

DPIS Newsletter



At the January GHBA Forecast Luncheon, speaker Mike Inselmann of Metrostudy predicted another good year for home builders in Houston. If this holds true, then we have some challenges ahead of us. My goal is to help my friends in this industry to become more profitable. I have always thought that builders would rather build homes than waste time repairing the ones they've already built. That's why DPIS is committed to being on the cutting edge with regards to innovations in the engineering and inspection fields. I love the science of home building!

Building Science



One of the subjects I have been studying recently involves taking advantage of the earth's geothermal properties for insulation and air conditioning. This is not a new concept, but as energy costs rise my "underground bunker" style home may become more appealing. At the very least we could seriously explore the concept of geothermal cooling. With the right infrastructure a whole community of homes could be heated and cooled just by passing well water through an evaporative coil type structure with a blower. My hope is to see a system like this installed in a retirement community some day.

Another thing that intrigues me is the idea of a mechanical room installed in attics. The time is right for builders to consider these rooms as a unique feature that will have a positive impact on the home's energy efficiency. By installing the a/c and ducts in a condition space the system becomes much more efficient. Not only that, a mechanical room would eliminate the controversy over designing the attic space for storage. The pull-down stairs would terminate into a conditioned space that has been engineered for the proper loads. Access to other areas of the attic would be restricted. I know the HVAC technicians would love to work in a well constructed, well lighted, air conditioned space!



Houston Builders

Meritage Homes: Mickey Pizzitola, a long time friend of mine, has committed his division of Meritage Homes to build a home to benefit the Texas Children's Hospital. The \$500,000.+ home will be constructed entirely of donated materials and labor, thereby leaving all of the proceeds for the hospital. In conjunction with the Children's Miracle Network, the plan is to sell 20,000 raffle tickets at \$100. each. I pray that God will bless the good people at Meritage and all of their associates for this worthy endeavor.

Kimball Hill Homes: Thank you Paul Simms and your great folks at Kimball Hill for taking on the enormous task of building the GHBA Charity Home this year. All of the proceeds will directly benefit the Alzheimer's Association and the Texas Children's Hospital.

David Weekley Homes, Kimball Hill Homes, Larus Builders, Lennar Homes, Morrison Homes, and Trendmaker Homes: Thanks for your generosity in funding Home Aid of Houston. Because of you, we now have two new communities to meet the needs of our Greater Houston community. Both the Mission of Yahweh and Wellspring Village held ground breaking ceremonies earlier this year.

Foam Plastics

As you know, home building techniques are subjected to as much scrutiny as a thief in a jewelry store. Every new product is tested and retested before it is even allowed to come to market. But even with all of this care, there are some people that still aren't satisfied. In an age where delivery of information is instantaneous, bad news travels fast. I'm ok with factual reporting, but I have a problem with rumors and innuendo.

In the case of foam plastics such as Dow Styrofoam, there have been many instances of errant reporting in the industry. The International Code Council felt strongly enough about this issue to write a whole section of code on it (section R314 of the 2003 IRC). The bottom line for Styrofoam and similar products is that it is acceptable to be used as sheathing, even when left exposed in the attic – in most circumstances. The reason I say "in most circumstances" is that the IRC *does* want this product to be protected when it is installed in attic spaces that are *only* being used for utilities. In attics where the space is being used for utilities *and* storage, the Styrofoam does not need to be protected. The ICC and most major Texas municipalities have agreed with this interpretation of the code.

However, there is a TREC inspector's trade organization that believes Dow Styrofoam is evil and should never be installed in a home. This group called TAREI (Texas Association of Real Estate Inspectors) is determined to scare every potential home buyer in Texas to death. Unfortunately these folks are typically not code certified and do not have to back up their theories with facts. Their contention is that the product is combustible and will cause the house to burn down. Hello! Have you ever heard of a building product called wood?

In some remote parts of the world, people actually burn wood to cook their food and keep warm. The point is that most of the building products we use are combustible. A great portion of the code is dedicated to the prevention of fire. The code recognizes the fact that there are both sources of ignition and combustible materials within a dwelling. The challenge to the code writers and inspectors is keeping them separate from each other.



On April 1st DPIS Engineering will host our first annual Charity Car Show. The purpose of this event is to raise money for Rick Holst and MS.

Rick is a long time friend and DPIS employee who is suffering the ravages of Multiple Sclerosis. Our plan is to raise enough money to remodel his home. Unfortunately he is bound to a wheelchair and needs numerous repairs and changes to his home that will accommodate his condition.

A DPIS bicycle team is also riding in the MS-150 to raise more funds for the MS Society.



In addition to the car show, we will have some live music and food as well. I have recruited Mundo Earwood to come out and sing some of his hit songs from the 70's and 80's. We want everyone to come out, have a good time and spend some money for a worthy cause. If you have a car that you would like to bring, please call Erick at 281-351-0048. If you want to play guitars, drums or sing, just come on out and bring your rig.

April Fools Day

2006 TOMBALL CHARITY CAR SHOW & JAM SESSION

DPIS ENGINEERING
"THE BUILDERS SOLUTION"
281-351-0048

ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AND RICK HOLST A MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS PATIENT IN OUR COMMUNITY.

WHEN: APRIL 1, 2006 10:30AM - 4:30PM
WHERE: DPIS ENGINEERING
1600 EAST HUFSMITH
TOMBALL, TX 77375

- LIVE BANDS
- AWARDS FOR TOP ENTRIES
- FOOD AND BEVERAGES AVAILABLE
- \$25 VEHICLE ENTRY FEE
- \$2 SPECTATOR FEE

FEATURING MUNDO EARWOOD

[HTTP://WWW.DPIS.COM/CARSHOW](http://www.dpis.com/carshow)

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Churchill

Winston Churchill said "It's not enough that we do our best; sometimes we have to do what is required". At different times in this journey we call life, we are placed in situations that do not allow us to show our best skills, but we still must do what is required of us. A little humility goes a long way towards maintaining a positive attitude. I see the future division presidents, directors of construction and industry leaders out in the field every day. I'm impressed by the knowledge and maturity of some of our younger builders. If their perseverance is as strong as their talent, the future of our industry will be in good hands.

Thanks

Dale Phillips

Please don't forget to email me with suggestions for topics that need to be discussed. dale@dpis.com