



Jonathan Fairbanks House in Dedham, Mass.

PRESS RELEASE

TO: Editor in Charge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wood: The Affordable Building Material

Building with wood offers benefits throughout all phases of construction

(Honolulu, Hawaii), March 9, 2007 – In 1641 Jonathan Fairebanke moved his family into their new home. For eight generations, members of the Fairbanks family lived in Jonathan’s home until the early twentieth century when the house was turned into a museum. But what makes this particular home special enough to be a museum?

This house, the Fairbanks House of Dedham, Mass. is a museum because it stands as the oldest surviving timber frame structure in North America. What Jonathan Fairbanke knew centuries ago, many homeowners today still discover; wood is America’s most affordable and durable choice for building a home. Across the nation, homebuilders continually find that wood has high value at a low cost for home construction, is naturally energy efficient and an environmentally sound choice.

“For centuries homeowners have recognized wood as one of the most solid building materials,” said Hawaii Lumber Products Association Spokesperson Carl Liliequist. “Modern home builders will find that wood still offers the best value for a solid, strong home that has the potential to last for generations.”

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Throughout all stages of building, wood ranks high on the list of competitively priced building materials. Wood uses 53% less energy than steel to produce into construction ready form and 120%

less energy than concrete. Even though almost half, 47% to be exact, of all raw material production in the United States consists of wood products, wood requires only 4% of energy of all raw materials.

In a 2004 study done by the Consortium for Research on Renewable Industrial Materials comparing construction of both steel and wood framed homes in Atlanta and Minneapolis, the steel framed house in Minneapolis used 17% more energy than the wood equivalent in a life-cycle assessment which considered energy needed to produce building materials, construct, maintain and demolish a home.

Wood has the added benefit of its status as a renewable resource. Since 1970 the area of North American forests has increased by 20 million acres and every year 2.15 billion trees are planted. In comparison to steel, which is a non renewable resource, the price of wood is consumer driven while steel not only can not be replaced each year, but steel prices are market driven. Home builders will find prices dictated by the larger steel market, rather than just other homeowners.

Across the nation, nine out of ten home builders construct their house using wood. Traditionally, wood has always been a top choice in home framing and construction, for a number of good reasons. Most construction tools are manufactured for use with wood and the majority of contractors are primarily experienced with wood framing.

In areas particularly prone to earthquakes and other natural disasters, some home builders will mistakenly give more consideration to alternative building materials solely because they believe a wood home can not provide as much protection.

“A common misconception about building with wood is that wood framed homes are not as strong as steel framed homes,” said Liliequist. “All homes are built to the same set of building codes, so wood homes are equally strong as steel homes.”

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In addition to its strength as a building material, wood is also naturally energy efficient. In the U.S. heating and cooling homes accounts for 50% of all utility costs and 15% of all energy used in North America. Since wood is 400 times less heat conductive than steel and 8.5 times less heat conductive

than concrete, wood homes take far less energy to heat and cool. With energy costs rising across the country, wood helps cut costs through its versatility. Wood framing and wall sheathing can easily be moved in or out to accommodate extra insulation, while wood itself contains excellent properties as a natural insulator.

“Homes framed with wood naturally provide excellent insulation properties, reducing the need for added costs for other framing materials in meeting strict energy code standards, thereby providing an energy efficient and comfortable home,” said HPLA President Hap Person.

The HPLA is comprised of professionals representing the development and construction industry as well as building material producers and service companies. They are committed to the education and promotion of lumber products as the best choice for home construction in Hawaii. To find out more about building with lumber visit www.hawaiilumber.com.

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