

Look for...

Resources and incentives for green homes are just a quick internet search away:

Pacific Northwest

- Cascadia Region Green Building Council
- Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency
- Northwest Ecobuilding Guild
- Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance
- Northwest Energy Efficiency Council
- Northwest Energy Coalition
- Northwest Energy Star
- Smart Communities Network

British Columbia

- Light House Sustainable Building Centre
- Vancouver BuildSmart

Washington

- Seattle City Green Building
- Built Green

Oregon

- Energy Trust of Oregon
- Earth Advantage
- G/Rated

California

- Build it Green

For more information about LEED for Homes, see the U.S. Green Building Council at www.usgbc.org.



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Green Homes

TOM KELLY is President of Neil Kelly Company, a design/build remodeler that has been working in the greater Portland/Vancouver area since 1947.


“ My dad, Neil Kelly, was part of a large Irish Catholic farming family in Minnesota, and he hit the rails and came to Oregon in the '30s. For years, he led the charge on a progressive approach to business and corporate responsibility with his remodeling and contractor company. Back in the '70s, there was the energy crisis at the time, and we were pretty heavily involved in solar hot-water systems, and we had a weatherization division. I don't think we even had the words "green building" in those days, but we were definitely helping folks conserve energy.

The business of home remodeling is somewhat of a green thing to →



Photo: from Neil Kelly, Inc.

A home built by Neil Kelly, Inc. in Parkdale, Oregon was the fourth in the nation to be awarded a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.


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➤ begin with, because we're keeping quality homes alive and slowing the need for suburban development. We were also one of the first cabinet companies to use FSC-certified wood, and we have been sourcing FSC-certified framing lumber from the Warm Springs Indian Tribe in Oregon. This has been a great connection for us because the wood comes from a well-managed forest and doesn't have to travel a long way. We have also been running biodiesel in a number of our vehicles for quite a while.

Even so, I've tried to look at our business more holistically. The Natural Step framework was a real epiphany for me personally. It helps companies take deliberate steps, one at a time, toward more sustainable practices. Now, all our new employees get exposure to the Natural Step as part of their orientation.



Our biggest roadblock to more sustainable building isn't us, and it isn't the competition. It's the lack of consumer understanding about value versus cost. We wish we had more demand. We're much more excited to build green than the average homebuyer. Even today, even in Oregon.

Residential green building has been a little slow to catch on, but now you can't

open up an industry magazine without seeing green. I just got a survey from the National Association of Home Builders, and its primary question was: What are you doing that has to do with green? It's everywhere.

For example, in 2001, when we built Viridian Place, the building that houses our showroom in Lake Oswego, I couldn't

get anybody in the appraisal world, the banking world, or the insurance world to value a green building any differently than a conventional building – even though we could show them that it would cost a lot less to operate. Things are different now. When I requested an appraisal for the LEED-certified house we built this year in Parkdale, green building was all the appraiser could talk about.

In the last several weeks, Oregon's

Regional Multiple Listing Service said it will start including information about energy efficiency and green home features in its listings starting next spring. These kinds of transformations are a big deal.

The three biggest reasons to build green are lower energy costs, a healthier home environment, and added value. When homeowners start understanding that green homes are going to have more

value, they're going to make decisions to invest in measures they wouldn't have before.

We just started a new business we call Home Performance where we go in and we do a complete, in-depth analysis of your house and provide a report and recommendations to optimize home health and efficiency. We're already running five or six audits a week, and we're the only general contractor in Portland who's in that business.

Still, incentives for building green depend a lot on where the home is located. We just completed a family home in Dundee that is in the application process for LEED Gold certification. The owner was eligible for a grant for solar photovoltaics from the Energy Trust of Oregon that'll dramatically

shorten the payback period on the PV system.

Having a reservoir of expertise about green building inside our company is very important for our future. We have this underlying belief that if we're going to be builders and remodelers, we will build sustainable as much as we can. For us, it's a great fit.

Twenty years from now, the term "green building" is going to sound really old-fashioned. There's no comparable historical change really; it's just going to be considered the best practice in home building and materials selection. ”

—Tom Kelly

HOMES WITH LOCAL CHARACTER: Partners connect the forest to the framing

Here along the West Coast, amid some of the world's best timber growing country, it's only natural that we build our homes out of wood. And how that wood is harvested makes all the difference to the health of our forests. Whether you are in need of a two-by-four or just admire exposed beams, a stamp of approval from the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) ensures that your wood makes the grade.

FSC-certified wood also earns points toward a wide range of green-building awards. Since 2001, Ecotrust's Forestry program has been working with forestland owners, mills, retailers and other partners along the coast to connect local markets to regionally sourced and well-managed forest products. It's a project that's deeply rooted, in the prosperity of Salmon Nation.



Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood from the lands of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs is on display in the Neil Kelly-built home.