and the sensors can then monitor electricity usage. Curb’s mobile app sends personalized push notifications with tips on how to use less electricity and save money, and alerts you when you go over budget or leave something on.

* Curb.com

**Zera® Food Recycler**

In response to the large amounts of food a typical household throws away every year, Whirlpool created a disposal that can turn a week’s worth of food into fertilizer in 24 hours. To use the device, owners just add a plant-based Zera Additive Pack before filling the machine up with contents and press start once it is full. When it’s on, the mixing blades rip up the contents and the device heats up to assist the additive in breaking down the waste. Once finished, the usable fertilizer is now about two-thirds its original size.

* Zera.com

**Halo®**

As fall, and subsequently winter, are approaching, the days will be getting shorter and light becomes more scarce. The Halo 360-degree light fastens to any standard construction helmet to create a ring of light around the wearer. The light allows the wearer to be seen over a quarter mile away in all directions when worn on the highest setting. There are four different brightness options, including Halo (full brightness), hi-alert (highest chance of being seen), task (200 percent power), and dim (for face-to-face conversations). Halo also comes with a rechargeable battery that provides at least 5.5 hours of full power and is built to last during tough working conditions.

* Illumagear.com/store/halos/halo

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* This information and the websites identified above are provided solely as a convenience to the reader. They are not intended to state or imply that the editors of Engineered Wood or LP Building Products sponsor, recommend, endorse or are affiliated or associated with the companies or products listed.
The Knights of Construction

By outward appearances, Oak Creek High School may seem like an ordinary academic facility. Lately they’ve been winning varsity basketball championships, hosting a spring musical and preparing for an upcoming mock trial, according to their latest newsletter. But there’s something a little extra special going for students who are interested in pursuing a career in the construction industry—a type of program only found at a few schools nationwide.

Oak Creek is a suburb just south of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It’s there that this program—Knight Construction—is preparing high school students to enter the workforce by providing specialized education and hands-on training. While most students in the program are getting ready for trade jobs, there are a handful of students whose dreams include moving on to complete four-year degrees in architecture and construction management.

“My goal is to provide students with realistic experiences in construction.”

- Matt Lonergan, in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Matt Lonergan, an Oak Creek High School engineering teacher, started the program two years ago. His interest in construction began when he was a high school student building decks during warm Milwaukee summers with his father, who was also a teacher. Their projects got larger, and today they’ve built 10 homes together so far. It’s that personal experience combined with his engineering background and teaching chops that make Lonergan uniquely qualified to lead this program, which is designed exclusively for juniors and seniors.

To be accepted, the students must complete prerequisite courses and submit an application that includes written goals and references. The program runs from September through June with 16 student participants per year. A typical day includes going to classes in the morning at the school, followed by two hours on the jobsite after lunch.

What jobsite? Their own. The students work together to build a house from start to finish. Last year it was a split ranch style with three bedrooms and two bathrooms. This year the house will be slightly bigger with three bedrooms, two-and-a-half bathrooms and a full basement. The key has been working with local partners in the community—from contractors to lumber yards, plumbers, electricians and distributors—who have all donated their time and resources to the program.

ABC Supply is a great example of a community partner. When they heard what Lonergan was trying to accomplish, they approached him about using materials from LP Building Products. At the time, he didn’t think they could afford it. Wanting to help, ABC Supply got the price down to fit within their tight budget so the students could work with a high-quality product and enhance their learning.

Representatives from ABC Supply also donated their time by coming out to the jobsite to teach the students proper installation techniques, such as nailing and spacing. “That was a great learning opportunity to hear from the reps about how to do it the right way,” says Lonergan. “The students really retained that information and corrected each other if they weren’t doing it right. It was really nice to see that.”

Although this is just the second year of the program, it’s already been a huge success in the community. Students who graduated last year are already working with contractors and electricians they met during the program, and the prerequisite courses have doubled in size. The house built by last year’s class sold to a family, with any profits rolling back into the program.

The whole community of Oak Creek has been able to see the investment the school district has made in its students.

“They saw that we recognized where the labor shortage was and where jobs were needed and that we could help all our students prepare for their future—an important message,” said Lonergan.
“Resilience” in the construction industry refers to a building’s ability to withstand natural events like earthquakes and tornadoes. No building product can offer complete protection against natural disasters, but engineered wood significantly increases the resilience of homes exposed to high-wind and seismic events.

