

NEWSLETTERS

Summer, 2001 Newsletter

Table Of Contents

- Environmental Policy Forum to Focus on Energy Reliability
- Director's View
- Homes Buyers Put Their Money Where Their Values Are
- Leadership and Innovation Can Lead Us Out of the Oil Age by Paul Hawken
- Calendar
- Member Profile: Ron Pelky, Brunsell Lumber & Millwork
- In Brief

Environmental Policy Forum to Focus on Energy Reliability

Energy reliability has emerged as a key concern in determining the future of our state's economy and environment. According to many stakeholders WEI has interviewed, there is a clear need for increased communication and collaboration among government agencies, citizen organizations, utilities, and industries in energy planning. Based on this feedback, the focus of WEI's environmental policy program in 2001 will be "Ensuring Wisconsin's Energy Reliability and Environmental Quality". WEI plans to hold an environmental policy forum on energy reliability that will explore ways to create a reliable energy system in Wisconsin that is economically viable and ecologically sustainable.

The forum comes at a crucial moment in Wisconsin's energy planning. Given our aging infrastructure and increasing energy demand, several proposals for added generation and transmission capacity are under review. The need to address Wisconsin's energy future now is widely realized; however, there is a lack of integrated, long-range energy planning in Wisconsin which could have a key role in determining the best steps forward in ensuring maximum economic and environmental benefit in statewide energy planning.

The Environmental Policy Forum on Energy Reliability will initiate a far-reaching discussion on how to most effectively meet Wisconsin's economic and environmental goals through efficient energy planning. This will include not only looking at traditional approaches to energy reliability, but also examining innovative strategies and technologies that could constitute important parts of the energy mix in the future, such as renewable technologies, distributed generation, and real-time pricing. Renewing our commitment to energy conservation and efficiency will also play a key role in building a reliable, sustainable energy system.

"This summit will be a bold, action oriented response to concerns about energy use and production by first, establishing successful stakeholder involvement and collaboration, said John Imes, Executive Director, and secondly, creating an innovative alliance between business, utilities, government and citizen groups working together on common goals and catalyzing long-term effective solutions to Wisconsin's energy and environmental challenges."

The objective of the forum is to bring together stakeholders in a collaborative effort to develop recommendations for our next steps forward in ensuring a safe, reliable energy supply. Determining how to balance the economic, social, and environmental impacts of different approaches to reliability will be at the core of the discussion.

This event is part of the Environmental Policy Forum, a program designed to bring together diverse stakeholders to work towards more effective environmental policy in Wisconsin. Two Environmental Policy Forum events held in June and September 2000 brought together leaders from various sectors and viewpoints. Participants created a systematic way to address environmental policy issues through collaboration and consensus-building, resulting in policy recommendations drafted and supported by a diverse coalition of environmental stakeholders. In the Environmental Policy Forum on Energy Reliability, the collaborative process developed by participants in last year's events will serve as a guide for approaching specific environmental challenges presented by the need for a safe, reliable energy supply.

For more information on the Environmental Policy Forum on Energy Reliability, contact Jennifer Wilfrid at (608) 280-0360, jwilfrid@wi-ei.org or visit WEI's website at www.wi-ei.org.

Director's View

Like many Americans, I've been watching with dismay as gas and energy prices go up and the debate about energy goes in circles. The energy crisis in California, the administration's proposals to drill for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and Vice President Cheney's statement about, "...the need to add one new power plant per week for the next 20 years..." have heightened concerns about the environmental and economic impacts of energy policy proposals.

Here in Wisconsin, many decisions for present and future energy reliability need to be made. Our energy infrastructure is aging as energy demand is increasing, while our commitment to energy conservation is lessening. In response, several major utilities and independent power producers have proposed spending billions of dollars on new coal and natural gas-fired generation facilities that would add many thousands of megawatts of new electric generation in Wisconsin. A 220-mile transmission line between Duluth and Wausau and a 150-mile natural gas pipeline are also being proposed. These projects and others have the potential to influence energy production and environmental quality in Wisconsin and the surrounding region for years to come.

