



Cover Story

Safer Communities One Home at a Time

From 'Safe and Sound' to 'Peace of Mind,' the 2006 NextGen Demonstration Home offers builders a chance to see how safe a community can be.

by Howard Shingle

When the expected 100,000-plus attendees to the International Builders Show (IBS) come to Orlando, FL, in January, they most likely will gather at a very timely exhibit: The NextGen Peace of Mind Demonstration Home.

Constructed in the parking lot of the Orange County Convention Center, this 2,500-square-foot home, built by custom homebuilder BrownStone Builders & Associates, will showcase the latest innovations in home building and design from storm-resistant construction to the latest advancements in home air quality, energy efficiency, home control and interior products.

Once again Hurricane Protection magazine has joined with NextGen home producer, iShow, as a media sponsor of the Peace of Mind demonstration home (see HP, Winter 2005, page 16), and the hurricane protection industry has joined, in force, as sponsors showcasing storm protection products. Every type of hurricane protection opening will be displayed as part of the NextGen home.

PEACE OF MIND

The theme of the 2006 NextGen home is Peace of Mind and it starts with construction. Built to the Institute for Business & Home Safety's (IBHS) "Fortified . . . for safer living®" program, the home offers a flexible and affordable means to construct a disaster-resistant new home anywhere in the country. "The NextGen home offers a great opportunity to present the program to builders looking to add this kind of value for their customers," says Kevin Barber, vice president of communications at IBHS.

The 2006 Peace of Mind home, however, will serve as more than a show home—it is also the model for the first-ever NextGen Certified Community, an entire collection of homes offered with the latest technology and building products that draw visitors each year from around the globe.

The Porte de la Mer community development currently is under construction just 15 minutes from Tampa Bay, FL. A gated community with waterfront property on the Alafia River, Porte de la Mer is the result of a partnership between NextGen and BrownStone Builders. "We have been

approached many times over the years by developers wanting to incorporate the themes and products of NextGen homes into a community, however this is the first time we've decided to do it," says Paul Barnett, president of iShow.

Visitors to the home will enjoy not only a look at better building products, but also a hands-on introduction to the latest advancements in home air quality, energy efficiency and home control. "The idea is to meld all of these new technologies into a home that truly offers its resident what every homebuyer is looking for: peace of mind," says Barnett.

"We're really excited about bringing new technology to the marketplace, especially as it involves disaster resistance, the need for which has definitely been seen this year," says Carlos Martin, a researcher for the Advancement of Technology in Housing (PATH).

The NextGen Certified Community will include 52 single-family homes. Offerings will range from exact replicas of the NextGen Peace of Mind home—a single story home measuring 2,565 square feet—to two-story homes of approximately 3,400 square feet and three-story homes on the community's waterfront property spanning about 4,000 square feet.

No matter the floor plan, however, every home at Porte de la Mer will feature the latest innovations in storm-resistant construction, built to Fortified . . . for safer living program whose standards exceed current building codes and include the incorporation of more than 15 new technologies approved by PATH.

Frank Daly, partner with BrownStone Builders, says that he thinks the fact that BrownStone is a custom homebuilder made the company an attractive choice. "As a custom builder, we're used to paying particular attention to each individual home's design, amenities, technology, efficiency and structure in order to meet the needs of the most demanding buyer. With this community we're able to take those custom priorities—that custom finish, feel and level of security—and expand it to an entire community."