The Department of Homeland Security has launched a pilot program called Resilience STAR patterned after the popular ENERGY STAR program. Homes can now be assigned a certain number of stars if they meet resiliency standards, in the same way that appliances receive energy efficiency ratings.

Builder magazine recently launched a new Resilient Homes resource center where builders can learn more about best practices in resilience. Many industry groups support resilient initiatives based on credible risks, but oppose those that potentially could be a way to charge homeowners a premium price for protection they might not need.

“The National Association of Home Builders supports resilience initiatives that are voluntary, market-based and represent an industry consensus on a reasonable, cost-effective set of practices meeting performance levels based on sound science and understanding of probable risks,” said Gary Ehrlich,
NAHB’s director of codes and standards. “We have seen repeated attempts to increase the wind, snow and earthquake design loads for residential buildings to levels more consistent with those required for surgical hospitals, fire stations, power plants and other essential facilities. Thankfully, the vast majority of building and fire officials, structural engineers and other stakeholders have recognized the lack of technical justification for these proposals and have overwhelmingly rejected them.”

Alex Wilson, president of the nonprofit Resilient Design Institute, believes that resilience measures work best when they’re tailored to individual communities. “Most of the changes we’re seeing so far have to do with the most significant vulnerabilities in each area. In Oregon, with awareness of the potential for a major subduction-zone earthquake, seismic resilience has been the focus.”

While most resilience initiatives thus far have focused on withstanding extreme weather events, Wilson believes that architects and builders need to anticipate the devastating consequences of long-term power loss. “In addition to the direct impact of natural disasters, our homes should be designed and built to withstand the secondary impact of loss of power,” he said. “Designing homes to maintain habitable conditions (sometimes referred to as ‘passive survivability’) involves high levels of insulation, natural ventilation, passive solar design, and cooling-load avoidance measures.”

If a home was built after 2000, it is likely to be sufficiently resilient already. “NAHB believes that current building codes already provide resilient construction,” says Erhlich. “This is repeatedly shown by numerous post-disaster assessments where the majority of the damage is to older homes built prior to the jurisdiction adopting building codes, or before the advent of modern building codes like the ICC’s International Residential Code.”
Today's Kitchen Demands High-Performance Building Products

The cliché “the kitchen is the heart of the home” rings even truer for today’s homebuyers, who gravitate toward kitchens that reflect their style and create a gathering space.

Some of the top consumer outlets, including Country Living and HGTV, cite some of this year’s biggest kitchen trends:

- Metal and reclaimed wood accents
- Dark wood floors
- Cabinetry in shades of “greige” accented with hints of complementary colors
- Statement tile flooring
- Cabinets designed to smartly maximize storage space
- Center islands with contrasting tones or materials to be a sort of “statement piece”

For John Rogers, owner of John Rogers Renovations in Atlanta, the challenge is merging aesthetics. “We are seeing projects where you are taking a traditional home and working on the challenge of bringing in contemporary and industrial elements without making the overall home design look confused,” Rogers says.

While the aesthetics are important, Rogers’ team ensures the kitchen is soundly built since many of the homes he renovates were built under former codes. “We always take it all the way down to framing, get plumbing and electrical up to code and make sure USB ports and outlets are in the right spots,” he says.

In the kitchen—where straight-backed cabinets increase the need for flush, flat walls—engineered wood framing products like laminated strand lumber (LSL) can help resist the twisting, warping and shrinking more common in traditional lumber. These changes can cause expansion or contraction across seasons, possibly leading to unsightly gapping or cupping behind cabinetry and backsplashes.

Additionally, today’s homebuyers are seeking an open environment for their kitchen. “Flow is what I would stress the most. Make the kitchen an extension of other rooms,” says Luke Costanza with L&L Homes of Raleigh, North Carolina. “We are moving away from the kitchen being boxed off or separated from other parts of the house.”

With an open floorplan, Costanza emphasizes the quality of framing and sub-flooring materials. “It is very important to have a high-quality sub-flooring on the first floor because it has such high traffic, and you want to mitigate the potential for floor squeaks.”

Likewise, the kitchen bears a lot of weight—from cabinetry, heavy countertops and appliances—so a heavier duty sub-flooring, like LP Legacy™ premium sub-flooring, will help.

