

2009 Star of Energy Efficiency Awards

Nominee: Todd Usher, Addison Homes LLC

Category: Charles H. Percy Award

Todd Usher founded Greenville, SC-based Addison Homes, LLC in 2001, making the decision to build only homes that met stringent EarthCraft House™ and ENERGY STAR® standards despite an Upstate marketplace that had yet to embrace green building. Using green building as a marketing point of differentiation, Usher today is recognized as a leading green building expert in Upstate South Carolina.

Usher has earned and maintains certifications including: Southface LEED™ For Homes Representative status - one of approximately 20 individuals in the Southeast designated to help builders and homeowners certify homes to the LEED For Homes residential green building standards; National Green Building Standard verifier for the NAHB Research Center; EarthCraft House™ Technical Advisor for Southface Energy Institute; and ENERGY STAR® home energy rater.

In 2007, Addison Homes was recognized by Southface Energy Institute and the Atlanta Home Builders Association as the EarthCraft House™ Regional Builder of the Year. In 2008, Usher received the Sustainable Communities Champion award from Upstate Forever, the membership based organization that promotes sensible growth and protects special places in the Upstate region of South Carolina. Also in 2008, Usher received the first Individual Environmental Stewardship Award from the Upstate Branch of the U.S. Green Building Council.

In addition to Usher's passion for green building is his passion for learning. He often is found traveling across the country to attend the latest green building course or conference. His training has resulted in his qualification to test and certify new homes under a variety of green building programs. He has earned the following designations relating to his training:

- Southface LEED™ For Homes Representative status
- EarthCraft House™ Technical Advisor for Southface Energy Institute
- National Green Building Standard verifier for the NAHB Research Center
- ENERGY STAR® Home Energy Rater

One example of Usher's leadership is his advocacy for the affordable housing market. He became an advocate for green building in the affordable housing market several years ago when he and Carlton Owen of Upstate Forever arranged to take a group of affordable housing leaders from Greenville to Atlanta. The goal was to show the Greenville group how Atlanta Habitat for Humanity was building all of its new affordable homes to EarthCraft House™ standards. The result was a commitment by Habitat For Humanity of Greenville County to build and certify all of its new homes to EarthCraft House™ standards along with the commitment by the Greenville County Redevelopment Authority to require ENERGY STAR® qualification for all new homes. Usher now works with both entities to provide certification inspections and consulting at discounted, below-market rates. Usher also sponsors a Greenville Habitat home each year, providing certification at no cost to Habitat for Humanity. This trend is growing, with Usher now working with Habitat for Humanity of Spartanburg County and the Eastern 8 Community Development Corporation in Johnston City, Tennessee to certify all of their new homes to EarthCraft House™ standards.