

## THE BUZZ ABOUT GREEN

By Bob Feeman

These days, you can't turn on the TV or radio, walk down a store aisle, take a trip, eat a meal, go for a walk, drink coffee, have a casual conversation, attend a sporting event or swing a bamboo stick without hitting, hearing about or seeing something green. Green is everywhere, and everything's going green. Homes, cars and office buildings are just the beginning. The Oscars went green this year. So did the Superbowl. Major League Baseball is going green with its Team Greening Program. Major TV networks and local stations have announced they're jumping on the green bandwagon.

Tourism is embracing green, with many hotels turning eco-friendly. Apple, Microsoft and Dell are going green, not only at their facilities but also by beginning to eliminate toxins from electronics products. Walmart and Goodwill, among many other companies, have introduced green initiatives designed to save energy and promote recycling.

Some restaurants have started going green by using more local sources and serving filtered tap water instead of bottled water, to reduce the use of plastics. Schools and college campuses are going green in a big way, as are a great many communities and municipalities.

Grocery bags have gone green. So have disposable coffee cups, cleaning products, sports stadiums, airports and airlines, taxicabs, tools, clothing and coffins (seriously — check out the Eco Casket, made from certified sustainable harvested wood and organic cotton interior cloth). Even weddings are going green, with recycled gowns, recycled-paper invitations and energy-efficient limousines.

It's remarkable, really, how fast green has grown. Four years ago, green was essentially a fringe topic, unfamiliar to most people and difficult to implement into a homebuilding or remodeling project. Even a couple of years ago, green was just starting to get traction. Today, all that has changed, in a number of ways:

- Green has entered the mainstream. True, it's far from ubiquitous, and only a small percentage of today's homes incorporate green elements. But the numbers are rising rapidly, especially with new building projects. In fact, green has become a major driving force in the homebuilding industry.
- It's easier than ever to go green. Major retailers have made green products a priority, and dedicated green retail stores are opening across the country. In addition, a growing number of green-oriented websites are making it easier than ever to locate and purchase green materials. Green products are even popping up at drug stores and supermarkets.

- It's becoming less expensive to go green. While installing a solar energy, geothermal or wind turbine system can still set you back thousands, or perhaps tens of thousands of dollars, most green products are now priced only slightly above conventional products. And in many cases, green products can save you money that will make up the difference in cost within a fairly short period of time.

Yes, when it comes to green, much has changed over the past few years. It's never been easier to go green, and there's never been a better time to start.

This article is compliments of Smart HomeOwner Magazine, the Presenting Sponsor of our 2008 *Smart Home Owner Seminar Series* taking place throughout the weekend. Bob Feeman is the editor of Smart HomeOwner Magazine. He can be reached at [bfeeman@smarthomeownermag.com](mailto:bfeeman@smarthomeownermag.com)