



Building a Better Community

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New Homes of the Future: Smaller, Greener and More Casual

The economic downturn has changed the way Americans look at a lot of things, including what they are looking for in their next home. A study by the National Association of Home Builders suggests that the recession has caused prospective home buyers to shift their perspective on the housing they want and need, and that the new home of the future will focus more on efficiency than indulgence.

The survey asked builders, designers, architects, manufacturers, and marketing specialists about what they thought the likely characteristics of the average, new single-family detached home would be in 2015.

First, the typical size of new homes will continue to shrink, with respondents saying they expect homes to average 2,152 square feet. That is 10 percent smaller than the average size of single-family homes started in 2010.

This decrease is likely influenced by economic hardship, with consumers focusing on lowering the cost of heating and cooling their homes as well as no longer having a lot of equity in their current homes to finance purchasing a much larger one. An aging population will also increase demand for smaller homes as empty-nesters downsize into easier-to-manage properties.

A smaller home means the space must be better suited to modern lifestyles. Fifty-two percent of builders expect the living room to be merged with other spaces in the home by 2015 and 30 percent said it will vanish entirely. Respondents also expect the entry foyer and dining rooms to become smaller, or merge with other spaces. A great room comprised of the kitchen, foyer and living room is the most likely room to be included in the average new home.

Kitchens are also expected to become more functional. Double sinks, recessed lighting, table space for eating, a breakfast bar and pull-out drawers are the features most likely to be in the new home kitchen in 2015.

In addition to floor plan changes, it is expected that new homes in 2015 will include more green features and technology, including low-E windows; engineered wood beams, joists or trusses; water-efficient features such as dual-flush toilets or low-flow faucets; and an ENERGY STAR rating for the whole house.

Learn more about building and remodeling green at www.columbiagreenbuilders.com.

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