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GREEN AWARENESS

By Jim McCulley, JCM Environmental

Builders and developers that embrace green building will reclaim hero status

Builders and Developers used to be heroes, many were honored for the cities that they built. They had visions and built towns and cities. William Penn laid out the city of Philadelphia, L'Enfant Washington DC, Peter Minuit purchased the land where NYC is from the Native Americans. Development of cities and towns continued until 1950 when William Levitt built Levittown, PA, Willingboro, NJ and various other suburban developments that allowed families to move out of the cities and started a whole new trend in residential development.

Three quarters of all of the homes that exist in the United States have been built since 1950 (about 105,000,000 homes). During this time the builders and developers have fallen from hero status. Mainly because even though they are still providing shelter, places to work and places to shop, the perception is that they are causing the loss of resources (farmland, forest, habitat and wetlands).

But during the last 60



Jim McCulley

years, the builders have been building what the people want and what governments will allow.

I believe that we are at an exciting point that represents a fundamental shift in the building industry, much like what William Levitt started in the 1950's. Buyers want environmentally sensitive development, government is on the verge of encouraging it and innovative, forward-thinking builders are building green and selling homes.

When the National Association of Homebuilders rolled out their Green Building



From left: Secretary John Hughes, DNREC, State Representative Gerald Hocker, Mr. and Mrs. West, the homeowners, Congressman Mike Castle, the builder Bob Thornton and gubernatorial candidate Bill Lee

Guidelines in Orlando at the International Builders Show in February of this year, it was a standing room only crowd. I got to the auditorium an hour early and barely got a seat. The Homebuilders knew that the time had come for Green Building and the NAHB was giving them a tool to make Green Homebuilding a reality on a national scale.

We have been working with Bob Thornton for twelve years on Silver Woods and

I knew that he was building quality homes and that he was incorporating many of the Green Building practices to both his homes and his site design and so I approached him about getting his next home certified under the program. We speculated that we could be the first certified home in Delaware and never dreamed that we would have the first Gold certified home in the nation under the NAHB program.

This is the first of many green homes that will be certified in Silver Woods and it is my belief that Silver Woods is the beginning of a national trend bigger than the trend that William Levitt started in the 1950's. The builders and developers that embrace green building will begin to reclaim their hero status in this country.

Jim McCulley is an environmental consultant for JCM Environmental. ■