

Innovative Building Techniques Aid the Owner/Builder

With home values plummeting and the market for home loans still in crisis, this downturn in the housing market is tipping the scales in favor of innovative building technologies and solutions. In this construction economy, it is time for conventional “on site” builders and owner/builders to rethink the way homes are built. For a number of reasons, the comfort zone for “on site” builders during the robust housing market in the last decade discouraged modernization and the growth of innovative building solutions. Now on top of the need to build more economically along came the presence of global warming and greener construction practices which also promise to help change the shape of the building industry.

Adapting to a factory method of production became the wave of the future at the turn of the century when Henry Ford industrialized the auto industry. At present every aspect of our lives is shaped by technology and the advances that have changed from how we communicate to how we travel. Yet at the same time home building is still using on site platform framing that was developed in the 19th century. Building in this fashion is wasteful, time consuming, inefficient and costly. For the conventional builder, the industry is now being forced to make technological changes to transition to a changed ecological and economical world.

The panelized building system can be the solution for home builders using conventional stick framing. By concentrating on the building envelope or framing, a builder can zero in on the one aspect of the building process that can benefit from being factory built. Building efficient structures comes down to structurally sound building envelopes and the panelized building industry is in a better position to complete on cost. Home owners are becoming aware that careful design, proper selection of materials and quality construction practices are needed to create an energy-efficient and cost effective home. They recognize the added value and look for the features that not only keep energy bills low but also lead to a healthy, safe, long-lasting and comfortable home. All of this depends on a solid and well built envelope and this is what panel and truss manufacturers know and do best.

This is a new era in home and building techniques where the option of panelized home construction has broadened to include not only standard pre-

designed home plans but also to include virtually any home design. Increased manufacturing flexibility in this high-tech approach also known as kit homes or packaged homes offer pre-engineered wall sections and roof truss systems produced in a controlled factory environment and then shipped complete to the building site for final construction. Once thought of as being an economical solution for lower end homes, panelization is quickly becoming the construction solution for cost effective and ecological friendly building from cottages to mansions.