**Top Three Trends for Living Better at Home**

**By \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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Although life will settle into a new normal post-COVID, the experiences of spending more time at home will resonate for years to come. Not only are home owners thinking about home design and furnishings, they are also exploring how the systems in their homes can affect their health and finances. In the coming year, home owners will be seeking out features for their homes that improve their comfort, wellness and efficiency according to a new report from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

The NAHB survey asked home builders about what green practices and features were most widely used and valued by home owners, commonly known as high-performance improvements. Among the top features most wanted from home owners is improving comfort. To increase comfort, home builders are eliminating drafts, ensuring consistent indoor temperatures and minimizing noise in the home. Common high-performance approaches to improve comfort includes weatherstripping around windows and doors and installing high R-value insulation in floors, walls and ceilings. The R-value is a measurement of the flow of heat in and out of your home. With a high R-value, the home is well insulated, which not only improves comfort but can also translate into saving money on heating and cooling bills.

Home owners are not only focused on comfort, they have also expressed interest in improving wellness. Builders focus on creating an overall healthy indoor environment that includes preventing mold, eliminating odors and incorporating natural light. A few of the common high-performance strategies to help improve wellness include installing bathroom exhaust fans, improving HVAC filtration, balanced ventilation and installing double or triple-pane windows.

Another common home feature home owners are seeking out are ways to improve their overall home energy use. To help lower energy bills, home builders install a smart thermostat to regulate temperatures and install ENERGY STAR appliances. To lower water bills, builders have installed features such as leak detection systems and WaterSense-labeled fixtures. WaterSense-labeled products and services are certified to use at least 20 percent less water, save energy, and perform as well as or better than regular models, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For more information about high-performance building or improvements to your home, visit homeperformancecounts.info. Home Performance Counts is a joint initiative between the NAHB and the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) to help home owners better understand the rapidly growing high-performance home marketplace.

To find a professional who can help you, contact **[insert local HBA info].**