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OUR EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS



Mark Fortune

Mark Z. Fortune

Mark Z. Fortune is a small-business marketing consultant and a co-author of the recent Amazon bestseller *The Small Business Owner's Guide to Local Lead Generation*. In 2014, Mark began pursuing a long-time dream and opened his firm, Fortune Marketing, with the goal of working with small businesses to help them grow and prosper. Mark believes that the challenges in small business sales and marketing are not insurmountable – they can be met with a disciplined and focused approach. He believes that the technology and media landscape today make it easier than ever before for a small business to compete and win against larger competitors.



Ron Hughes

Ron Hughes

Ron is the owner of HERS Inc. Since 1995, HERS Inc. has provided inspections, testing, consulting, energy ratings, and energy-code compliance in single- and multi-family buildings. Ron's goal since 1987 has been to see all new homes energy-rated so consumers can comparison shop, real estate agents know better what they are selling, appraisers have the comparables they need to value energy efficiency, and builders will be able to afford the cost of building more energy-efficient homes. Thirty years later, 1.9 million homes have been energy rated in the U.S.



David Roberts

David Roberts

David Roberts is a full-time Keller Williams Realty agent. He has been serving the Greater Little Rock area since 2009. His local real-estate market expertise allows him to determine an optimum pricing strategy for all of his properties. He is a technology-based marketing specialist that effectively targets and attracts potential buyers in the market.



J. Don Overton

J. Don Overton

J. Don Overton is an attorney and founder of The Overton Firm LLC. Mr. Overton is also a licensed contractor and has received the Master Certified Green Professional and Certified Aging in Place Specialist recognition from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), and is a Green Advantage Certified Practitioner recognized by the USGBC for both residential and commercial construction. Don is active in the homebuilding industry in the Greater Little Rock area and Arkansas as a whole. The Overton Firm LLC works primarily with issues related to construction law, real estate law and green building law, and serves clients all over the State of Arkansas.



Timothy Russell

Timothy Russell

Timothy Russell is president of Estate Planners of Arkansas, P.A. Estate Planners of Arkansas, P.A. is a law firm practicing in the areas of Trusts, Wills, Probate, Estate Tax Planning, Business Formation and Business Succession Planning. Timothy has been practicing since 1993 and has prepared over 4,000 estate plans. Estate Planners of Arkansas, P.A. is located in North Little Rock, AR, but they service clients, including small businesses, throughout the state.



Jim Carr

Jim Carr

Jim Carr is a professor in the Construction Management and Civil and Construction Engineer Department at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Before becoming an educator, he was a home builder for 17 years. He teaches safety, is an authorized OSHA outreach trainer, and is a member of the National Association of Homebuilders Safety and Health Committee.



Frank Kelly

Frank Kelly

Frank provides consulting through his company, Solar Source Consulting, where he assists owners of planned or existing structures who are interested in adopting a higher level of independence, sustainability and stewardship as it relates to their property. In 1986, Frank and his wife, Jo, built an earth-sheltered, passive solar geodesic dome in the Overlook neighborhood of Little Rock. Frank is the current Chairman of the Arkansas Renewable Energy Association, an Arkansas based 501(c)3 nonprofit organization where he is active in helping develop policy to promote the adoption of renewable energy systems in Arkansas. Frank lives in Little Rock with his wife, Jo.

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People Don't Buy Drills, THEY BUY HOLES



Written by Mark Fortune

When you first talk to a potential client, how do they describe what they're looking for or why they're talking to you? What really makes their eyes light up, letting you know that you've created a connection that will lead to a positive relationship? Is it when you discuss price, technical specifications, building materials, and how long the project will take? Or, is it when they talk about what they want out of the project – what it means for their lives, their families, their future?

I'm sure it's the latter. If your marketing strategy and plans don't attract clients by addressing their dreams, desires and challenges, it could probably use a second look.

Without a solid foundation built on a sound marketing strategy, your marketing house will quickly fall apart, and you'll wonder why your business isn't producing the results it should. But to get that foundation built you need to:

1. Know your ideal target client.

Everyone with a pulse (or a check) is not your ideal client. If you've ever been involved with a project that went on too long or cost you too much, you know this. Write down your ideal client persona, and try not to sell to anyone who doesn't fit it.

