



PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

SPRING | ISSUE 20

SPREADING THE NEWS TO BUILDERS AND ARCHITECTS

Dealers Divided on Green, United on Sales Slump

ProSales poll also finds lots of LBM's are implementing green at home

Lumberyard executives split sharply over the presence—and sometimes the value—of green construction in their communities, but a solid majority are greening their own operations even as they report reduced sales and weak profit prospects in 2009, a new ProSales survey finds.

Results from the online poll conducted this month revealed, for instance, a near dead-even split between dealers who reported interest in green construction in their area was “nonexistent” or “barely there” and those who said interest was “robust” or at least enough to merit doing something about it. Among customer types, custom builders ranked first among those asking about green, with nearly 70% of dealers reporting getting questions from that group and 67% saying consumers were asking. On the other hand, fewer than one in 10 reported hearing a question about green building from a large production builder and only one out of four could say the same about small production builders.

The survey found dealers (a category that for the survey includes shortline companies and molding/millwork dealers) were split roughly into thirds over whether the housing slump has made builders and remodelers less interested in green building now than they were a year ago. About 32% agreed with that argument, 34% disagreed and the rest put themselves in the middle.

The differences were most apparent when dealers commented on what they've found when they tell customers that green construction can cost more than traditional building practices. “Green is not worth the green right now,” one dealer wrote. “You try to sell it, but it's a hard upsell.” But another said that “Serious customers are willing to pay,” while yet another dealer urged: “Don't waste your money on stupid liberal gobbledygook.”

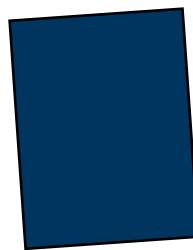
Even if their market isn't ready for green, the survey indicates dealers are preparing. One quarter of the 142 dealer respondents (our of the 192 total respondents to the poll) said they have a formal program in place in which they have identified green products,

and close to half said they collect and share information on green construction basics and the green qualities of products they sell. In addition, close to three-fifths agreed with the statement “Green isn't a big thing in our area now, but we believe it will become a significant factor in homebuilding and remodeling in the future.”

Dealers also have been active in greening their own operations over the past year. Roughly 61% said they have started turning off computers at night to save on electricity costs, 49% have

(continued on page 3)

Dear Friends and Clients,



It's been a long winter, and – let's face it – times are tough for everybody. Signs of renewal in the housing market are as hard to spot as crocuses poking through the snow. However, here at Nickerson- Remick, we're keeping a positive attitude and focusing on the new beginnings that springtime always brings.

Many of you are putting off building a new house, or maybe abandoning the project entirely. That's okay. Remember, we New Englanders have a long tradition of making do with what we have. There may be more value in that old house than you realize. Whether you're a builder, an architect or a homeowner, renovation and preservation are sounding better every day.

Older houses were built solid, with full-dimensional beams, studs and joists, and solid foundations. They may be drafty as all get-out, but you can fix that.

Start with our Spray Polyurethane Foam (SPF) insulation.

(continued on page 3)

Homeowner Puts on General Contractor Hard Hat

Dana Ritchie likes to build houses – for himself. Being a General Contractor is a labor of love for the New Hampshire businessman, but he doesn't think other people would want to pay for his services. "The problem is, I do it right and I don't cut corners."

He got his feet wet years ago as an active participant in the construction of a home in Bedford, MA. By the time he and his wife were ready to build a second home in Laconia, NH, he had decided to assume all general contracting responsibilities

"I didn't know anybody in the area, and I just started going to the lumber yard, and asking for references. I went around to my neighbors and asked them who they liked. And I was very fortunate: I ended up with the best and the brightest in the Lakes Region."

He found Nickerson-Remick by searching online. One of his primary goals was to build an energy-efficient house, and he knew from his experience in Bedford that "the best insulation known to man is spray-in foam."

He also didn't want to burn fossil fuel, and had decided to invest in a geothermal heating and cooling system. "People told us over and over again that we were putting too much money into energy efficiency, but we were willing to make the investment because we thought we could get a good return on it."

His conversations with Nickerson-Remick were the only ones he had about spray foam. "I just had a good feeling that these guys knew what they were doing and that they were going to do a quality job. Nickerson-Remick stands behind the work that they do and I knew they would take my calls if there were any issues."

Then the fun began. "It was very difficult, being a general contractor and also running a business out of a rented condo, I had three children, 4, 3 and 1 at the time, my wife was also working out of the house, and it was very trying – but it was great. It was awesome!"

