

# Reaching for Green

## NAHB Launches National Green Building Program at Builders' Show



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The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) has launched the National Green Building Program, an education, verification and certification program that will allow builders to build green homes. The program was launched at the International Builders' Show held in early February and the association's New American Home™, on display in Orlando, was the first show home to be certified in the new program. The project was awarded "gold" level certification.

The program features an online scoring tool at [www.nahbgreen.org](http://www.nahbgreen.org), which shows the builder how to accrue points in seven categories: water, energy and resource efficiency, lot and site development, indoor environmental quality, global impact and homeowner education. The program sets point requirements in each category for the bronze, silver and gold levels (*see chart below*). An Emerald level will also be available once the standard is complete in the spring.

Homes are inspected and verified by local green experts and the documentation is sent to the NAHB Research Center for review. If the project qualifies, the home can receive national certification from the Research Center.

NAHB program coordinator Emily English stressed that the program is avail-

able online and is easy to use. In fact, Tom Kenney of the NAHB Research Center said users can keep track of projects online as the program is Internet-based.

"It takes a 'Turbo Tax' approach," he said. "It walks you through step by step and gives you helpful hints along the way."

Once the standard is approved it will be released as an NAHB/ICC ANSI-approved standard, according to English.

Cost of participation is \$150 per project for NAHB members (will be higher for non-members) in addition to the verifier fee. The association will provide members with a list of accredited verifiers on its website. The verification cost can range from \$200-700 dollars, she said.


"It allows builders to pick and choose how they accumulate points," said English. "It allows for regionally appropriate choices."

When designing for a project, builders can choose a prescriptive path or a performance path. Kenney said an essential item in the program is energy efficiency. **SHELTER** learned that builders can earn eight points for using ENERGY STAR windows.

### LEED versus NAHB

According to English, people always ask how this program differs from the U.S Green Building Council's LEED for Homes Program. She gave the example of one project that would cost one percent more to certify to NAHB and 2.7 percent more to certify to LEED. She also said the NAHB program is less cumbersome.

"Our builders have told us it's [LEED] like applying for a Supreme Court briefing," she said. "Time is money for builders."

In the question-and-answer portion of the session an architect in attendance pointed out that it's virtually impossible to earn a LEED certification for a large home, for example, 8,000 square feet. He asked if this is the case with NAHB's program. English said that builders are not penalized for a large home, but for structures above 4,000 square feet require that extra points be earned in other areas. 

### Points Required for the Three Different Levels of Green Building

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Lot Design, Preparation, and Development	8	10	12
Resource Efficiency	44	60	77
Energy Efficiency	37	62	100
Water Efficiency	6	13	19
Indoor Environmental Quality	32	54	72
Operation, Maintenance, and Homeowner Education	7	7	9
Global Impact	3	5	6
Additional points from sections of your choice	100	100	100

Source: NAHB