

It's your choice to move in the direction of living green

As a builder in the greater Tucson marketplace since 1980, I congratulate Pima Association of Governments for its foresight and proactive role in communicating the importance of energy efficiency and sustainable building practices in our community.

We are fortunate in Tucson to have our major energy suppliers taking an active role in supporting and encouraging practices that save energy, reduce operating expenses and provide a future that is appropriately sensitive to our environment and quality of life for our residents.

The Community of Civano taught us, as builders, the necessary decisions that must be made to produce homes which are at the forefront of energy efficiency and healthy, comfortable living environments. We have learned a lot in the last eight years. We are currently working on a LEEDS certification that will exhibit among the highest standards possible for a new home community.

Our plans for the future include a significant role for sustainable design and implementation throughout the design and construction process. The reason for our decision is the recognition that creating communities and homes within Tucson that provide comfort, cost savings, and smart, practical solutions for our desert environment just makes sense.

In order to meet the standards of Energy Star, Pima County, the National Association of Home Builders' Green Building guidelines, or other important certifying bodies such as the U.S. Green Building Council LEEDS program, home development must be viewed from a comprehensive SYSTEM point of view.

If paying attention to details, incorporating simple and effective construction techniques, selecting quality durable products, and placing a level of importance to appropriate design solutions can be effective in improving our living environment, why would we "not choose" to go in this direction?

While there may be cost implications of meeting the highest standards, many practical decisions can contribute to significant improvements in the performance of homes. Today's new homes are being built to higher standards and there is a significant voluntary participation in certification programs across the country. The industry is responding quickly to the increased awareness of the buying public to the availability and desirability of energy savings and sustainability features.

Consumers want quality, energy efficiency, and are giving thought to the "green revolution." As builders, it is our job to determine what features and programs to adopt in our product offerings that meet the needs and desires of our consumers and still maintain affordability, as appropriate.

Reducing our energy needs and providing a safer, healthier home is on everyone's mind. It applies to the new home buyer, the resale buyer and the remodeler. Every consumer can make simple changes or improvements to their home and benefit from lower energy bills and reduced maintenance costs. PAG's Sustainability and Energy EXPO is a good place to start your education.

Tom Doucette is president of Doucette Communities and currently beginning construction of a LEEDS certified project in Tucson.