2. Know your core message.

"We build great houses" won't cut it. Talk about the problems you solve for your clients and the great results they get. Describe your unique value, and you'll get further much faster.

3. Inform the journey.

Like it or not, you're a content publisher. Video, web posts, social media, printed materials, emails – these are content you use to educate your customers about why your company is the fit for them. Think about each touch as a chance to differentiate your company. Be aware of where your customers are in their decision-making process – from awareness, to education, to conversion – and you'll have a leg up on the competition.

4. Be consistent; be persistent.

"We tried Facebook once, and we stopped." I hear this a lot. Everyone is bombarded with marketing messages, and while your message needs to be creative and unique, if no one hears it, it doesn't matter. Have a plan, keep it manageable but follow through.

As 2018 ends, keep this marketing strategy framework in mind as you plan and execute for 2019. You'll be much better off with a more profitable, happier client base. If you need help figuring it out, I'd love to talk: mark@fortunemarketinginc.com or (501) 580-0550. Happy holidays, and best wishes for 2019! ▼

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[focus section]

By Beverly Smirnis

Things People Hate ... And Thoughtful Touches Builders Can Include To Shorten That List

“Builder Grade” Choices — Same as the Joneses Down the Street



RangeCraft Manufacturing has announced a new Standard Line of range hoods available in 36-inch, 42-inch, 48-inch and 60-inch with a standard 30-inch height. While a number of things remain constant in the Standard Line in order to save time and costs, different metal combinations and powder coating are among the available options in the semi-custom line.



L.J. Smith is the largest stair-parts manufacturing company in the country, including wooden and ornamental iron balusters and newel posts, hand rails and accessories. Match up metal newel posts with stainless steel cables to create a stunning stairway system for both interior and exterior use.



ITALdoors Eco Line's all-inclusive door package includes the door panel, frame, casings and Italian hardware.

While production builders often narrow down the choices to deliver more at less cost, keep buyers in their budget and keep the process flowing smoothly, it is possible to still attain all these goals while having standard amenities that keep up with current trends and desires. Allowing buyers some upgrade choices before move-in, which can be rolled into the mortgage, means the upgrades are less costly since they are paid over 30 years. It also avoids the fuss, hassle and waste of making changes later. Options can transform

the project from being conceived as “a house built for the market” to a home built for a family with specific needs, tastes and desires.



With a vanadate diode laser in house, INOX can create customized laser work on location. INOX's work includes engraved hotel door plaques and lever sets, logos for private suites in arenas, and custom designs on residential hardware.

Inadequate Lighting



One of the most important elements for any design project is good lighting. Photo courtesy of architect and interior designer Myrna Gondim Porcaro. Ms. Porcaro has offices in Miami and Brazil.

It's necessary to consider types of lighting solutions from the very beginning of a project. A homeowner's daily routines, habits and times of use are important to the lighting plan. Each part of the

home requires a different type of lighting and, thus, multiple solutions. Safety should always be of utmost concern. In work areas such as a kitchen and office, white lamps bring out the exact definition of colors and textures. Hanging pendants that illuminate the center of the table are usually the favored fixtures for a dining room. Bedrooms require a softer light. Colored LED lights can be used in a bath or shower for a relaxing effect. Indirect light that will not reflect off the screen is the ideal solution for entertainment areas.

Acoustical Sacrifices of an Open Floor Plan



A Tudelü wall with a beautiful graphic placed between the living and dining areas adds, rather than takes away, from the decor and feel of the space.

Adding or breaking down a wall is not always feasible. But what if you could add a retractable piece of artwork to solve a spatial divide or acoustic issue? Tudelü makes motorized, fully retractable walls to increase visual privacy while simultaneously absorbing sound in any given space. With over 100 color, fabric, pattern combinations, and the ability to incorporate custom images, prints or logos, the walls can be both gorgeous and functional.