Supporting the need for an inclusive examination of these and other critical initiatives, WEI's upcoming Environmental Policy Forum "*Ensuring Energy Reliability and Environmental Quality*" will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to reach an understanding on the need for both energy reliability and environmental quality; identify innovative alternatives and overlapping interests; and establish a diverse partnership for developing and recommending innovative solutions for consideration by the legislature, government agencies, business groups, energy producers, suppliers and consumers.

The challenge for Forum participants will be to explore and recommend practical improvements in energy reliability without compromising affordability, comfort, convenience or environmental quality. Fortunately, energy efficient technologies, green building and recent developments in energy markets offer a great place from which to start:

- Leading Wisconsin companies like Miller Brewing, Quad/Graphics and Johnson Controls (all National ENERGY STAR award winners) demonstrate the abundant opportunities for cutting costs, increasing profits, improving worker productivity, enhancing corporate image and deriving environmental benefit from energy efficiency improvements. The Johnson Controls Brengel Technology Center in Milwaukee, is one of 12 buildings in the world to earn The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification by using innovative, cost-effective environmental design and construction techniques in the areas of site selection, energy efficiency, water conservation, occupant comfort and health, materials usage and indoor air quality.
- WEI's Green Built Home program and our partnership with Wisconsin ENERGY STAR® Homes results in homes that are 25-30% more efficient than code built homes because they integrate efficient design with high levels of insulation, high performance windows, air tightness, and energy-efficient mechanical equipment, lighting and appliances. We also congratulate Wisconsin ENERGY STAR® Homes for winning the National 2001 ENERGY STAR® award for excellence in consumer education;
- Energy from sunlight, wind, flowing water, plant matter and geothermal sources are emerging as viable energy sources for Wisconsin's businesses and consumers. Wind power, biomass fuels (ethanol) and "manure to energy" applications provide opportunities for Wisconsin farmers to improve markets and add new income from their land and agricultural products.
- Recent developments in energy distribution and metering also present opportunities develop Wisconsin's energy market.
- Distributed generation (on-site power whether it's a windmill, solar panel, gas-fired turbine or fuel cell) can be brought online faster than central power plants and deliver electricity more reliably and efficiently while reducing the problems of transmission where 95% of power outages occur. On-site reliable power is also critical for attracting high tech computer and bio-tech companies to Wisconsin, since a single outage can cost companies millions. Examples of distributed generation include:
 - ⇒ A ShopKo store in Green Bay which features a 10.8 kW rooftop solar system, providing about 8 percent of the store's energy needs. The system feeds energy into a battery back-up system, which the company uses when electricity rates are highest;
 - ⇒ Small-scale residential fuel cell generating systems being tested in Chicago by The Electric Power Research Institute to determine their economic and environmental benefits. Nationally, leading green developers are establishing clean, decentralized energy for their developments and marketing the energy reliability and environmental benefits to home buyers;
 - ⇒ Net metering (special meters that allow any excess power generated on-site to be sold back to utilities) rewards consumers and businesses for on-site energy investments.

In this issue of Update, Paul Hawken (author of *The Ecology of Commerce* and *Natural Capitalism*) describes how leadership and technological innovation can lead us to a more secure

and environmentally sound energy future. I would add partnerships and collaboration to that recommendation. A bold, action-oriented response to concerns about energy use and production will require successful stakeholder involvement and collaboration, and the establishment of “Partnerships for Progress” - innovative alliances between business, utilities, government and citizen groups, working together on common goals, achieving shared rewards, and catalyzing long-term, effective solutions to Wisconsin’s energy and environmental challenges. I look forward to working with you on WEI’s upcoming initiatives and establishing “Partnerships for Progress” for Wisconsin’s benefit.

Many home buyers willing to put their money where their values are

According to a recent national online survey, in an amazingly short time the American consumer has become increasingly aware of green building and its benefits. The results of this first-ever green building survey aimed at consumers and builders provides an important picture of where the green building industry is today and points out green building opportunities and obstacles.

The data gathered in the survey, *The State of Green Building*, looked at green building in the residential construction industry and sought the builders’ and the buyers’ point of view. An important survey result indicated that, contrary to what many builders believe, many home buyers will pay for green features such as energy efficiency, resource-efficient construction materials, and improved indoor air quality. When asked about their buyer’s willingness to pay for green features, builders responded that less than half would pay extra. This contrasted significantly with the 89% of buyers who said they would spend more. The survey showed that consumers are becoming savvier about their purchases and with very little education, make informed decisions about them. Not only are consumers interested in saving money by lowering utility bills, but they’re also interested in the health the planet. To consumers, green products represent value-added and 56% were willing to pay between \$2500 and \$5000 for a green upgrade to their homes.

