

NEW HOMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

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Kitchens go green

By Shari Held
For Custom Publications

The kitchen is the heart of the home, where family and friends gather. Homeowners increasingly want this important space to be functional, inviting, comfortable and, now more than ever, green.

"Green" homes incorporate recycled materials and products that conserve energy and natural resources. Green homes are healthier both for the environment and for the people who live in them. "Our kitchens are the most energy-intensive rooms in our homes," said Jane Brooks of Lone Star Custom Homes. "Oversize and energy-inefficient appliances can be the No. 1 problem with conventional kitchens."

One simple way to "green up" the kitchen is to replace old appliances with energy-efficient models. Another idea is to switch to compact fluorescent lighting, which is easier on the eyes and uses about a quarter of the energy of incandescent bulbs.

Breathe free and easy

Going green also can decrease exposure to chemical emissions, such as toxic fumes from glues and other materials used in the manufacture and installation of kitchen products. Even granite and other natural materials can emit harmful substances and harbor bacteria.

By using a combination of compact fluorescent lighting, energy-efficient appliances and earth-friendly flooring, you can do your part to save money and Mother Earth.

Revolutionary Cambria countertops, made of 93 percent natural quartz, are durable and nonporous. Cambria doesn't stain and is certified for food preparation areas by the National Sanitation Foundation. Cambria is Greenguard Indoor Air Quality-certified by the Greenguard Environmental Institute as a low-emitting product and qualifies as a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-accredited material.

Other green countertops include IceStone and Vertrazzo in recycled glass and concrete versions, as well as Richlite paper-based countertops.

Conventional kitchen cabinetry can emit formaldehyde, but manufacturers such as Neil Kelly, Wood-Mode and others are producing environmentally friendly options using nontoxic bamboo and recycled woods for veneers and wheat board for the cabinet core.

Green from the floor up

Concrete and Marmoleum (a natural product made from linseed oil, wood flour, rosin, jute and limestone) are alternatives to conventional flooring, as is cork, which is very durable and comes in a variety of colors.

When it comes to walls, homebuyers now can opt for paints that emit no or low fumes. No-VOC paint can be expensive, but low-VOC paint is priced comparably to

regular paint and is readily available.

"From the kitchen perspective, green is hot," said Peter Martin, director of marketing operations for Cambria. "It's been on the forefront of kitchen redesign for the last couple years, but in the last couple months, we have really seen it heat up."

Brooks said Lone Star has had more inquiries about green homes in the past month than in the last two years.

"Green products, even when choosing recycled materials, can be more expensive, but if you look at the longevity of the savings and the health qualities, it's kind of a no-brainer," she said. "The payback is very quick. Not only is it healthier, but it's the right thing to do." ■

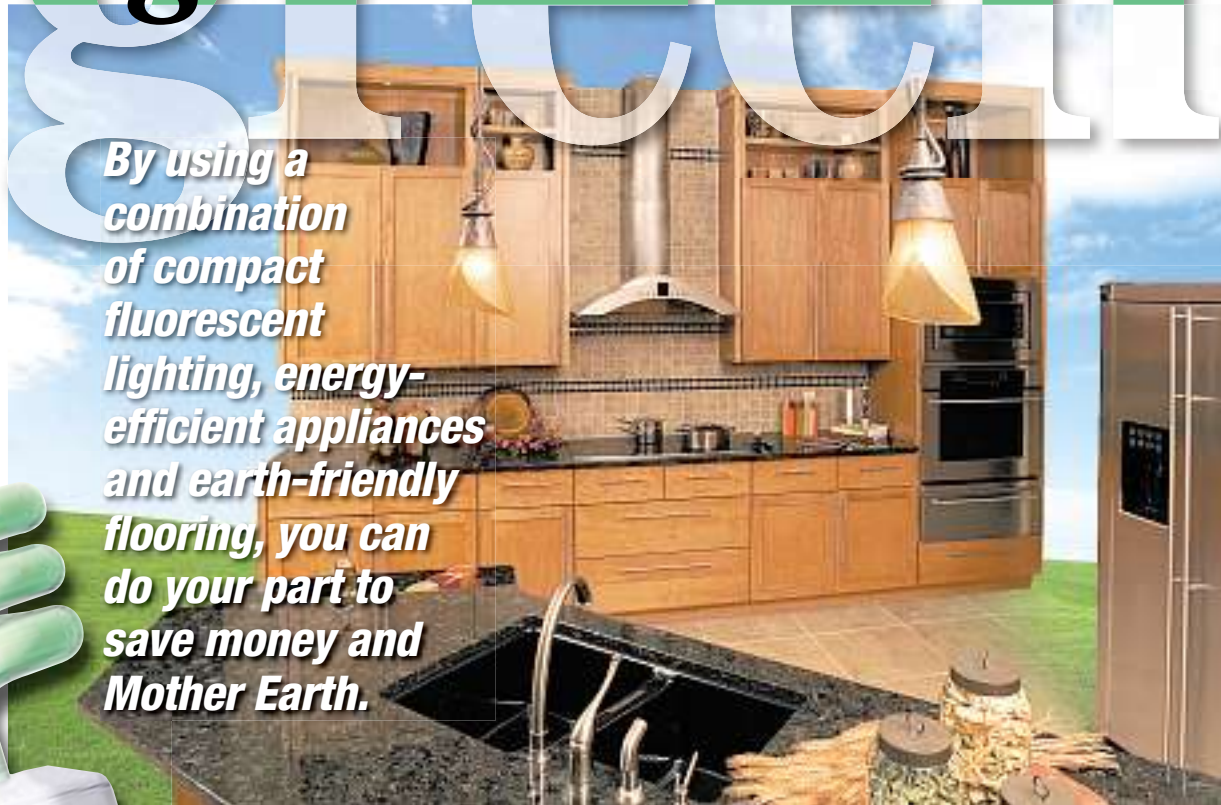


Photo Illustration: Joe Sorria

A look
inside >

A move-in-ready masterpiece



A beautiful two-story entry welcomes you into this stunning four-bedroom home.

H2

Neer Development creating lifestyles, not just homes



Terry Neer's (left) homebuilding knowledge with his twin brother, Larry's marketing and sales background to create new neighborhoods under the Epcon Communities banner.

H5

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[For Custom Publications]

H.H. Gregg funds scholarship



Carl Asaro

Submitted Photo

Indianapolis-based home appliance retailer H.H. Gregg has become the sole corporate sponsor of a 9/11-related scholarship program benefiting the children of Indiana's police officers, firefighters and EMTs.

The H.H. Gregg-Carl Asaro 9/11 Scholarship Fund will provide 30 scholarships annually, including a \$5,000 first-place award, to Indiana high school

seniors. The fund was created in 2002 to honor New York City firefighter Carl Asaro, who died in the collapse of World Trade Center 2.

H.H. Gregg CEO Jerry Throgmartin said the company decided to sponsor the program after learning it was in need of funding.

"Indiana's firemen, police officers and emergency workers have supported

us since the day we opened the doors of our first store back in 1955," he said. "We all agreed that this program was an appropriate, truly meaningful way to say thank you for the daily sacrifices they make. We serve Hoosiers from Clarksville to Fort Wayne, so it only made sense to expand the program statewide instead of just central Indiana."

Application forms are available at all Indiana H.H. Gregg stores, Indiana public high schools and online at www.hhgregg.com and www.avatarpr.com. Applications also may be obtained by writing to Ernie Reno, president, Avatar Communications Group, 4310 Saratoga Parkway, Suite 600, Plainfield, Ind. 46168. Submission deadline is March 1, 2007. ■

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