Hauling Home Water Bottles from the Grocery



The Quatreau Tap

By blending both the instant hot and cold functions into one single-handle mechanism, bulk and excess in a kitchen is eliminated, and a clean design prevails. California Faucets' award-winning Kitchen Collection recently expanded again with Combination Hot and Cold Water Dispensers. The Quatreau Tap takes it even a step further with a multi-functional, touch-screen faucet that delivers pure instant boiling, instant chilled and instant sparkling water.

Necessities that stand out like a sore thumb.

When you're working with a buyer building a custom home that is truly concerned about the aesthetics of a room, or someone who has a special physical need, being willing to find a product that offers the solution sets you apart as the savvy builder.

Although smoke detectors are essential for safety and mandated by the NFPA (National Fire Protection Association), traditional, bulky models mounted on ceilings or walls can interrupt — even ruin — the overall design and feel of a space. Used for decades in the most sensitive smoke-detection applications, the VESDA (Very Early Smoke Detection Apparatus) system from Xtralis is now available in a simplified commercial version — the VEA — that is increasingly crossing over into the residential market. Instead of typical bulky smoke detectors that passively detect smoke, the VEA system instead draws in air from each room or space through small, flexible tubing. The air is then analyzed at a remote unit for the presence of minute smoke particles in a continuous process.

A buyer needing a plumbing fixture that exceeds ADA accessibility bathroom standards should not have to settle for a toilet with institutional-looking aesthetics. The Convenient Height Co. offers toilets designed to meet the needs of the elderly or less mobile as well as veterans, athletes and anyone of above average height. The Convenient Height Co. offers toilets designed to meet the needs of the elderly or less mobile as well as veterans, athletes and anyone of above average height. They look just like a regular residential toilet, only they are taller.

Hauling out a vacuum for everyday clean-up



For daily messes like crumbs, kitty litter, tracked-in leaves, and dryer lint, consumers can rely on H-P Products SpeedZone Every Day Vacuum to quickly clean up the mess. SpeedZone products are designed to be used multiple times a day for a quick, five-second clean-up in kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, garages and more. SpeedZone is a complement to H-P's HomeZone full central vacuum system.

The Bottom Line

Sometimes it's the small adjustments to the standard amenities list that produce the greatest results in terms of differentiating a builder's product. Any item that can resolve a challenge, make it easier to maintain a home, illustrate your forward-thinking, or add a reasonable personalization factor may be the very thing that sets your home apart. ▼



Photo credit: Chris White, 3wire Photography



Photo credit: Chris White, 3wire Photography



Meet Ron Harris

SUMMERWOOD INC.

Written by Jean Leffler, Staff Writer

WHERE QUALITY AND STYLE COME TOGETHER.

Van Dover
photography



Photo credit: Chris White, 3wire Photography

Ron is proud to point out that "every home generates at least three full-time jobs while under construction, and every home built generates at least one permanent full-time job!"



Photo credit: Chris White, 3wire Photography



A builder's reputation is reliant on customer satisfaction. Summerwood Inc., located in North Little Rock, has been building its reputation of excellence since 1997. Ron Harris was formally trained by Arkansas Power and Light Company on how to interface with builders and customers on Energy Efficient Construction beginning in 1980. He is also trained in properly sizing HVAC equipment for homes. From then, it was a logical step to take that knowledge and expertise into home construction. By 1997, Ron and his wife, Vikki, formed Summerwood Inc. This year, Summerwood Inc. is celebrating the build of their 100th home in the *Southern Living*-Inspired Neighborhood called Rockwater!

Ron serves on the council for the City of North Little Rock. One focus Ron

has as a council member is the revitalization of the inner city and the quality of life for Millennials and Baby Boomers alike. He is a current Life Director of the Home Builders Association of Greater Little Rock. He has also served as Executive Vice President of Arkansas Home Builder Association, representing industry issues statewide.