“There is no question that anytime you have a strong and stiff sub-flooring you are going to better spread the load across multiple floor joists, creating a solid feel underneath,” explains Costanza, who recently used LP Legacy sub-flooring in one of his projects. Costanza also prefers a stronger, high-quality sub-flooring in kitchens, where hardwood and tile are common flooring materials, because it will help mitigate deflection. Decreasing deflection will help mitigate potential cracking and separation of finished flooring materials.
Lantz-Boggio Architects

SIMPLE TRANSITION BETWEEN 1-HOUR AND 2-HOUR WALL ASSEMBLIES USING LP® FLAMEBLOCK® FIRE-RATED OSB SHEATHING

LOCATION: CASTLE PINES, CO

PROJECT SUMMARY

Lantz-Boggio Architects, a Denver-based national architecture and design firm, recently designed The Legacy Village at Castle Pines, a 176-unit continuing care senior living campus on a seven-acre property in Castle Pines, Colorado. Lantz-Boggio Architects used LP® FlameBlock® Fire-Rated OSB Sheathing as a code-compliant component of both 1-hour and 2-hour UL-listed fire-rated wall assemblies.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

A portion of the building has 2-hour load-bearing walls with 1-hour walls stacked on top. Dwight Miller, Associate Principal at Lantz-Boggio Architects, was seeking wall assembly solutions that would provide a consistent plane across both 1-hour and 2-hour fire-rated wall assemblies.

SOLUTION

Miller specified 2-sided LP FlameBlock sheathing as a code-compliant component of the U349 2-hour fire-rated wall assembly and 1-sided LP FlameBlock sheathing as a code-compliant component of the U348 1-hour fire-rated wall assembly. In total, four truckloads of LP FlameBlock sheathing were delivered to the jobsite to be used within the exterior walls.

OUTCOME

Miller was pleased with the result of the two LP FlameBlock wall assemblies and says he plans to use it on wood-framed multifamily projects in the future. He also noted the labor-saving component of the LP FlameBlock assemblies compared to assemblies that call for exterior fire-rated gypsum in combination with wood structural panels.

“When using plywood or structural wood panels behind the gypsum sheathing on the exterior side of the wall, there is the material and labor cost to install at least two layers of sheathing, as well as the additional schedule time for installation and inspections of multiple layers,” said Miller.

“Secondly, to have a 2-hour exterior wall that is stacked below a 1-hour exterior wall would either require some means of transitioning between the change in plane, or to continue the third layer of gypsum sheathing up the 1-hour wall,” he continued. “By using the 1-sided and 2-sided FlameBlock, I was able to overcome all of these obstacles with two products that are easily identifiable by the contractor (based on the 1-side or 2-side coating) and that install the same as regular plywood.”

Main factors driving demand for senior housing:

- Age
- Accessibility
- Wealth
- Income from the senior population
- Desire to live in senior housing community

- According to SeniorHousingNews.com, senior housing construction is expected to increase in 2017. A reported 75% of senior housing executives say they are extremely likely or somewhat likely to pursue construction this year.
- Anecdotal evidence shows that most people move into a senior household between the ages of 82 and 84.
- Between 2017 and 2025, the 82-86 age group is forecast to increase in size from 5.1 million to 6.6 million (a 29% increase), according to the National Investment Center for Seniors and Housing Care.

+ www.lantz-boggio.com
Millennials Building in Mid-Sized Cities

According to LinkedIn data, young adults are increasingly showing interest in jobs located within mid-sized cities. It’s no real surprise that trendy Austin, Texas, tops the list of job searches by LinkedIn users, but it is followed closely by cities like Raleigh, North Carolina; Detroit, Michigan; Cleveland/Akron, Ohio; and Charlotte, North Carolina. Job searching aside, other top markets for young adults relocating include Seattle, Portland and Denver, where more manageable costs of living, tolerable traffic, and an accessible lifestyle and lively culture all mesh together. Affordable living in or near a city’s core draws many Millennials to these mid-sized cities, so builders would be wise to include the amenities that support more urban lifestyles—regardless of whether the community is in the heart of the city or a suburban residential area. Density, walkability and transit accessibility all top the list.

Could Your Attic Be Housing More Than Just Junk?