Consumers reported that their three most important upgrades when buying a new home are energy-efficient features, kitchen cabinet upgrade and improved indoor air quality. Energy upgrades are one of the first things consumers would pay extra for if they could expect to see a payback through lower monthly energy costs in two to three years. Another top interest is improved indoor air quality. Eighty-nine percent of those surveyed are aware that certain building materials emit gas chemicals into the living environment.

The survey data show that the building industry is starting to realize that green building is good for business. Of the builders surveyed, 54% said that green building accounts for less than 25% of their business, yet 21.7% said that 75% of the homes they build are green. Considering that green building has only been around for eight years, this is a significant shift in the market. Eighty-six percent of builders responded that sensitivity to environmental concerns assisted in meeting local approvals. Almost half of the builders surveyed said that when deciding what green products to procure they consider recycled content, renewable resources, reduced off-gassing and durability. Nearly all builder respondents consider energy-efficiency features to be fundamental to green building.

About the survey...

Posted at www.housing-zone.com in September 2000, web browsers were pointed to the survey from several sites on the Internet, including banner ads on Yahoo!, NAHB.com, CNN, Captain Planet, ImproveNet and Realtor.com.

Builder respondents represented a geographic cross-section of the country, from New England to the Pacific. The largest number of respondents, 36.5 percent of builders, was from territories west of the Mississippi. The mix of builders that responded was typical of the residential market as a whole. Consumer respondents came from all over the country with 67% from east of the Mississippi. They have an average annual income of \$70,000, and nearly three-quarters of all surveyed have family incomes of over \$50,000.

The survey was conducted through the joint efforts of Cahners Residential Group, Professional Builder, Luxury Home Builder, Professional Remodeler and HousingZone.com, CertainTeed, Willamette Industries, Austin Power, U.S. Green Building Council, E-One Corporation, PATH (Partnership for Advancing Technology in Housing), Koch Industries, New England Classic, Whirlpool Corp. and James Hardie.

Leadership and Innovation Can Lead Us Out of the Oil Age

Paul G. Hawken is the co-author of "Natural Capitalism: Creating the Next Industrial Revolution."

There is a humorous Sufi story about the Mulla Nasrudin who is crawling on all fours late at night under a streetlight outside his house. A friend wanders by and asks him what he is doing and Nasrudin tells him he is looking for his lost house keys. After joining the fruitless search for some time, his friend turns to him and asks him exactly where he lost them. Nasrudin points to the backyard of the house. His friend is incredulous and wants to know why they have been searching in the front yard near the street. Nasrudin says: "Because this is where the light is."

The purpose of Nasrudin tales is to reveal how the mind creates illusions, which then pass for reasonable behavior. In the U.S. there is the illusion du jour: We are running short of energy and need more. Not only has California hit the wall, but there are ominous warnings from New York City right across the country that we may have entered a new period of energy deficits with all the suffering that will entail: inflation, economic stagnation, and joblessness. Perish the thought; let's drill for oil. The proposals to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, though it is one of the world's most climatically hostile locations, seem "reasonable" in this light. If it is scarcity that determines something's value, then what is scarce is not oil or even energy, but the wisdom to use it wisely. If that wisdom could be found in an oil well or vein of coal, America would be the wisest country in the world. Instead, we are the most profligate with respect to energy use. How wasteful are we?

Imagine a water tank that supplies a growing town in an arid region. The water is filled by a well that draws from an aquifer, but the tank is old and leaky as are the pipes that carry the water into the hamlet. For every hundred gallons of water that goes into the tank, only two gallons gets to the village's inhabitants. The rest is lost at the tank or on the way. With new houses being built and more families arriving, the town is running out of water, and people are complaining. The mayor proudly announces that he is going to dig a new well a thousand miles away and pump it across the desert to their water tank and calls on his city council to appropriate these needed funds so that the town does not suffer economically. Everyone applauds. He is a hero.