Ron's wife, Vikki, acquired her residential contractor license when Rod did and went on to earn the status of Certified Green Professional Builder. Ron continued his work at Entergy as Summerwood grew, and he recently retired as Area Manager. He is now able to fulfill his passion of residential building alongside Vikki full time. Their team approach assures the customer that Summerwood, sub-contractors, and tradesmen are all on the same page ... and their solid reputation continues to spread. Their work ethic of craftsmanship, de-

sign and efficiency help to ensure the homeowner is likely to live "happily ever after" in the new home.

Both Ron and Vikki are Arkansas natives, he from Pine Bluff and she from Camden. Ron attended Arkansas Tech and completed his degree at UALR. Vikki received her undergraduate degree from the University of Arkansas and her master's in Public Administration at UALR. Together they have lived in North Little Rock for about 27 years. They raised four children: grown daughter Summer, son Jackson (17), teen daughter Jamie (15), and youngest daughter Jacey (12). With an active family schedule, there isn't a lot of time for hobbies beyond community involvement and watching an occasional movie or spending a quiet evening at home enjoying family time. One will often find Ron on the "Harris Upper



Photo credit: Chris White, 3wire Photography



Photo credit: Chris White, 3wire Photography

Deck" grilling for neighbors and friends of whomever the kids invited over for dinner.

The Harrises have built the Summerwood Inc. name through hard work. Their attention to detail, quality workmanship, and the economic health of the area,

is of utmost importance to both of them. Ron is proud to point out that "every home generates at least three full-time jobs while under construction, and every home built generates at least one **permanent** full-time

job!" As the Harrises construct homes, they are proud to contribute to the economic growth of central Arkansas communities. Summerwood is recognized as being one of the top residential builders in Central Arkansas. Their portfolio varies widely, building for the first-time homeowner as well as the upwardly mobile homeowner. The goal of each project is to leave a lasting legacy of quality, style and innovation. The Harrises are dedicated to creating places where people truly want to live, places that people are proud to call home. When asked what he wants to be remembered for, Ron is quick to answer "thinking outside of the box, turning negatives into positives, and always have an eye on the budget."

Visit the Harrises online at www.summerwoodinc.com to check out their online showroom. There you will find a sampling of their past projects. There is a wide variety of styles and floor plans. All of the homes Vikki and Ron build emphasize quality. They keep a close eye on the budget, being sure to maintain low overhead and operating expenses. What you contract for "on paper" is what you get as the 100 percent finished product.

Ron and Vikki are confident that a comparison between Summerwood Inc. and other contractors will result in Summerwood being your builder of choice. Their advice to the prospective homebuyer is, "Interest rates may never be lower, and prices will never go down." To add your name to the growing list of satisfied customers, contact Vikki and Ron Harris at 501-758-1212. The office address is 6309 Southwind Dr., North Little Rock. Summerwood has a comprehensive presence on Facebook. Call Vikki and Ron to arrange for a free consultation with the marketing staff to discuss your own custom home needs. ▼



Photo credit: Chris White, 3wire Photography



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Comments from vendors, suppliers and subcontractors:

Nick Madison-Pella Windows:

"Ron is a people person, fun to be around, makes me smile every time I see him. He is never negative and love the way he treats everyone."

Casey Martin - Ridout Lumber:

"Ron is full excitement. Great guy to work with, is always pleasant and fun."

Vanessa Castaneda - Eagle Granite:

"We love working with Ron because he does great work. He takes the time that we need and the client needs to get it done right."

Brian Renk - Plumbing Warehouse:

"Ron is one of the most laid-back builders I work with. He is always level-headed about any issue. Love working with him."

Gavin Higgins - West Little Rock Glass:

"Working with Ron is easy. Ron has a great eye for design. He always finds a way to please, and always takes care of the customer and takes care of business. Ron is fair and easy, and always goes above and beyond."

Sam Elmore - Speciality Roofing:

"Ron has great attention to detail. He is a perfectionist, which is a real pleasure for me to work with instead of someone that is just trying to get a job done."

Visit the Harrises online at www.summerwoodinc.com to check out their online showroom. There you will find a sampling of their past projects. There is a wide variety of styles and floor plans. All of the homes Vikki and Ron build emphasize quality.