For some homeowners, converting attic space is an attractive way to add square footage and livable space to the house without undertaking a full-on addition. Though many factors affect the cost of an attic build-out, Homeadvisor.com reports the national average for an attic renovation is just shy of $50,000. But before moving on up into the attic, homeowners should consult an architect or structural engineer to confirm that the housing structure below can support the additional weight of the build-out, new or upgraded utilities will be feasible, factors like roof slope will not impede the build-out, and—most importantly—the final renovation will pass building codes. Plus, homeowners without an existing stairwell into their attic will especially want a qualified architect or designer to address a new access point (because who really wants to use a pull-down ladder to get to their new upstairs bedroom?).

Tips for Communicating with Framers and Subcontractors

Whether you’re an architect, builder or contractor, you’ve likely experienced an unexpected change in plans as the result of others involved in the project. In an effort to reduce eleventh-hour changes, improved communication with subcontractors and/or framers can help ensure that design and product specifications are met:

1. BRING THE CONTRACTOR IN EARLY:
   Gain early buy-in, set expectations, and establish a feeling of collaboration rather than competition.

2. BE THE BAD COP:
   Be prepared to play hardball, even if it means a delay, in order to maintain project integrity.

3. WORK WITH CONTRACTORS YOU TRUST:
   Successful projects and relationships should breed long-term partnerships between you and your subcontractors.

To see the full Top 10 list of tips that can help you communicate with subcontractors and framers, visit the LP Engineered Wood blog at LPCorp.com/10tips.
LP® SMARTSIDE® TRIM & SIDING CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY WITH RECORD SALES
Strong Growth in Shed Siding

LP® SmartSide® siding has become popular in the shed segment, accounting for more than a third of all shed siding volume in 2016 based on SAP data. That success is largely due to the team of LP® Outdoor Building Solutions® field merchandising representatives around the country, who meet face-to-face with shed dealers and educate them on LP product benefits. “Although most shed sales are in rural and suburban locations, we’re starting to see an increase in urban areas that have smaller yards,” says Trisha Diewald, LP segment marketing associate.

“Based on the social traffic on our website (LPShed.com), people are getting really creative in shed building,” said Parry Grimm, LP segment marketing associate. “Sheds are becoming an extension of people’s homes and identities, and reflect what’s really important to them. People are using sheds for gardening, crafts and reading—or even creating man-caves and she-sheds. One of our customers even built a shed that’s a mini movie theater.”

Grimm believes that Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, is in the forefront of shed creativity. “The shed builders there do a beautiful job,” she said. “They’re showing a lot of interest in board and batten profiles. It creates a unique look when you use LP SmartSide siding instead of pine.”
It’s rare when a product line’s 20th year in business also happens to be its best sales year ever. The LP® SmartSide® Trim & Siding line debuted in the late 1990s—and last year had net sales of over $750 million.

To meet the brisk demand, LP has six domestic manufacturing facilities for siding and is planning further expansion. “We have seen tremendous growth in our siding business and anticipate this growth to continue as we look to meet increasing demand,” said Curt Stevens, who recently retired as LP Chief Executive Officer.

Cedar Creek, the largest LP SmartSide distributor in the nation, just added the line to its Lakeland, Florida, location. “We saw an increased customer demand for the LP SmartSide product line and are excited to add it to our Florida location,” said Mike Wilson, Cedar Creek’s vice president of sales.

Here are some LP SmartSide sales statistics that are especially noteworthy:

- **THE TOP THREE MARKETS ARE NEW CONSTRUCTION, SHEDS, AND REMODELING AND RENOVATION (R&R)**
- **IN R&R, MORE THAN 70,000 HOMES WERE RE-SIDED LAST YEAR WITH LP SMARTSIDE SIDING**
- **LP SMARTSIDE SIDING ACCOUNTED FOR 36% OF TOTAL SIDING VOLUME IN THE SHED MARKET IN 2016—AND NEARLY 600,000 SHEDS WERE BUILT LAST YEAR WITH LP PRODUCTS**
- **LP MERCHANDISED OVER 2,200 SHED DEALER LOCATIONS LAST YEAR**

The newest innovation in the LP SmartSide line is 16-foot vertical siding used for board and batten executions, which was first showcased at this year’s International Builders’ Show. The new product allows the board and batten to span the second floor without any trim bands.

