

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR REALTORS ABOUT **GREEN HOMES**

Learn About Green Homes
Spring 2009

The Real Estate world as we know it is changing. People's desires to live longer, healthier lives, a heightened awareness of environmental issues, our dependence on foreign oil, and prohibitively high household utility bills have caused us to reassess how we have been living and come up with alternatives.

Homes consume more energy and are among the leading causes of the environmental problems that threaten the planet today. Clearly, what we have built and how we have been living up until now just isn't working anymore.

The U.S. Green Building Council is the nation's authoritative body on green and sustainable design and construction, and it's **LEED For Homes (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System** is the benchmark for green design and construction that every other credible green home certification program in America has based their standards on. To date, 16 cities across America have passed laws mandating all governmental (tax-payer funded) construction must be **LEED certified**, and it's just a matter of time before residential homebuilding, including remodeling, will follow suit. As a nation, we simply have no other choice.

Realtors have a very real need to learn about green homes.

Understanding green homes is essential for Realtors to be able to converse intelligently with their Buyers and Sellers, plain and simple. As Realtors, we are required to possess **superior knowledge**, and those of us who remain cognizant and embrace change will be prepared to prevail upon the opportunities that lie ahead. In Sept, 2008, the N.A.R. launched its' **Realtor Green Designation** program, following **Ecobrokers** and **Green Real Estate Education's** launch a few years earlier. All of these programs' content have been based upon the **USGBC's LEED For Homes** program, and are excellent venues that help Realtors stay knowledgeable and competitive while contributing to the greater good.

However, for Realtors who don't wish to schedule the time and spend the money for these programs (and for those who already have and wish to learn more), we've come up with an easier way to provide you with a solid understanding about green homes that you can accomplish at your own time and pace for about \$100 or even less.

My wife and I have built a **LEED Silver** and **Energy Star Qualified** green and sustainable home in Kennett Square, PA. Early in the process, we became frustrated by the lack of information available that explained green homes in simple, non-technical, plain English. Most books published about green homes are really written for people with some prior knowledge about the subject and are actually reference books that present their content categorically (i.e. heating, plumbing, electric, etc.), textbooks with too much non-relevant content, or picture books. None do a very good job explaining green homes in their entirety.

Learning about, planning, and building our LEED Silver home changed our lives and inspired us to write a book **GREEN BEGINNINGS: The Story of How We Built Our Green & Sustainable Home** to help others learn about green homes. Our book, an eco-memoir, reads more like a novel than a textbook or reference manual, and our homespun narrative style of storytelling makes for an enjoyable and informative read. We use the true story of learning about, planning, and building our home to teach about green homes and create a meaningful learning experience.

Additionally, we have opened our home on a limited basis for tours. Our **90 Minute Educational Tour** itineraries provide an opportunity to experience a LEED Silver home first hand “up close and personal”, and allows for questions and conversation about various aspects pertaining to the home. Tours explain green homes from a historic perspective, define the concepts “green” and “sustainable” as they relate to homes, explain the **USGBC’s LEED For Homes** program, and include a 25-minute presentation of our new **GREEN BEGINNINGS VIDEO** showcasing our creative team green builder, architect, sustainable engineer and landscape architect as they discuss various green and sustainable aspects and explain features and benefits.

Presently, there are only 7 LEED homes in PA, and only one in Delaware. Touring one of the first LEED homes in the nation is an educational opportunity and learning experience not to be missed.

We have also set up a website that contains a valuable resource for Realtors. **The Green Voice of Experience Newsletter** is a regularly updated on-line column that provides even more information about green homes, what’s happening with green homes throughout America, and shares our experience living in a green home. Bookmark our website and use our newsletter as a resource, and share it with others who are interested in green homes.

Finally, visit our website www.greenbeginningsconsulting.com for useful links and further information about our home, book, video, tours and newsletter. Our mission is to help others understand green homes and the benefits they avail their occupants, the communities in which they are built, and how they conserve and protect our precious natural resources.

As a special offer to Realtors who sign up during the show, we are offering our complete **GREEN BEGINNINGS Educational Package**; our book, video, and a 90 Minute Educational Tour (Tuesday & Wednesdays at 10am or 1pm only) for only \$100. Ask us about a time and date that works for you.

ABOUT US

Avrim Topel has been a real estate developer, hotelier, and licensed Delaware Realtor since 1972. Vicki Topel is a teacher, animal rights advocate, and physical fitness enthusiast. The couple lives in Kennett Square, PA, and Rehoboth Beach, DE, and is committed to helping others learn about green homes. For information about green homes, their book, video and 90 Minute Educational Tours, call 610-388-1914, or Email: LEEDSilver@yahoo.com
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