

Looking Forward To 2009

Recently, I attended a “marketing perspective” breakfast regarding the state of the local housing market in Denver, Colorado. We, of course, heard about the challenges facing builders and developers in our market, and learned how our tribulations compare to those of others across the rest of the country.

Amidst all the doom and gloom, a “bright shiny nugget” of advice was shared with the group. That “nugget” was to look for niche market sites and product opportunities that will entice potential buyers. This issue’s focus happens to be all about the potential surrounding that “bright nugget.”

In “Smart Communities” by Kathy Sykes, she shares her insight on seizing smart growth opportunities by considering sites that incorporate natural topographic features and are located in close proximity to work and play. That serves the purpose of minimizing negative environmental impact on our world, as well as harmful health impacts on the body and spirit. Sykes focuses on the need for creating smart communities, since they will affect our lives by giving us permission to change generations’ worth of static social norms.

Jan Mitchell’s article is a retrospective of the 2008 Best of 50+ Housing Award Winners from across the country. This year, the judges noted a predominant theme of builders who identified, designed, and marketed their homes and communities to specific niche buyers. The winners include everything from “lock’em and leave’em” communities, to theme driven communities, and communities that emphasize “green” living.

In “Small Niches = Big Business” Mike Kephart explores some very specific niche markets. He strongly believes it takes passion to create markets that are not considered mainstream in today’s world. Pursuing niche opportunities is not easy — it requires education, forward thinking, and conviction to thinking outside the box — but a little perseverance can reap big rewards.

I am honored to be the guest editor for this issue of *50+ Housing Magazine*, and I look forward to reading future articles about how you were able to strike gold while mining your own “bright shiny nugget” by taking advantage of niche market opportunities.



Doug Van Lerberghe