“Builders and remodelers have been asking LP for a vertical siding panel that is taller than 8 feet,” said Sandra Bostian, LP product manager for siding. “This 16-foot panel is LP’s response to their request. The rustic and historic beauty of board and batten architecture is making a strong revival across the United States. This look creates a charming, stylish aesthetic. Ours is the only product like this in the category.”

Most products that launched in 1997—like the PalmPilot digital assistant—are long gone. But the LP SmartSide line continues to break sales records and lead the industry in innovation. That’s something worth celebrating all year long.
LP PURPOSEBUILT™ GARAGE DOOR OVERLAYS: OPENING THE DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY

LP’s Growth & Innovation team has identified garage door enhancements as a major opportunity because the garage door market is quickly transitioning from functional to aesthetic considerations. New LP PurposeBuilt™ garage door overlays are products made for garage door original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), who previously had to scavenge for accent parts from local distributors.

According to Remodeling magazine’s latest Cost vs. Value Report, garage door replacement (for two years in a row) has ranked in the top three home improvement projects nationwide. Both upscale and mid-range garage door replacement recoups more than 90 percent of the project cost when the home is sold.

Garage door replacement also ranks third on the REALTOR list of home improvement projects that appeal to prospective buyers. That explains why 26 percent of all realtors urge homeowners to replace their garage doors before putting a home up for sale.
WHY LP PURPOSEBUILT GARAGE DOOR OVERLAYS ARE THE BEST CHOICE FOR OEMS

Here are some of the advantages that make LP PurposeBuilt garage door overlays the ideal product for garage door manufacturers:

- **Superior durability**: Made with a process that resists fungal decay and termites while enhancing strength even in harsh environments.

- **Premium aesthetic**: Comes in both an authentic cedar grain texture for a superior wood look or a smooth surface for sleek, timeless appeal.

- **Easy fabrication and workability**: Manufacturers can easily cut, paint and secure LP PurposeBuilt garage door overlays to garage doors without degrading the strength and appearance.

- **Easy for OEMs to procure**: LP distributors are located across the nation.

- **LP’s long experience in the garage door market**: For more than 10 years, we’ve sold high quality overlays to garage door OEMs. Now we’ve become the industry's first dedicated supplier of quality components.

- **Comes in a variety of versions**: Our nationwide network of refinishers helps us offer a wide range of colors, two-tone and wood stain options.

- **Perfect for carriage and courtyard look**: Garage doors play a prominent role in the overall look of carriage and courtyard-style houses. LP PurposeBuilt garage door overlays give garage door manufacturers the aesthetic options they need.

+ To learn more about LP PurposeBuilt garage door overlays, contact product manager Nick Overmann (nick.overmann@lpcorp.com) or G&I business development manager Adina Barnes (adina.barnes@lpcorp.com).

LPPurposeBuilt.com
Experts have predicted that in 2017, a rising number of homebuyers will travel further away from city centers to find more affordable housing in the suburbs and the way-out 'burbs.

There are several reasons people are ditching city life in favor of the perks suburbs offer. Buyers typically cite benefits such as lower home prices, bigger lots and better schools.

We talked to a real estate company that caters to far-out suburbs in Texas to get a better idea about why people are moving out there and, more importantly, how to market those homes. For context, we discussed their communities in Rockwall, located about 30 miles from the Dallas, Plano and Richardson areas, which are all much more expensive.

Kelly Hoodwin, VP of Sales and Marketing for Altura Homes, explained that there have been several big corporate relocations to nearby areas, including Toyota to Plano and State Farm to Richardson. She’s noticed that many of these new Texans have chosen the Rockwall area and drive 30–45 minutes to and from work each day. If you’re used to commuting, which many of these employees are, then that doesn’t seem like a hassle. But what about buyers who are accustomed to the convenience of the city? With the right marketing strategies, you can target both groups.
SCHOOLS

A big selling factor for buyers with a family—or who plan to start a family one day—are the schools in their district. In suburbs like Rockwall parents can expect smaller class sizes and, subsequently, more one-on-one attention for their children. Their schools are also ranked higher than major-city public schools in nearby Dallas.

MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

We’re not just talking about a few pennies. Moving to the suburbs could save a family hundreds of thousands of dollars. For a property with higher-than-average acreage in Rockwall, homebuyers can expect to save anywhere from $100K up to $200K for a home compared to the bigger markets of Richardson or Plano. For a home on a normal-sized lot, the savings go down slightly but are still substantial at around $50K–$75K. Imagine what a homeowner could do with that extra money in their pocket or acreage in their backyard. Better yet, help them imagine it for themselves.

AMENITIES

If buyers are worried there won’t be as much to do in the suburbs, they could be in for a surprise. With the rise of families moving further outside of the city, so too are businesses. In Rockwall, a buyer can find all the big retail shops plus a variety of restaurants—not to mention the amenities that come with neighborhood communities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, and playgrounds for children. Is there a Starbucks or grocery store three minutes away? Show buyers just how close they are to everything they could need, and suddenly the suburbs aren’t that different from the city.

WARRANTIES

Budgets don’t always go as far in the city when it comes to new construction, so older homes or fixer-uppers are often more budget-friendly within city limits. But with that same budget in Rockwall, new homes are affordable. That means the home comes with builder warranties and all appliances are covered under mechanical warranties. That’s a big reassurance for buyers who are already covering down payments and moving costs. Knowing that they won’t be spending $5,000 for a new air conditioner within the first few years—or months—can create significant peace of mind for homebuyers.

Now that we’ve covered some of the top reasons people are moving farther from the heart of the city, what are some of the best practices for marketing these communities, features and benefits to prospective buyers?

SOCIAL MEDIA

Altura Homes taps into the buyer market by developing content that is relevant to their audience. They don’t just list homes on their social media platforms. Their Facebook page is a hub of information for anyone with a new home. It’s updated regularly with recipes and decorating ideas. Imagine a “mini-Pinterest” forum of sorts. As a bonus, they’re able to handle all their social media in-house. Remember, to do social media marketing right you need to develop an objective, a strategy, a content plan and goals as well as determine the appropriate individual or team to manage it.

LOCAL SIGNAGE AND MARKERS

It might sound simple, but it’s effective. Placing directional signs strategically on the streets can get people headed toward a community they may have otherwise missed. Altura Homes uses these signs to get people on a route from one city to another and back. “Cloud busters” (balloons that reach high into the sky) are also good marketing tools. They draw attention to a community from the main roads.

Be aware of any rules in certain communities that need to be followed. For example, businesses, organizations and individuals use kiosks in some of the surrounding cities such as Wylie and Fate instead of putting up individual signs and advertisements. These are referred to as kiosks, which are metal signs that can accommodate around 5–6 advertisements or announcements each.

COMMUNITY EVENT SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsoring community events, such as the local school’s musical or football game, is a good way to garner name recognition with the public in that area. It’s also a good way to show your involvement and investment into the community where you’re marketing homes. *

For more information on Altura Homes, visit AturaHomes.com.

Kelly is a licensed real estate agent and Dallas native with over 25 years of experience in the homebuilding industry. She’s on the board of directors for the Dallas Builders Association where she’s served in various roles during her tenure, including past Chair of the Sales and Marketing Council. In her free time, Kelly stays busy as a mom to an 18-year-old Eagle Scout and up-and-coming Aggie at Texas A&M.

Kelly Hoodwin
VP Of Sales And Marketing
At Altura Homes
Builders Who Specialize In 55+ Communities

There are a growing number of adults ages 55 and up who are looking to downsize their homes. They may be "Boomers" or part of the first wave of Generation X homebuyers who are fast approaching—or have recently approached—the age 55 threshold. Some builders are taking notice.

These builders target “active lifestyle” adults who want to enjoy their surroundings while eliminating things that could one day become a nuisance: big yards to mow, a lot of interior and exterior steps and stairs, etc.

“We find that many of today’s 55+ homebuyers really want to live in their own single-level home that is built with thoughtful design features like no-step entries and wider doorways,” said Jim Chapman, president of Jim Chapman Communities and a former chairman of NAHB’s 55+ Housing Industry Council. “They appreciate a secure community that will allow them to age in place, without worries about maintaining their yard or their home. They are moving to an active adult community to embrace a carefree, flexible and ‘lock-and-leave’ lifestyle.”
HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT CHAPMAN’S CUSTOMERS PRIZE:

- Quality amenities, including (but not limited to) a clubhouse with a fireplace, exercise room, outdoor pool, tennis courts, community garden and walking trails
- Maintenance-free homes in a gated community
- Spacious single-level floorplans, with covered entries, attached garages and innovative storage solutions

The Springs of Mill Lakes is a 55+ community that opened last year in Opelika, Alabama. Billed as a “perfect blend of homestyle and lifestyle,” The Springs is a master-planned community of 134 single-family custom homes. It’s bordered on one side by a 45-acre protected wildlife sanctuary and contains two large lakes for canoeing, kayaking and fishing.

