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North Carolina Architect Wins National AIA Award 04-22-2009

RALEIGH, N.C. - "All good buildings begin with the land." That is the edict that informs every building Raleigh, NC-based architect Frank Harmon, FAIA, designs. It is also one of the key reasons his design of a green residence in Charleston, South Carolina, recently received one of the American Institute of Architects' 17 Housing Awards for 2009. [More....](#)

Through the Knothole



Mike Noonan

What's Your Outlook?

There are differing opinions regarding the status of the construction industry. Depending on who you ask, where you live and work, you'll get a variety of answers.

This much appears to be certain:



National Green Building Standard Picks Up Momentum

April 23, 2009 - As demand for authentic, verifiable green home construction practices continues its ascent, the National Green Building Standard™ is back on the presses for a second printing.

The standard is the first green rating system for new homes, remodeling projects and residential communities to be approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). The first printing was released by BuilderBooks, the publishing arm for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), in March - and has already sold out. [More....](#)

McGraw-Hill reports March rise in new construction

* A tax credit for first-time home buyers and historically low interest rates is creating an increase in traffic back into the market. Unsold inventory is being reduced, albeit at low prices.

* Material prices are at low levels. Meanwhile, the construction industry is experiencing extremely aggressive pricing, the likes of which haven't been seen in many years.

* The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) single-family Housing Market Index (HMI) rose from 9 to 14 in April and improvements were registered in current sales, buyer traffic, and sales expectations in all four regions of the country. The HMI is a weighted, seasonally adjusted statistic derived from ratings to provide some insight into present and future residential construction. Information is based on monthly surveys of about 400 companies of all sizes. The numbers had been mired in a record-low and narrow range from last November through March of this year. A rating of 50 or higher indicates positive comments about the economy. Below 50 indicates mostly negative. The report from NAHB concludes by saying that while one month doesn't make a trend, the positive signals provided by the April HMI are welcomed.

It's hard to reach a conclusion about our industry when there seems to be a confusing and sometimes contradictory mix of good and bad news about the housing industry. All of us would agree that news stating we have reached the bottom of the housing descent is what we are most anxious to hear.

Cascade Mg Co is maintaining



starts

Meanwhile, the National Association of Business Economics (NABE) says the economic slide is slowing

By Ken Simonson

New construction starts increased 5 percent in March, seasonally adjusted, McGraw-Hill Construction is reporting, based on its own data compilation. However, for the first quarter of 2009 compared to the same months of 2008, total starts tumbled 40 percent. [More....](#)



The Greenhouse of the Future

We asked architects to draw up plans for the most energy-efficient houses they could imagine. They imagined quite a bit.

By: Alex Frangos

What will the energy-efficient house of the future look like?

It could have gardens on its walls or a pond stocked with fish for dinner. It might mimic a tree, turning sunlight into energy and carbon dioxide into oxygen. Or perhaps it will be more like a lizard, changing its color to suit the weather and healing itself when it gets damaged. [More....](#)



Problems Continue To Grow With Drywall Made in China

By: William J. Angelo, with Steven Setzer

Amid a growing chorus of complaints, two U.S. Senators have introduced legislation to recall Chinese-made drywall and to ban further imports until federal safety standards are developed. Meanwhile, Florida's governor has asked the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to help the state develop and implement chemical-testing strategies. [More....](#)



Architectural Billings Index Jumps 8 Points

April 22, 2009 By Jenna M. McKnight

The Architectural Billings Index (ABI) rose to 43.7 in March, up from 35.3 in February. It's the first time the score has landed above 40 since last September.

The inquiries score, which in February was 49.5, climbed to 56.6. The index, one of the profession's leading economic indicators, reflects a nine- to 12-month lag time between architectural billings and construction spending. The American Institute of Architects produces the index based on surveys sent to architecture firms. A score above 50 indicates an increase in billings, and below 50, a decrease. In January, the billings score dipped to 33.3-a record low

its commitment to the construction industry. While some companies are reducing their presence in the market place, we are all the more committed to earning your trust and your business.

in the ABI's 13-year history. [More....](#)

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