

Feature

Member Community "Green"



Manufactured "green" home communities

by Steve Lefler and Janece Herrington

Conservation, efficiency, and stewardship of resources. Everywhere you turn you see a new cultural awareness taking place as people look to save money and leave a smaller footprint on the earth. Going "Green" is the wave of the future. Along with that, it is estimated that within the next 10 years, over 50 percent of the U.S. population will be over 60 years of age. Life expectancy continues to grow with every passing year, and while the amount of wealth this population has accumulated is immense, it will not be enough to sustain the entire group into their 80s and 90s.

Is there a way to address both of these issues?

The answer is, yes!

Owners of today's manufactured home communities have the opportunity to be on the leading edge of green technologies, by bringing these innovations and others like them into their communities. Manufactured home communities naturally create small concentrations of families and seniors, making it easier to provide a variety of social services to both of these groups.

For example, there is growing popularity and need for assisted living centers, and this sector of the real estate market is considered to be in its growth stage throughout the country. Many of today's seniors are on fixed incomes and find that the high cost of owning and maintaining a home can drain their savings. Additionally, the children of this growing demographic are finding it more difficult – if not impossible – to afford the high cost of a stick-built or conventional home, and care for their parents.

Community living

Manufactured home communities have long been thought of as the affordable alternative to the high cost of stick-built houses, including condos, townhouses, and single-family residences. You, as the community owner, hold the answers for this

affordable housing challenge. At the same time, by taking advantage of green technologies, you can begin transforming your community into an energy efficient, environmentally responsible property. By making a green impact you not only enhance your community now, you're also making a wise investment in your future costs. Since there are so many cost-effective incentives being sponsored by various government agencies, why not take advantage of them today?

LED lighting

One place where we suggest you may begin with your change to green is the use of solar powered led (light-emitting diode) streetlights and walkways lights. While replacing



your traditional streetlights with led street lights requires an initial investment, the advantages are far reaching. The solar street light can be installed anywhere any light is needed as it does not require the cost of an electrician to install, and the location is only controlled by the landscape's physical obstructions. These led lights are almost completely maintenance free (each bulb lasting 20+ years). In addition, leds help eliminate electrical costs since they are powered by a backup that obtains its energy from the sun.

Solar power

Another area to consider is the communal areas. The installation of a solar water heater system to pre-heat the community pool and spa, as well as pre-heat an existing water heater's cold water intake, is a fantastic green alternative. By reducing the community's heating communal costs these systems have a short term payback. Consider a solar panel electrical generation system providing power for the property's lighting and electrical usage within its clubhouse. The initial cost for this kind of system has a higher term of payback; however, you can fix your current electrical costs

to today's rates, supplement your electricity generation and eliminate future utility electrical cost increases. Once the solar generation system's payback is reached, your total future electrical costs will be minimal.

Water capture and conservation

Water is a huge issue in many parts of the country, especially the drier climates. The installation of a rainwater collection system is a smart, green choice. After capturing (free) rainwater within a storage tank, it can then be pumped to a drip irrigation system for watering your existing vegetation during the summer months. Combine this with the introduction of new drought tolerant plants around pool area and clubhouse, and you have a win-win watering solution. One inch of rainfall in reality is an acre foot of rainwater – or 325,851 gallons of water. As we all know, this rainwater usually just runs out of the community and down the nearest storm drain or creek. Because the surface area of your clubhouse roof is smaller in size, it will produce a lot of water for storage for your later use in the drier months.

A community owner today can make a green start by contacting their local utility company, and having them perform an energy audit on their community. A realistic goal of 25 percent reduction in utility usage, and costs should be attainable with the above changes to your existing systems.

There are now solar powered, *green* Energy Star manufactured homes available. This is the perfect solution for community owners who want to be cutting edge, have a desire to create an interest about their community, and who have been grappling about an upgrade to their electrical infrastructure (especially if their community's electricity is master-metered and the homesites' pedestals are at 50AMPs or less).

Some of the basic principals of going green include looking at your community's design for ways to improve its efficiency, looking at your energy usage and making changes to reduce it, and using your available water more wisely by eliminating waste. We believe your properties are going to be a very integral part of the solution of our upcoming housing crisis in the coming decades, and can provide ways to reduce the drain on our natural resources. Your local government plus the federal branch are grappling with these issues now as well.

You can lead the way.

If you have any questions regarding green manufactured homes and your community, contact Steve Lefler or Janece Herrington, Newport Pacific Capital Company: 949.852.5575; janece@newportpacific.com; www.newportpacific.com. ❁