Developer Allen Harris notes that there’s plenty for residents to do in Opelika’s historic downtown with its cultural events and lively restaurant scene. “The city also has the ability to run fiber optic cable into all residences, showing its ongoing efforts to grow this community,” he said.

“Most NAHB members are already selling to 55+ buyers, and they could have even greater success with help from the 55+ Council,” said Chapman. “It’s important to let young builders know that they can sell to older buyers. You don’t have to be 55. You just have to know how to deliver what those buyers want. One of the Council’s goals is to assemble and organize research relevant to 55+ housing and make it available to members.”

For more information on NAHB’s 55+ Housing Industry Council, contact current chairman Dennis Cunningham at dennis@activewestbuilders.com.
True or False: According to the Geological Survey of Canada, the peat in Canada’s wetlands stores almost 60 percent of all the carbon stored in soils across the country.

Answer: True.

Further, the 147 billion tons of carbon stored in Canadian wetlands is more than 900 times the annual carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from all industrial activity in Canada.

This tremendous ability to store carbon, while supporting habitat for numerous animal and plant species, makes Canada’s wetlands critically important to our natural environment. And the more we learn about these wetlands, the better we’ll be able to conserve them.

**CARBON MEASUREMENT IN WETLANDS**

We know that wetlands, both in Canada and globally, store huge amounts of carbon. While we understand it’s important to store carbon, reduce CO₂ emissions and mitigate climate change, we’re also aware that we need a greater understanding of how best to measure the carbon stored in wetlands.

In terms of carbon management generally, it’s crucial that land managers understand how much carbon is stored both in trees and soil. Today, methods and tools for carbon measurement are well established for upland forests because these types of dry forests have been studied for decades. By comparison we know much less about carbon measurement in wetlands, where trees are smaller and areas are water saturated and difficult to operate in.

That’s why the Saskatchewan Research Council has teamed up with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), Louisiana-Pacific Canada (LP) and Spruce Products Ltd (both SFI Program Participants), and Ducks Unlimited Canada in developing a rapid assessment tool to measure carbon storage in boreal forest wetlands.

**CREATING A FIELD-READY PROTOCOL FOR THE INDUSTRY**

There’s been little motivation in the past for forest managers to go out into the field and quantify carbon stored due to difficulties in sampling waterlogged areas and because, in general, these areas are not managed. And yet the wetland carbon values from the Geological Survey of Canada show it’s crucial we understand carbon stored in wetlands much, much better. Forest managers are now taking a more holistic ecosystem-based view of their landscapes and need to know how wetlands and uplands are related and how forestry activities can affect wetland values such as carbon storage.

Unlike upland forests where carbon storage is in the upper 30 centimeters of soil, wetlands are a three-dimensional system and carbon in wetlands can be stored two or three
meters deep, complicating carbon measurement.

The goal of our project is to develop a rapid protocol that is usable by forestry professionals in the real world to get credible, reasonably accurate estimates of carbon storage in wetlands. That means not only developing the assessment steps, but testing them in the field with LP and Spruce Products near Swan River in Western Manitoba. A crew was in the field last summer, taking measurements of peat depth and extracting peat cores in order to complete the required calculations. We also used this as an opportunity to refine the protocol during the first two weeks of sampling.

**NEXT STEPS**

The LP crew wrapped up the sampling exercise in September 2016, and several hundred peat core samples were sent to the peatland lab at the University of Brandon to be analyzed for carbon content and bulk density. These values, along with peat depth, will be used to calculate the total mass of peat carbon in each of the 28 wetlands sampled. The protocol should apply widely to wetlands in the boreal region and can be modified to apply to other SFI-certified landscapes across Canada and the United States.

