

The Chronicles of Challenging America – January 31st, 2009



Nat Hodgson of Pulte Del Webb receives a Builders Challenge Award of Excellence at the 2009 IBS from Jack Armstrong of BASF (left) and Ed Pollock of DOE (right).

Just returned from the International Builders Show (IBS) held in Las Vegas where the corridors weren't as crowded as in the past, but I like to think the quality was still there. At last year's IBS, we helped the U.S. Department of Energy launch their Builders Challenge, a voluntary, national energy savings program calling for the nation's homebuilding industry to build high performance energy efficient homes. It took a little while to get off the ground, but we celebrated some significant success this year.

Since the summer of 2008 - in the most severe housing decline in decades - nearly 1,000 homes have been qualified to meet the challenge! About 40 builders qualified homes ranging from scores of 70 to zero on the Energy Smart Home Scale (E-Scale). These homes will save their owners over three quarters of a million dollars every single year through reduced energy bills! Over the next 30 years, these homes will mean total energy cost savings of more than \$23 million or nearly 1 million MMBTUs.

And this is just the beginning! The first target on the way to a Net-Zero Energy Home for all Americans by 2030, is 220,000 high performance homes by 2012. The goal seems much larger now than it did a year ago before the bubble burst, but I remain optimistic because I think the market share of builders who want to differentiate their homes' performance will grow.

I had the opportunity to meet some of the best in the business at the first annual BASF Builders Challenge Awards. They were **John Wesley Miller, President - John Wesley Miller Companies** for the first Net Zero home completed in the Builders Challenge program; **Tom Wade , President – Artistic Homes** for a Net-Zero Energy home with a market price tag of \$250,000; and **Nat Hodgson, Vice President, Construction – Pulte del Webb** for qualifying an amazing 669 homes under the Builders Challenge in 2008. DOE also recognized another ten of the 40 builders who qualified homes during this inaugural year and were present at IBS.