This is the way we deal with energy in the U.S. Measurements of energy-calories, BTUs, kilowatt-hours-are ways to indicate the amount of work a given amount of oil, gas, or electricity can accomplish. In the US, for every 100 units of energy that we introduce into our economic system nearly 98 units are wasted. That's right, we are 2% efficient. Building a pipeline in the fragile environment of the Arctic circle to deliver oil that will not arrive for another ten years from now and that would supply 180 days of total U.S. consumption will only do one thing: satisfy the Senators of Alaska and the CEOs of oil companies. It will do nothing for U.S. energy security.

If you doubt the 2% figure, consider two common energy devices, your car and a lightbulb. After a century of engineering, the modern car is still in the iron age. Of the energy consumed, about 80 percent is lost, mainly in heat and exhaust. Of the 20 % that gets to the rear wheels, only 5% moves the car. The other 95% is lost in friction, drag, and braking. Five percent times 20% equals 1%, a level of inefficiency that means cars burn their weight every year in gasoline.

Light bulbs are 8% efficient. The other 92% of electricity powering an incandescent bulb becomes heat. When you consider that power plants providing the electricity are about, 30% efficient, and line losses from transmission trim another 10-12%, we are talking about 8% of 27%, or 2% efficiency for our favorite form of illumination. If you drive 45 minutes to work, are stuck in a traffic jam, or sit with your engine idling, the efficiency plunges far below 1%. A light bulb left on in a room with no one in it is 100% inefficient. The solution to such gross inefficiency is not more energy and energy conservation doesn't mean lowering the thermostat and shivering. It means increasing energy productivity.

What President Bush has completely overlooked are the proven alternatives that greatly increase the productivity with which energy is used. There are now a plethora of innovative productivity techniques that can reduce energy consumption fifty-fold greater than the purported supply of oil in ANWR, and they are cheaper, more effective, and create more jobs. If the USGS estimates are correct, ANWR will provide about 292,000 barrels of oil or about 156,000 barrels of gasoline a day for thirty years starting in 2011. That would run about 2% of the cars in the U.S for three decades. Improving fleet mileage 0.4 mpg in our light vehicles would accomplish the same objective with the important exception that it would cost consumers less.

These savings are just the tip of the iceberg. U.S. fleet mileage is currently 24 mpg, a 20-year low. Hybrid electric cars now appearing in show rooms will triple that figure. Current models such as the Toyota Prius get 48-mpg city/highway combined. There are now over 350,000 on the road here and abroad. VW is already selling a car that gets 78-mpg and is said to have a 200-mpg car available in 2003. The Big Three are testing family sedans that will head for production in the next three years that exceed 70 mpg. Another way to think about this is that we can create the equivalent of about 30 Arctic Refuge oil fields in Detroit with good engineering. It takes bad politics to exploit only one.

Before we get a drop of ANWR oil, we will be driving electric cars powered by fuel cells. These cars, whose emissions are hot water vapor and oxygen, have an extraordinary secondary use: they are mobile power plants with 5- 10 times the total power output of all our nuclear and coal plants. Parked cars can feed electricity into the grid, thereby forever eliminating the need for dirty, large, centralized power plants. In buildings, manufacturing, processing, and construction, similar savings abound. The mindset that made cars with one percent energy efficiency created our buildings and cities too. With relatively low-tech methods including new glazing, proper siting, efficient lighting, and passive heating and ventilation, we can create state-of-the-shelf, quiet, thermally comfortable buildings that are a visual delight. These buildings save 30-50% over

conventionally built structures that are too hot, too cold, too drafty, too noisy, and not so great to work in. Integrating green buildings with new urbanist planning and layouts can further reduce traffic, noise, energy, and waste by equal amounts.

In industry, huge cost and energy savings can be attained as we shift away from the petrochemically dependent reactive chemistry that has produced a witch's brew of compounds that permeate our environment with toxins. New enzymatic techniques not only promise safer compounds, but low-temperature manufacturing can reduce energy cost by 90%. The possibilities for energy efficiency in all aspects of industry are almost overwhelming in their diversity and possibility. The good news is that these savings are made of tools, products and services that can be created everywhere in the US. They do not depend on oil fields, large capital outlays, or putting critical environments at risk.

