

United Country's Darryl McCreary Leads as Green Agent

Green living emerges, Earth Day is celebrated and now a new type of agent has arrived to bring it all home. Joining the team at United Country of Leipers Fork is Darryl McCreary, a designated *green agent* by the National Association of Realtors. After completing the first Green Core Course ever held in the southeast, he is one of only a handful of green-certified real estate agents in the mid-state.

Working with developers and homeowners, McCreary has discovered how much is going on in respect to green living and the technology that exists. Once believed to be too expensive, homeowners are learning there is a health benefit and cost savings to using energy efficient appliances, recycled materials and other alternative items for the home.

"The market is driving it right now, the technology components used. Government is not mandating it, it's happening on its own," claims McCreary. And, he adds, "You don't have to be a tree hugger to know it's a smart thing to do."

A newly constructed home in Franklin, listed under United Country, offers an example. The home is beautiful and spacious incorporating earth-friendly elements, some obvious to the eye, others not. Easy to spot are the reclaimed oak floors from the 1800s, antique Argentine doors and salvaged brick and stone that not only fit well into the interior design, but offer a wealthy character and quality to the home. Genuine hardwood floors,

as in this home, can last 200 years. Further talk with the agent delves further into a deeper shade of green.

"Air quality inside a home is worse than the air outside," states McCreary. Paints, flooring and cabinets can release low level toxic emissions into the air for years. The source of these toxins is a variety of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which has led to an increased consumer demand for low-VOC and zero-VOC paints and finishes. Most paint manufacturers now offer an alternative that is durable, cost-effective and less harmful to humans and the environment. This is also an ideal solution for family members with asthma.

Living green can go as far as being off the grid when alternative sources for utilities are exclusively used. More common are the homes with certain components in their construction that are recognized as eco-friendly. Darryl's preference is to work with LEED certified builders (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) who are rated and qualified based on certain criteria. LEED homes have lower energy and water bills, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and fewer problems with mold, mildew and other indoor toxins. A green home today has a HERS (Home Efficiency Rating System) rating up to twice the average home, leading to a significant cost savings and an improvement in health and environmental issues.

The same home introduced here includes Energy Star rated appliances, fixtures, heating



Darryl McCreary and Cindy Garvey of United Country Real Estate.

and air system and water heater, as well as, low-E windows and no-VOC paint and finishes on walls and cabinetry. There are plenty of options today for homeowners to update their existing homes to be more environmentally safe by choosing materials that are energy efficient, less hazardous and recycled. The savings in utility bills and health benefits will more than make up for a little added spending.

Cindy Garvey, owner/agent of United Country, is excited about having a green agent on board. "It's a different angle in this market, you've got to do different things, get out of the normal little box. What sells real estate today is not the way I've been selling for the past 20 years," she acknowledges. The new broker looks forward to his

role with new development, as well as working with people on retrofitting old construction.

McCreary brings a fresh, new perspective on real estate while helping to promote better living through environmental friendly choices. "Builders and realtors are seeing the advantage. The market needs them, (those) who understand the techniques from an environmental and health perspective," he shares. "It's smart, it's sustainability." ❁

Becky Bauer lives in rural Williamson County. A songwriter, poet and equestrian with interests in graphic and Web site design, her various talents make her a multi-faceted contributor to this publication.

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