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[savvy safety zone]

SAFETY PAYS



Written by Jim Carr

All employers want safe work site. They want their employees to go home at night. All builders have workers' compensation to protect themselves and their workers from the costs of the injury and lost wages that are the result of a job-site accident. But there are other costs of injuries on the job site.



Wages might have to be paid to the worker that are not covered by workers' compensation. At the time of the injury, the worker stopped, but the employees were still being paid. You or your supervisors had to deal with paperwork that was required to document what happened. You might have to train a new worker to replace the individual that was injured. The workers were less productive for a while after this incident.

OSHA has developed an online tool to estimate the cost of an illness or injury of a company's profitability. Found at: <https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/safetypays/estimator.html> the toll has a menu of injury types that can be used or the company's annual Worker's Compensation Costs. The company's profit margin and the number of injuries is also entered.

For example the direct costs of an amputation is \$77,995 and the indirect cost is \$85,794 for a total cost of \$163,789. With a company that has a profit margin of 10 percent the estimates sales need to cover these expenses is over \$1,500,000.

This online tool might not be completely relevant to a small home builder in Arkansas, but it makes you think about the true cost of accidents and why safety pays. ▼



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The Rockwater Masterplan

Written by Kris McKenzie




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Rockwater's uniqueness and timeless beauty have been recognized by *Southern Living* magazine, and Rockwater was named a *Southern Living*-Inspired Community in 2016.

Rockwater Village

Sitting along the banks of the beautiful Arkansas River, Rockwater Village offers the classic architectural style of historic Arkansas, the truest sense of community, and the convenience of the best in recreation, entertainment, shopping, and city life.

The downtowns of Little Rock and North Little Rock are nearby, and the Rockwater Marina is so close it's actually part of the neighborhood. The Arkansas River Trail adorns the neighborhood and offers the highest-quality recreation right outside your door.

Arkansas natives Jim Jackson and Lisa Ferrell are the developers of Rockwater Village.

Both share a passion to create a community rooted in Arkansas history that will become the beloved historic district of the 22nd century.

Parents to three young children, Jim and Lisa were looking for a way to create a neighborhood where generations could come together. With three generations in Lisa's family living in the Little Rock area, it was important to create an opportunity where their children could create a special bond with their grandparents by living "just down the street." It was this desire that spurred the concept of Rockwater Village. With their background of community activism and historic preservation, Jim and Lisa began putting together their vision.

Rockwater's uniqueness and timeless beauty have been recognized by *Southern Living* magazine, and Rockwater was named a *Southern Living*-Inspired Community in 2016. Rockwater has lots available and ready now for builders as well as the opportunity for custom homes. "Working with builders has been one of the most rewarding aspects of developing Rockwater," said Lisa Ferrell, Developer of Rockwater. We have greatly enjoyed learning from builders with their expertise, and we look forward to the chance to work with more builders." Prices of lots and homes include a broad range so builders can build the home that fits their needs and budget, as well as homeowners' budget. Homes in Rockwater range from \$265,000 to over \$1 million. "We have had specs sell before they were hardly out of the ground at Rockwater in both The Porches and The Residences at Rockwater," Ferrell added.

Rockwater also offers significant tax advantages to builders and investors since it is located in an Opportunity Zone. Opportunity Zones were created to direct investment to emerging communities through generous capital gains tax treatment that can help builders and their businesses. Ferrell has become an expert in Opportunity Zones and their benefits for builders, through immersing herself in the law, regulations and working with national professional associations. "With Rockwater being in an Opportunity Zone, builders, multi-family and commercial real estate developers can greatly benefit from these tax incentives. The advantages are like none that we have seen before. I would be glad to talk to anyone looking to learn more about Opportunity Zones and how it can help their business," Ferrell said.

“When you come here and walk along the river and envision the prosperous community this will be, you quickly realize what a truly special place this is. It’s full of history and timeless beauty. The river brings a peace to this land that is hard to find anywhere else,” Jackson added.



