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Little Green Houses for Everyone

Realtor Judy Wagner first in Watauga County to be awarded "Green Designation"

By Mary Creighton

The High Country's commitment to sustainable and 'green' building has grown to include local real estate. Encouraging energy efficient properties is a growing movement in the real estate market and local realtors are jumping on board.

Judy Anne Wagner of Weichert Realtors, Weber-Hodges Group is the first in Watauga County to be awarded a 'Green Designation' on behalf of the National Association of Realtors.

This first-of-its-kind award is the only green real estate professional designation recognized by the NAR and is completed upon attending a rigorous three day training course designed especially for realtors on issues of sustainability, green homes and energy efficient properties. Wagner, as a part of this inaugural class of 220, completed this course in Orlando, Florida last October making her an NAR Green Designee.



Judy Wagner holds up her certificate awarded to her as an official National Association of Realtors Green Designee. Photo by Mark Mitchell

Essentially, as a Green Designee, Wagner has the aptitude and wherewithal to function as a green resource for the Boone and Blowing Rock areas. This means that she can determine whether a property is considered 'green' or not. "Realtors need to know how to guide clients toward the best changes they can make for the least outlay of their hard earned cash," says Wagner. "Being an informed 'source of the sources' that are available to my clients makes me feel good about the real estate profession as well."

There are several variables to consider when determining the many shades of green. "Reduced Energy Cost is the number one reason clients chose to buy a green home," Wagner reminds us. Energy efficiency not only refers to solar panels and wind energy but the appliances and kinds of insulation used.

There are National Green Building Standards with various rating systems. 'Energy Star' appliances cut down on excessive energy bills and 'R-value' guidelines can be met for maximum insulation with regards to walls, ceilings and floors. Energy Star appliances and homes are those that meet the guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. These 'Energy Star' homes are 15 percent more energy efficient than homes built to the guidelines of the 2004 International Residential Code (IRC) (www.energystar.gov).

"Building green also involves reducing waste at the site, which trickles down to helping the environment as well," said Wagner. Even remodeling along energy efficient avenues is possible. "Regreen is a movement in this country that addresses the remodel and is working toward a rating system," says the designee.

Judy Wagner has been in the Boone area since 1970 and is currently in team with her husband at Weichert Realtors as well as being a member of the High Country Homebuilders Association Green Committee.

This spring the HCHBA Committee will host its first expo called "WHY GREEN?" The event, tentatively planned for the end of May, is a response to what is felt as "a disconnect between the public (consumer) and the industry as to the what, the where and the how of building or retrofitting green. So many folks have heard about green but have no idea of how it might apply to their lives."

Wagner's certification is an important development in the real estate community allowing her to contribute to the mounting consumer awareness among the public. This certification allows her to inform and educate her clients on the cost and benefits of green building features as well as helping them see a property's green potential. More information can be found at Home2mtn.com or jwagner@weberhodges.com.

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