



By Anne Bertino

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[merz project]

"Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design," Green Building Rating System.

LEED for commercial buildings has been employed for several years already. Cities such as Scottsdale and Phoenix have LEED requirements for government funded buildings such as libraries and court houses. There are other categories of LEED certification and one of the newest is LEED for Homes or LEED-H. LEED-H now allows the general home buyer access to the benefits of building to the LEED standards. LEED-H will become a national brand that signifies to the consumer that the home meets stringent requirements for energy efficiency, indoor air quality and durability.

Scottsdale and Metro Phoenix are one of 12 areas in the United States that was chosen to host the LEED-H pilot project. This means that we have the local expertise to verify homes to the LEED standards. LEED-H Providers, as they are called, are local organizations with demonstrated experience and expertise in their region's market. Their primary roles are: marketing LEED to builders, providing green home rating support services to builders, and training, coordinating and overseeing inspectors. Currently, here in Arizona, there are 300 homes including single family and multiple family homes, signed up with the USGBC to become LEED-H certified during the pilot process. By October 2007, 30 Arizona homes are expected to become certified.

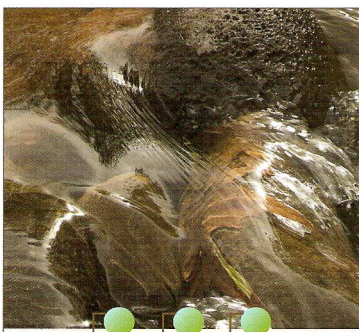
If you are a "label reader," says Richard Zimmerman, partner in Sonoran LEED for Homes, LLC, which is one of the local LEED-H certifying providers, "you will want to know what's in your home too and that's what a LEED-H certified home provides. You get third ▶

How buying a LEED-H certified home can make you happy inside and out

Looking for a new home that's less expensive to operate and easier to maintain? - How buying a LEED-H certified home can make you happy inside and out.

As a professional interior designer, I am often asked "what's the latest trend?" As an interior designer who specializes in helping clients make eco-friendly choices, it's my respon-

sibility to stay up to date on what's really green so that I can educate my clients. The Green Building market is exploding. New products, methods and materials are introduced almost daily. The most respected source for green building information is the United States Green Building Council (USGBC). The USGBC has created a nationally accepted standard for green buildings called LEED®, the



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party verification and documentation which guarantees that your home meets one of the most stringent building programs in the country. Also, consider that only the top 25 percent of builders, the crème de la crème, are going to be able to perform to these standards."

Benefits of owning a LEED Home as compared to a code built home are listed by the USGBC as follows:

- Healthier, more comfortable living environment
- 30-40 percent lower utility bills
- Higher resale value
- Lower ownership and maintenance costs
- More durable home design and materials
- Better air filtration
- More efficient use of resources
- 30-50 percent environmentally preferred building materials
- Non-toxic pest management
- 30 percent less storm water run-off (reduces pollution of local watersheds)

The result is that the homes use less energy, water and natural resources and that means lower bills! Equally important is that they are healthier and more comfortable for the occupants because of the use of non-toxic materials and special venting techniques which keep the air inside the home as fresh as possible and reduce the threat of mold. There is also a durability analysis that the builder must complete to identify and incorporate items to increase durability. The most significant plus is that the homes are certified by a third party to meet all the requirements and the homeowner gets a manual on how to use the home. This way you know that your home is guaranteed to perform to the best of its ability.

"Certification costs for a LEED-H home are \$2,700 for a single family home of 2,500 square feet or less," according to Zimmerman. "Other costs include costs for the materials to meet the requirements and documentation and verification fees" Zimmerman said.

One thing to remember is that a LEED-H home is designed to be cheaper to operate over the long term.

So, what you may spend up front for more efficient windows will save you money on energy bills for the entire life of the house. You could think of it this way; each appliance or fixture you buy has three price tags: one you pay when you buy the item, one you pay to operate the item, and one you pay by the environmental impact of the energy to manufacture and operate the item has on the planet. Given that, you could see energy savings in the neighborhood of 45 percent or more and those efficiencies will be guaranteed by the certification process.

If you are interested in purchasing a LEED-H home or building one, where do you begin? "The first thing you should do," says Zimmerman, "is look at the USGBC website (www.usgbc.org) under LEED for Homestobecome familiar with the guidelines and the verification process." Listed on the website is the contact information for the LEED-H Providers.

Just recently, I went to the grand opening of the soon to be first LEED-H certified homes in Arizona, The Galleries at Turney (www.modusdev.com). These homes are beautiful and incredibly modern. Modus development, the local developer, is planning at least three other similar developments this year. All are going to be LEED-H certified. Soon big track developer Pulte Homes will open its first environmentally sensitive, LEED-H development of 1,500 homes in the desert near Las Vegas, Nevada. Lets hope this means that the deserts of Phoenix will see something similar in the near future. As a green interior designer, I'm looking forward to having more green homes around!

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After 15 years as an aerospace engineer, Anne Bertino decided to come back to earth to help save the planet she loves. So, she took her technical skills and merged them with her creative calling. Anne is owner and principal designer of the Bertino-Baumann Design Group, an interior design firm specializing in people and planet friendly design. Striving to lead a balanced life, you can often find Anne communing with nature and her peers at committee meetings of the US Green Building Council, and Valley Forward.
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