



An Interview with Jay Judy, Construction Manager
March 2010

Jay, how long have you been in the construction business?

Well, my father was a contractor, so I've been on the job site for about as long as I can remember. Officially, I've been in construction for the last 27 years, and during that time I've been involved in the building of more than 100 homes. I take a lot of pride in what kind of a home I put in the ground, and I make sure that what's done gets done right. While I've been doing this a long time, I believe there is always something new I can learn to do things even better. I recently was trained and certified as a Green Advantage Builder, and am going through the HERS (Home Energy Rating System) certification program right now. Every new technique I find that I think can make our homes a better home, I incorporate into the next one I build.

When did you start building green?

I have always believed in building the best home possible for our customers. For me, that has meant building a tight, solid house using quality materials and giving a lot of attention to details. It turns out that we've really been building a bit "green" all along – we just didn't have that name for it. There are a lot of specialized things you can do, special materials you can use, to make a house "green", and we have been moving in that direction in the last few homes we've built. But there are also a lot of simple things you can do to make a house more "green", like using 2" x 6" construction, maximizing insulation, caulking joints, wrapping the house tightly, that we have always done.

Your homes in Highland Meadows were built specifically to be "green" houses, though. What is special about the homes you are building in Highland Meadows?

One of the ideas behind Highland Meadows was to create a neighborhood where there was an emphasis on green building and energy efficiency. In the two homes Highland Community Builders has built so far, we took what we were already doing to make our homes energy efficient and long-lasting, and then took them a few steps further.

What are some of the special features of these homes that you are most proud of?

Inside the house, we use ENERGY STAR rated windows, appliances, and light fixtures. We are using recycled carpet, low-VOC paints, and

whenever possible, we use materials manufactured locally. We insulate our homes above what Code requires, and we caulk every little space we can to prevent air from seeping in or out of our homes. We build with a conditioned crawl space that helps maintain the temperature of the house better, too.

Can you explain what a conditioned crawl space is?

A typical crawl space is an uninsulated, vented space that can be the source of drafts, wood rot, and even mold in a home. A conditioned crawl space is an insulated space that is made to be airtight and moisture-free, to avoid the problems of a typical crawlspace that I just described. To do that we seal the crawlspace every way we can when building it, put down a moisture and vapor barrier on the ground, and insulate the walls of the space. Conditioned dry air is continually circulating through the crawlspace and the home to keep it fresh.

How do you know that you are building a more energy efficient home?

Our two model homes were tested through the Home Energy Rating System (HERS) and were rated to be 25% more energy efficient than the average home. That translates into a significant savings for the homeowners when they go to pay their utility bills every month.

Anything else you'd like to mention about Highland Community Builders?

I know that some of this green building discussion can be confusing. Customers wonder what "green" building modifications are really going to benefit them, and what just sounds good. I am happy to have this kind of conversation with anyone who might want us to build them a home.

Email questions to info@highlandmeadowswv.com

At Highland Community Builders, we want our customers to be well-informed about what we can provide them, and about what a great product they'll end up with in an HCB-built home. We want to build them a house they'll be proud to call their home.