President Bush's energy policy will reward what a few Senators and oil executives want but not what the American people want. People are not clamoring for the destruction of a sensitive Arctic habitat, more greenhouse gases, climatic instability, or the wanton disregard of the traditional home of the Gwich'in people. What Americans want is security, jobs, stable prices, and an intelligent energy policy. Ignoring the leaky water tank on the hill cannot attain this. No system is 100% efficient. That is impossible according to physical laws. But America could have a goal of 10% efficiency, an objective that would allow robust economic growth while reducing overall energy use by two-thirds in the next twenty years, a goal that would lead us away from the oil age, an age whose end is inevitable. The oil age, including combustion processes, which threaten the very stability of life on earth, is ending, not because we are running out of oil, but because we have a better idea. The Stone Age never ran out of stones either.

We are on the threshold of a profoundly different economy with respect to energy use. The continued governmental subsidy of coal and oil, whether in Alaska or Virginia or Kentucky or any other state whose Senators have seniority, is a sure-fire way to hobble America's competitiveness. We can continue to be the most profligate nation in the world with respect to energy, or we can begin to become the most brilliant and innovative. We lead in so many areas of technology. We can do it with energy too. Mark Twain said that you can't see if your imagination is out of focus. To focus the imagination of a nation, a country that is economically strong and environmentally conservative requires just one quality: leadership out of the oil age, not halting backward steps into it.

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Calendar

June

9-24: Madison Area Builders Association Parade of Homes, Madison, WI; MABA: (608) 288-1133, www.maba.org.

20-22: The Fifth Annual Natural Business™ Market Trends Conference, Broomfield, CO, (303) 422-8983, www.NaturalBusiness.com or www.LohasJournal.com.

August

18-September 9: Metropolitan Builders Association Parade of Homes, Milwaukee, WI; MBA: (414) 258-9850

October

17: 2001 Wisconsin Green Building Alliance Conference: “Greening the Built Environment”, Olympia Resort, Oconomowoc, WI; WGBA: (414) 224-9422.

November

7-9: North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) Symposium, “Bridging the Gaps Between Science, Policy, and Practice”, Monona Terrace, Madison, WI; NALMS: (608) 662-0923, www.nalms.org.

7-9: Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) 9th Annual Conference, “Learning for the Future”, Seattle, WA; BSR: (415) 537-0888, www.bsr.org.

Member Profile

Brunsell Lumber & Millwork
Ron Pelky
Vice President Sales, Brunsell Lumber & Millwork

Brunsell Lumber & Millwork has been a Green Built Home™ Sponsor since November, 2000. Brunsell Lumber & Millwork is a full-service lumber and building material supplier, providing products that meet many Green Built Home Checklist criteria. Ron Pelky, Vice President of Sales, has been instrumental in Brunsell's involvement in green building and represents Brunsell on the Madison Area Builders Association Green Built Committee.

Brunsell Lumber & Millwork, started in 1938 has always emphasized providing high-quality products to their customers. Today, their commitment to quality extends to environmentally superior building products, many of which meet the criteria for Green Built Home certification.

Asked how he became interested in green building products and practices, Ron Pelky replies, “I don't like waste, no matter what it is”. Pelky's experiences teaching woodworking, trying to improve the habitat on his farm by planting trees and prairie grasses, and witnessing the energy crisis of the 70s have proven to him the importance of using natural resources wisely and not taking them for granted. “We all need to take the challenge and opportunity to improve upon our relationship with our environment,” Pelky said.

Green Built Home, Pelky believes, provides a good way to address environmental concerns and connect builders with new products and ideas. He notes that, although many builders and manufacturers are increasingly conscious of environmental issues associated with the industry and have taken significant steps towards improving their environmental performance, there is an opportunity to take a more proactive approach to green building, which is what Brunsell aims to do.

Brunsell has been a leader in providing new products and ideas to builders and homebuyers. For instance, Brunsell was one of the first companies in Madison to stock resource efficient

engineered wood products. Engineered wood technology makes it possible to use 80% of the log, as opposed to 50% used in solid-sawn lumber. In addition, this technology makes it possible to engineer out natural weaknesses normally found in smaller, younger trees and end up with a high-quality product whose strength is comparable to that of old-growth trees. The use of engineered lumber products in construction is recommended in the Green Built Home Checklist.

