

Manufactured Housing – The Affordable Home Choice

In today's housing market, the need for affordable housing has become greater than ever. Site-built home prices have soared, coupled with higher mortgage rates, putting homeownership out of reach for more people than at any time during the last 10 years. Housing affordability reached its lowest levels in October of 2004, according to the National Association of Realtor's Affordability Index, with some areas seeing affordability levels dropping to lows not seen since the mid-1980s, according to Fannie Mae.

This current trend has also affected the Manufactured Housing industry, but in a very positive way. With the crisis in affordable housing continuing across America, Manufactured Housing offers a unique source of quality, non subsidized homes that people can afford. With an average per-square foot cost ranging from 10 to 35 percent less than site-built homes, depending on geographic region, today's Manufactured Homes provide homebuyers with the best value to be found in the housing marketplace.

The affordability of Manufactured Housing can be attributed to a number of efficiencies that are inherent to the factory-built process. The controlled environment and assembly-line techniques help manufacturers avoid many of the problems encountered with site-built construction, including inclement weather, theft, vandalism and damage to building products and materials stored on site. Also, factory employees are scheduled and managed more effectively and efficiently, as opposed to contracted labor employed by the site-built housing industry.

Manufactured Home building also benefits from the ability to purchase large quantities of building materials and products. As a result, manufacturers are able to negotiate better prices on materials for their homes and pass these savings on to the homebuyer.

In addition to being affordable, today's Manufactured Homes also offer the quality, amenities, and technologically-advanced features that homebuyers desire. Ranging from vaulted ceilings to working fireplaces to state-of-the-art appliances, today's Manufactured Homes offer homebuyers the opportunity to customize a home to fit a family's particular lifestyle and needs, at a price they can afford.

Today's Manufactured Homes are continually evolving, with architectural styles that blend into most neighborhoods and offer real housing options for suburban and urban markets. New exterior designs make these homes more aesthetically pleasing, allowing them to blend in seamlessly with existing neighborhoods. As a result, developers and builders are increasing their usage of Manufactured Housing in their subdivisions.

Greater focus on energy efficiency within the Manufactured Housing industry has resulted in a significant jump in the numbers of manufacturers building EnergyStar-labeled Manufactured Homes. These homes, with enhanced levels of insulation as well as

more efficient heating and cooling equipment, provide homeowners with substantial savings on their energy costs.

An emphasis on innovation is propelling the Manufactured Housing industry forward in many new areas. With continued advances in technology and public acceptance, Manufactured Housing will remain a major provider of quality, affordable housing in the 21st century.

In Arizona, the Manufactured Housing industry has seen increases in both shipments and production of homes compared to 2004. Shipments of new Manufactured Homes are up 33.8% as of October 2005, and production has increased 12.5% over the same period.

The Manufactured Housing Industry of Arizona is dedicated to increasing home ownership opportunities in Arizona by focusing on image improvement, zoning equality and customer satisfaction. Its membership includes Manufacturers, Retailers, Developers, Lenders, Contractors/Installers, Suppliers, and Brokers of Pre-Owned Homes. MHIA has a legislative and regulatory program designed to protect and promote the interests of the industry. It also conducts educational programs designed to address members' needs and industry issues.