Once the house was framed up and weather-tight, the Nickerson-Remick crew came onto the site. "They started their work, and we

went from the peak of the roof to the floor of the basement with spray foam. There's a lot of spray foam in the house."

The pace of the work was at times uneven, because bad weather had forced delays and the foam crew had to take days off on a couple of occasions "because we were trying to work a bunch of trades at the same time so we could have everybody scheduled. But they were very accommodating. They were just great to work with."

The other big contributor to the energy efficiency of Ritchie's home was the geothermal heating and cooling system. Geothermal systems utilize the heating and cooling properties of groundwater taken from a well.

The geothermal well qualified Ritchie for the Geothermal Track of the ENERGY STAR Homes Program, administered by Public Service of New Hampshire. In addition to paying for consultation and certification services by a trained home energy rater, ENERGY STAR offers incentives up to \$7,500 for a geothermal home.

When it came time for certification, one of the tests was to shut all the doors and windows, install a huge fan in an outside door, suck air out of the house and measure how quickly air infiltrated back in. The Nickerson-Remick foam insulation did its job, and the Ritchie home was ENERGY STAR certified with a score of 96, with 93 or better required.

Once the Ritchies moved in, the payback on their investment in energy efficiency was quick to materialize. The home is 7,200 square feet. It costs on average \$1,200 a year to heat, and \$200 a year to cool.

Looking back on the project, Dana Ritchie has nothing but good things to say about his experience with Nickerson-Remick. "It was clean, the guys were neat, they picked up after themselves. They did a great job. They gave me more than my money's worth. I'd highly recommend them. And the product

Save the Date!

AIA 2009 NATIONAL CONVENTION

April 30 – May 2

Boston, MA

Dealers Divided on Green...

(continued on page 3)

installed energy-efficient lights, 19% have put in motion sensors, 33% added insulation to reduce fuel bills, and 18% installed lowflow toilets.

These initiatives are taking place despite weak sales conditions. Nearly a quarter of the dealers said sales at their facility were at least 30% lower than they were a year ago, another quarter said sales were down 20% to 29%, and a third quarter said sales were down 10% to 19%. Only 4% said sales had risen. Meanwhile, only 47% of dealers said they expected their facility would post an operating profit this year.

Sad as those numbers are, dealers' estimates of construction activity in their area were even worse. More than 28% said housing starts and/or building permits had fallen at least 40% compared with this time in 2008. Another 16% estimated business was down 30% to 39%. All told, close to 80% said construction activity had shrunk by at least 20%.

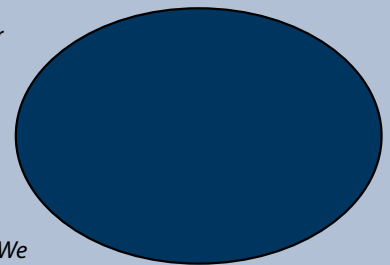
*Source (reprinted with permission from):
Craig Webb, Editor, ProSales Magazine
Publication date: March 18, 2009*



FEATURED PROJECT

Have you ever wanted to showcase your work with fellow builders and architects? Here's your chance! Beginning in the next newsletter, you will have an opportunity to highlight a project you have recently completed incorporating Nickerson-Remick products to be included in the NEW Featured Project section.

Here's how it works. To submit a Featured Project inquiry, simply fill out the form below and either fax to 603-436-2595 or stop by our office and drop off at the front desk. You will also need to submit two color images of the project electronically to jim@nickerson-remick.com. We want to hear from you!



Contact Name: _____

Company Name: _____

Company Address: _____

Company Phone: _____

Project Location (City, State): _____

Nickerson Products Used: _____

Project Description (Please be specific): _____



Nickerson-Remick

95 Brewster St. Portsmouth, NH 03801

Jim's Letter

(continued from cover)

It eliminates air infiltration, sealing your home from windows to vents. It's the most efficient and cost effective insulation available, reducing heating and cooling costs by as much as 40%. It provides superior sound insulation, and keeps out moisture and pests.

We at Nickerson-Remick have been a leader in SPF insulation for more than 30 years, because we offer the best brands and know exactly what to use and when to use it. Contact us for more information about SPF insulation.

You should also be looking at replacing windows and doors, tuning up furnaces, upgrading air conditioners and even installing green technologies such as solar power and geothermal heating and cooling.

Make the best of what you have! And remember, we here at Nickerson Remick are ready to help.

All the Best,

Jim