Rockwater attracts homebuyers because of its unique beauty. Rockwater Village is a modern take on the traditional, front-porch-focused neighborhoods of the past. The skyline of downtown Little Rock provides beautiful views, while the restaurants and bars of North Little Rock’s historic Argenta neighborhood and downtown’s Rivermarket are within walking distance, as is Verizon Arena and Dickey Stephens baseball park. The commute from downtown Little Rock is just over a mile. You can leave work and be home in time to enjoy a beautiful sunset from your front porch, be on the trail or out on the water – all in moments.

Of all the amenities we offer, getting to know your neighbors while sitting on your front porch may be the best one. “When you come here and walk along the river and envision the prosperous community this will be, you quickly realize what a truly special place this is. It’s full of history and timeless beauty. The river brings a peace to this land that is hard to find anywhere else,” Jackson added. Another one-of-a-kind feature of Rockwater is Rockwater Marina, a 64-slip marina that serves as the front porch for everyone who lives in Rockwater and offers convenient access to life on the river. The Arkansas River Trail runs through the neighborhood, connecting neighbors to the area’s 88-mile biking system, including a 15-mile loop that covers both sides of the river and the city’s famous Big Dam Bridge.

Rockwater has transformed the riverfront, making it a special place to live, work and play.

For more information on Rockwater Village, visit our website at www.rockwatervillage.com, or call Lisa at 501-347-8275. ▼

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Written by Frank Kelly

THE STRUCTURAL INSULATED PANEL

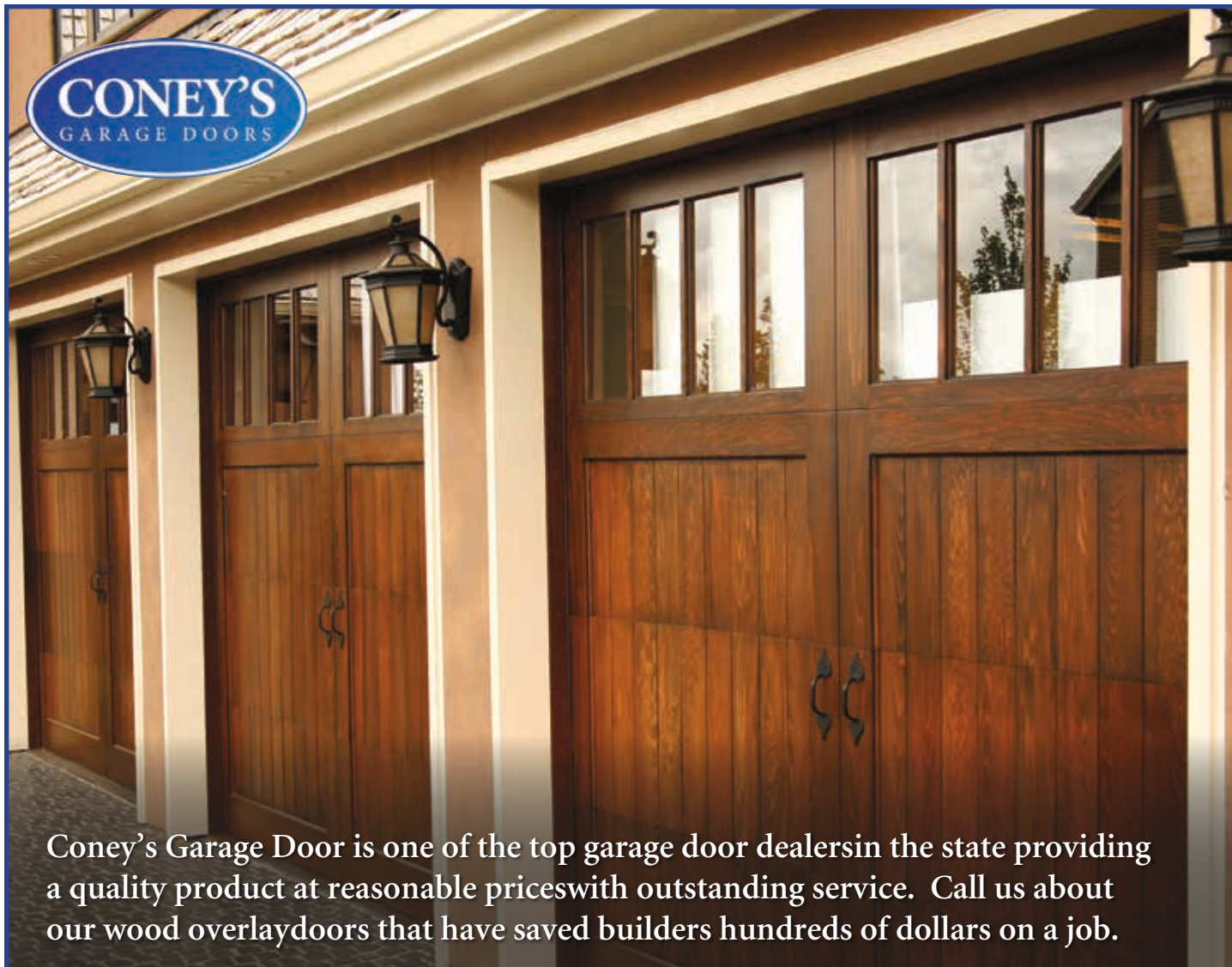
In previous columns I have touched on the important aspects to achieve net zero-energy goals relating to a new standard in residential building performance. This month I want to focus on building envelope considerations. Key to passive solar design criteria is the building of an internal building mass for passive winter heating and provide proper shading for passive-solar cooling in the summer.