“Brunsell has always been a leader as far as education in the market,” Pelky said. “With green building, we can help educate builders and the community on using new materials and products.” Pelky noted that Brunsell has a tradition of community-minded responsibility and active involvement with builders. Involvement with Green Built Home, Pelky noted, helps Brunsell stay in touch with green building innovations and continue to be responsive to builders’ needs for high-quality, durable, green building products and materials.

In Brief...

Don Simon Homes: Every Home a Green Built Home

On June 26, 2001, at a groundbreaking event at their Door Creek home site near Cottage Grove, Don Simon Homes executives announced that beginning in June 2001, all homes built by Don Simon Homes will be certified by Green Built Home™ and Wisconsin ENERGY STAR® Home. Home buyers who choose Don Simon Homes will now have a seamless way to integrate comprehensive green building and energy saving practices into their new home. Don Simon Homes is one of Wisconsin’s largest home builder; they estimate that they will build 175 homes in 2001 and 300 in 2002. .

Green Built Home featured in Madison and Milwaukee Parade of Homes

Green building will again be part of the Milwaukee and Madison Parade of Homes this year with seventeen homes in the Parades certified as by Green Built Home. On August 29th at the Milwaukee Parade, a Talk ‘n Tour will be offered highlighting the waste reduction and recycling aspects of Green Built Home. The Talk ‘n Tour is being presented in conjunction with **WasteCap Wisconsin** and sponsored by **Wisconsin Electric**. Both Parades will feature High Performance Home seminars.

The **Madison Area Builders Association** Parade of Homes is from June 9 to the 24th. For location information visit www.maba.org. The **Metroplitan Builders of Greater Milwaukee** Parade of Homes is from August 18 to September 9. For location information visit www.mba.org.

Partnerships are key to the success of Green Built Home

In 2001 a partnership between Green Built Home and Wisconsin ENERGY STAR® Home was created. This means that a Green Built Home is also a Wisconsin ENERGY STAR® Home. Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home consultants work with builders during construction, performing site visits and tests to ensure safety, comfort, durability and energy efficiency.

Green Built Home partners also include **Madison Gas & Electric** and **Alliant Energy**. Madison Gas & Electric recently donated printing for 10,000 Green Built Home Checklists. Alliant Energy supplied 25,000 bookmarks for use in the Madison Parade of Homes Planbook. Our

sincere thanks to **Dave Borski** at M G & E and **Leo Udee** at Alliant Energy for their coordination of these generous donations.

WEI Executive Director on agricultural stewardship committee

WEI Executive Director John Imes has been appointed by the Department of Natural Resources Secretary Darrell Bazelle to serve on the **Wisconsin Agricultural Stewardship Initiative (WASI)**. WASI is a new initiative - unique in the United States - that will help producers develop farm business systems that will address on-farm environmental issues in an economically profitable manner. The Initiative is a broad-based coalition among Wisconsin's agricultural universities, state agencies, producers, and the private sector, and includes representatives of both agricultural and environmental interests. WASI will develop research-based economical solutions - tested under real farm conditions - to the most pressing agro-environmental issues of today and tomorrow. By developing solutions to environmental issues that are based on farm profitability, WASI will ensure production agriculture remains a vital part of Wisconsin's economy and culture.

Green mortgages and fuel cell technology on agenda at National Green Building Conference

Dirk Mason, Green Built Home Program Director was one of approximately 600 enthusiastic attendees at the **Third National Green Building Conference** held in March in Seattle, WA. In his opening remarks, Barry Zigas from Fannie Mae, reported that the company has developed housing finance products (such as the Location Efficient and Energy Efficient Mortgage) that rely on green building features to increase buying power for the borrower. Look for further outcomes from the partnership between Fannie Mae and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

Other conference news included: an EPA assessment of indoor air quality (in some regions of the country) as the most important health concern among leading environmental hazards; NAHB Research Center studies revealed methods of "turning your trash into cash" through optimal value engineering and recycling; attendees learned about the latest developments in fuel cell technology to supplement a home power supply. This technology should be online within the next 12 months and within the next 3 years be affordable for many regions throughout the United States.

Several local green building programs were represented at this conference. Of programs to date, Green Built Home has the most focused requirements and the most comprehensive checklist in the nation and is well on its way to being an industry leader.