

Special Article for Local HBA Publications

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FHBA's SEBC/Green Building Show Fuels the 'Road to Recovery' for 6,500

By Edie Ousley

More than 6,500 building and housing professionals found fuel for the "Road to Recovery" during the 31st annual Southeast Building Conference (SEBC)/Green Building Show held recently at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando.

Sponsored by the Florida Home Builders Association (FHBA), the event presented seminars, an exposition of industry products and services, and rich networking opportunities.

Highlight speakers included green building specialist Carter Oosterhouse, star of HGTV's popular show *Red, Hot & Green*, and adventurer Alison Levine, who led the first all-woman team to climb Mount Everest.

National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) First Vice Chairman Bob Jones of Bloomfield Hills, MI delivered housing outlook news to industry leaders. "The recent gains in the stock market and consumer confidence, as well as solid increases in housing starts, are all reasons for optimism," he explained. Jones was joined by NAHB Third Vice Chairman Barry Rutenberg of Gainesville, and NAHB Immediate Past President Sandy Dunn of Point Pleasant, WV.

FHBA held its annual Summer Builders Conference concurrently with the SEBC/Green Building Show, where its Board of Directors elected Tampa home builder John C. "Chuck" Fowke to the position of President-elect. Fowke will succeed current President Jay Carlson of Punta Gorda as the association's top leader on October 31, 2009.

Three individuals were elected to the Florida Housing Hall of Fame for career contributions to the industry. The inductees included interior merchandiser Kay Green of Kay Green Design in Orlando; former FHBA Past Second Vice President George Kavanagh (deceased) of Port St. Lucie; and former Pasco Builders Association and Tampa Bay Builders Association Executive Officer Joseph Narkiewicz of Tampa.

Throughout the SEBC/Green Building Show and FHBA's Summer Building Conference, industry leaders were honored for their dynamic work products and contributions to their profession.

The prestigious Aurora Awards for Designs of Distinction were presented during an industry gala. Taking the top award, the 2009 Golden Aurora Award, was Wayne Windham Architect for their Nature's Image custom home in Bluffton, South Carolina. Best in State Aurora Awards were also presented with the Florida award going to Johanson Homes, Inc. for a custom remodel on Jupiter Island.

Tallahassee remodeler Ed Dion received the first annual Robert and Amy Harper Award for his tireless work on behalf of the Future Builders of America (FBA). The award, sponsored by Bonded Builders Warranty Group, is named for FHBA Past President Robert Harper and his wife Amy of Lakeland for their generous donation to purchase land for the FBA Training Camp. Dion, a past president of the Tallahassee Builders Association, guided the FBA Leadership Camp in its first two years and is currently building a pavilion at Camp Harper.

Arlene Stewart, a Gainesville energy consultant, and Heather Henning, a Naples commercial builder, were named "Women of Distinction" during the conference. Stewart has guided FHBA's Green Building initiatives as leader of the Green Building Council and Henning runs one of the state's most successful woman-led construction companies.

The Excel Awards, which salute the efforts of top sales and marketing professionals, celebrated its 25th anniversary at the conference.

FHBA's next major event is its Annual Fall Leadership Conference set for October 28-31 at the Renaissance Vinoy Hotel in St. Petersburg. Next year's SEBC/Green Building Show will be held July 22-24, 2010 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando.

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