On top of this, we’re also using published data from wetlands in other parts of the boreal forest so that our team can conduct a rapid assessment of carbon in above-ground vegetation that occurs in the wetlands. Adding together the carbon estimates from peat and vegetation will give us a picture of total carbon storage in the Manitoba boreal forest wetlands.

As collaborations go, this one is especially strong. I’m thankful the Sustainable Forestry Initiative has seen value in supporting our work through its Conservation Grants Program, while LP and Spruce Products have provided access and resources on the forest licenses they manage. Ducks Unlimited Canada used their boreal wetland inventory to select wetland sample sites and will be including the results of this work in its wetlands carbon store mapping project.

We’re only in year one of this three-year project, and the project collaborators can see the value of the work emerging already. For the project collaborators, the issue is simple—there’s a tremendous amount of carbon in our wetlands. So it follows that wetland conservation is important—not only for carbon, but for other environmental values like biodiversity and water quality.

And accomplishing that takes good science. ■

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**LP Weighs In:**

The forest industry does not harvest timber on many wetlands. However, roads are often built across wetlands to access upland harvest areas. The goal is to build roads that do not impede the natural flow through a wetland because the blockage could cause flooding on one side of the road and dry out the wetland on the other side. The flooded side essentially “drowns,” leading to vegetation death and stopping peat accumulation within the ecosystem. Conversely, the dry side lowers the natural water table and the peat and carbon decomposes, increasing carbon in the atmosphere.

These impacts can be proactively avoided by knowing the wetland type, the peat depth and the amount of carbon stored within it. Next, the road could be relocated to cross a wetland with little or no flow, or the road could be constructed to ensure the wetland’s natural flow is maintained.
BALANCING GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Urban planners Stephen Friedman and Harrison Rue don’t just talk about strategies for balancing growth and infrastructure—they’ve actually written books on the subject.

Friedman, president of SB Friedman Development Advisors in Chicago, is the editor and lead author of Success In Public/Private Partnerships: From Principles To Practice published by the Urban Land Institute. Rue, the community building and transit-oriented development administrator for the city and county of Honolulu, authored Real Towns: Making Your Neighborhoods Work.

Both agree that the job of balancing growth and infrastructure—especially on urban infill projects—requires greater public/private teamwork than ever before. “When you start taking down old shopping malls to make room for residential, you’ve got all this existing infrastructure that needs to be made bigger or changed or moved,” says Rue. “That has a big impact on surrounding neighborhoods and businesses. It takes active leadership from local and regional government to do all that.”

Friedman uses the example of Uptown Park Ridge, a highly successful mixed-use development in Park Ridge, Illinois, to show how complex things can become. “The city had to relocate two car dealerships in order to buy the land,” he says. “But because of the Illinois tax structure, they needed to keep the car dealerships within the municipality to retain a portion of the sales tax generated. The city then combined the dealership land with an adjacent leaking reservoir they needed to replace to create a great redevelopment site.”

Uptown Park Ridge succeeded because the stakeholders managed its maturation over time. That takes ongoing communication, like when Friedman and others reminded the city council that the development was designed to support commerce but would never become a major retail center.

In Honolulu, Rue’s team starts with transit considerations when planning compact, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. They’re currently laying the groundwork for a walkable mixed-used development near the planned Pearlridge rail station that would eliminate parking hassles and improve access to the Pearl Harbor Historic Trail and shoreline.

Friedman adds that you don’t always need excellent mass transit to create a town center development. He cites Crocker Park in Westlake, Ohio, as a good example. This mixed-use “lifestyle center” is mainly accessed by highway and requires parking. “Developments like Crocker Park include offices in addition to residential and retail—and the office parking can be used at night by the people out shopping and dining.”

Rue names several cities as role models in effective balancing of residential growth and infrastructure. “It’s no surprise that Portland, Seattle and San Francisco are on the list, but Denver is also doing a great job,” he says. “Washington, D.C., is starting to design a lot of walkable neighborhoods near their Metro subway stops. But I’d have to say that Charlotte, North Carolina, tops the list because they do a charrette with each developer to make sure everyone’s on the same page.”

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Additional Resources:

Urban Land magazine
Published by the Urban Land Institute
+ urbanland.uli.org

Public Management magazine
Published by the International City/County Management Association
+ icma.org

+ Remember to check with your local building department before deciding on an installation method.
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