

SERENBE IS A NATIONAL MODEL FOR THE FUTURE OF SMART DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Community on the Edge of Atlanta Focuses on Land Preservation, Green Building, Organic Farming, and Clean Technologies

Chattahoochee Hills, GA (12.01.08) — Serenbe, a 1,000-acre sustainable community on the edge of Atlanta, is a national model for the future of smart development in the U.S.—focusing on land preservation, energy efficiency and green building, and community living. While daily news headlines are all doom and gloom regarding the housing industry, some analysts see this market as the opportunity of a lifetime for responsible developments like Serenbe, and the chance to move the U.S. towards financially and environmentally sound growth.

A 2008 report from McGraw-Hill Construction, cosponsored by the National Association of Home Builders, predicts that the market for green housing will grow from as little as \$12 billion this year to between \$40 billion and \$70 billion by 2012.

This prediction comes as consumers become more aware of surprising facts: The construction and operation of buildings generate half of all greenhouse gas emissions in the country, according to estimates based on data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Residential buildings alone account for 21% of national energy consumption—nearly as much as transportation (27%). As Americans are becoming increasingly conscious of their individual impact on the planet, they are demanding more responsible solutions, especially regarding their homes.

A recent white paper from the Urban Land Institute predicts that approximately 70% of future building will be in the greenfield. Development must occur to accommodate the need for housing, but does not have to occur at nature's expense. Serenbe and the Chattahoochee Hills are national models for land conservation: The Chattahoochee Hill Country Overlay and Serenbe land plan both call for a preservation of at least 70% of acreage, while building on a maximum on 30% of the land. These development plans will accommodate as many or more people as subdivision-style development, which would preserve a maximum of 20% of the land and disturb nearly 80%. This is accomplished by using the basic tenets of new urbanism—dense building around community centers, just like many historic U.S. towns and English villages.

“Developers have seen the wisdom and financial rewards of creating new traditional neighborhoods that are desirable and market-friendly alternatives to sprawl. New small-town communities are prospering despite the current economic downturn,” says Russell Versaci, architect and national green building expert. In October and November, Serenbe Real Estate welcomed six new families into the community, occupying three townhouses, two cottages and an estate home.

Green building has long been the common sense way to build. Though the buzz is relatively new, the idea is vintage: Work with nature's gifts rather than against them. Homes within Serenbe, for example, are sited with minimal disturbance of the land and natural terrain, and are placed in relation to the sun for maximum energy efficiency and natural heating and cooling, and windows are placed for cross-ventilation. All structures are built to the strict green building standards mandated by EarthCraft Home; in 2008, Serenbe was honored EarthCraft Development of the Year.

“With the industry broken in so many ways, it's time for a change. The recent and now certain death of the suburban subdivision and its cookie-cutter production methods opens up home building to a new dawn. But how do we let the sun shine in?” questions Russell Versaci in *Old House Journal's New Old House Magazine* (Winter 2009). “The answer is to go back to basics — an architecture of common sense based on tradition and community living. Instead of homes that are built to fall apart and are unlovable, clustered in sterile subdivisions and demeaning warehouse districts, we will build new old houses in hometowns designed around the old-fashioned concept of “neighborhood.” These neighborhoods will look a lot like the places we Americans have grown to cherish: traditional homes in small towns that are rooted in place, built to last, and tailored to our needs — in short, lovable homes. Today we have a chance to return American home building to its rightful place as a source of national pride. We can make the new old house the essential home of new urban and rural home building—rich in character, sustainable, and made to order. They will be the classic homes of tomorrow, beloved, inherited, and preserved by the next generations, breathing new life into America's story of home.”

In addition to land conservation and green building, Serenbe promotes clean technologies and green practices, such as recycling and composting, alternative fuel usage for maintenance vehicles, geo-thermal heating, and the farm-to-table movement with a partnership between the Serenbe Organic Farm and Serenbe's three restaurants. Addressing our planet's shrinking water supply is of utmost importance to Serenbe. The community is a cutting edge example of several of the water conservation practices President-elect Obama promises to promote in his administration: improved technology for water conservation and efficiency via water-smart appliances like dual-flush toilets, wastewater treatment using bio-retention and constructed wetlands, minimal landscaping, and stormwater treatment via natural buffers. The monthly water bill for Serenbe as a community is 25% lower than the national average.

Serenbe, along with our esteemed builders—Capstone Partners, McKinney Builders, Greg Mansour Construction, T. Olive

Properties, The Hoots Group, Martin Dodson Homes, Arc & Angle Home Builders, Moon Brothers, and Green Homes—are proud to be on the cutting edge of the future of development in the U.S. and an example of responsible growth.

Serenbe is a 1,000 acre community located just 30 minutes from Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. It was the first hamlet built in Chattahoochee Hills, a 40,000 acre city with an overlay plan that calls for preservation of a minimum of 70% of the acreage. Serenbe has private residential homes, commercial space, art galleries, original shops, stables, a 20-room inn with conference facilities, and organic farm with CSA program and Saturday markets. In 2008, the Urban Land Institute awarded Serenbe its inaugural Sustainability Award, the Atlanta Regional Commission honored Serenbe as a "Development of Excellence" with special merit in conservation, and EarthCraft named Serenbe the EarthCraft Development of the Year. The community is home to three restaurants—Blue Eyed Daisy Bakeshop (the nation's smallest Silver LEED certified building), The Farmhouse (which has received national critical acclaim in Gourmet and Bon Appetit magazines, and is consistently featured in local publications), and The Hil (owned by executive chef Hilary White, and has received national critical acclaim in Food and Wine magazine, and was named a Best New Restaurant by Atlanta Magazine and the Atlanta Journal Constitution). For more information, visit www.serenbe.com.