Let's look at the slab as a strategic part of the building envelope. While not every home will make sense building on a slab, there are numerous reasons to start with one. However, just forming and pouring concrete on the ground and adding walls is not going to aid in reaching net-zero energy status. As I have mentioned in a previous column, homes in Arkansas will need to be designed primarily for above-average summer temperatures going forward.

For winter comfort, it is critical to isolate the slab from the outside temperatures. This is actually important in both winter and summer. Concrete acts as a wick, drawing the outside temperature inward to the mass of the concrete. In the winter, warm indoor air will be in a constant battle to warm the concrete while the outside air temperature is cooling an uninsulated slab. There are existing and proven slab insulation techniques that have been employed in states with much colder winter temperatures than we have here in Arkansas. My favorite slab insulation technology is using an insulated concrete form (ICF) with the inside wall of the ICF cut down to allow full slab thickness to the outside insulation. Incorporating a metal sole plate to go under the wall structure is a suitable pest control

barrier. Insulation under the slab is also helpful to help maintain floor temperature in concert with what is needed for indoor air temperature.

With a properly designed slab in place, it's time to talk walls. Constructing a state-of-the-art building envelope is where most resistance is encountered. There is really only one way to truly capture the published R-value on your insulation, and that is with a continuous run of it. Keeping the window count down helps enormously too. Every window changes the R-value of a wall. The most economical system available for capturing published R-value is the structural insulated panel. (SIP) I know that statement probably sent a shockwave through most of you who have taken the time to read this far! Now hold on a minute, SIP's provide the most economical way to achieve a tight and fully insulated envelope as any other technology available. A home built with SIP's will be capable of withstanding five times the wind load of a stick built house. SIP's are superior when designing vaulted ceilings too. If you're ready to make the leap to net-zero energy home design I think you'll find that incorporating SIP's is a low hurdle to your success. ▾



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Real Estate Trends

Understanding the state of 2018's Low Housing Inventory

In cities across the country, housing inventory remains low. What does it mean for Arkansas builders? Rising demand for homeownership has sent home prices soaring, thanks mostly to low inventory. With prices being so high, it would seem natural that existing homeowners would want to sell their properties for much more than they paid. In reality; however, many homeowners have remained hesitant to sell for three key reasons:

1. THEY ARE WAITING FOR MAXIMUM RETURNS
2. THEY HAVE NO WHERE ELSE TO GO
3. THEY WOULD RATHER REFINANCE

This shortage of available homes is GREAT news for Central Arkansas Builders especially in the \$200,000 to \$350,000 price range. The demand is increasing in this price range.



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