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President's message: Why we should go green?

March 31, 2010 - Northern New England

The office of the Federal Environmental Executive defines a green building as "the practice of 1) increasing the efficiency with which buildings and their sites use energy, water, and materials, and 2) reducing building impacts on human health and the environment, through better siting, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and removal-the complete building life cycle." Buildings are responsible for almost one-half of all greenhouse gas emissions today. Sustainable properties are the future of the real estate industry. Consumer demand, residential builders, federal government incentives, and local government policy are making this happen. Many consumers, real estate professionals, and property owners are taking steps towards greening their properties.

Green building is a great place to start, as buildings consume 14% of potable water, 40% of raw materials, and 39% of energy in the United States alone (according to the US Green Building Council). That's 15 trillion gallons of water and 3 billion tons of raw materials each year! If that's not enough to convince you, here are some other reasons to go green:

For The Environment

Want to make the world a better place? Implementing green practices into your home or office can help reduce waste, conserve natural resources, improve both air and water quality, and protect ecosystems and biodiversity.

For The Savings

Want to make your dollar go further? Green systems and materials reduce energy consumption, which in turn reduce your energy bills. They also increase asset value and profits and decrease marketing time; making your dollar go further for longer.

For Your Health

Want to live healthier? Green building isn't just good for the environment; it's also good for YOU. Sustainable design and technology enhance a resident's overall quality of life by improving air and water quality and reducing noise pollution. According to a 2006 study by the Center of the Built Environment, University of California, green office buildings improve productivity and employee satisfaction in the workplace.

Commercial Demand

Government incentives and policies are increasing the number of green commercial buildings and retrofits as well. Nearly 25% of all new construction projects in the U.S. are LEED-registered. Additionally, the number of states with green building policies, standards, legislation, and programs increased from 13 to 31 between 2005 and 2008 (Green Outlook Report, McGraw Hill Construction

2009).

Many thanks to The Green REsource Council of the National Association of Realtors for the above information.

Arthur Slattery is owner of The Phoenix Realty Group, Bedford, NH and is president of the NH-CIBOR, Concord, NH.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540