

Homes of the Future: What's Hot and What's Not

Are you planning to move to a new home in the next few years? Thinking about renovating your current home so it's more appealing to potential buyers when you do decide to move on? Or maybe you just want to change your space to follow the latest trends?

Whatever your plans for your existing or future home, research from the National Association of Home Builders and Better Homes and Gardens magazine shows what features and floor plans will be popular over the next few years.

According to an NAHB survey of home builders on their expectations for homes in 2015, smaller homes with lower prices and more green features will be the predominant force in the marketplace.

As the average size of new single-family homes continues to decline to 2,377 square feet from a peak of 2,521 in 2007, floor plans are focusing on frequently-used rooms. More than half of the builders surveyed said the size of the family room will increase, while the formal living room, entry foyer and dining room are expected to decrease or disappear.

Other features that builders predict are highly likely to be included in the average new home of 2015 include a walk-in closet in the master bedroom; a laundry room; ceiling fans; a master bedroom on the first floor in homes with two stories; and a two-car garage.

Nearly 70 percent of the respondents said that homes will be greener, and about one-third expect them to have more features related to technology.

The most common green features in 2015's new homes will be low-E windows; engineered wood beams, joists or trusses; water-efficient features such as dual-flush toilets or low-flow faucets; and an Energy Star rating for the whole house.

The families who will be looking to move into new or renovated homes have high expectations for their new space as well.

A December 2010 survey of Better Homes and Garden readers who consider themselves prospective home buyers or who are planning a major improvement to their home indicated that home buyers don't want any "wasted space" in their next home and they are seeking significant value for the money they spend.

Eighty-nine percent of consumers want high-efficiency heating and cooling in their next home, 85 percent want high-efficiency appliances, and 78 percent want upgraded features and fixtures such as granite countertops, wood flooring, faucets and lighting fixtures.

Efficient use of space also ranks highly in consumers' desires. The top-ranked living spaces include a separate laundry room; additional storage space; walk-in closets or built-ins; a home office space, workspace or family computing center; and everyday eating space in or close to the kitchen.

For more information on new home builders, remodelers and housing trends in the Barron & Rusk County area, contact Heart of the North Builders Association at 715-736-4622 or visit www.hnbawi.org.