



For Immediate Release

Contact:

David McAdam

(760) 774-2495

dmcadam@blueskyhomesllc.com

Fast Construction Expected for Sustainable Steel House Squarely Aimed at Current Economic Conditions

Palm Springs, Calif., March 5, 2009 – Blue Sky Homes LLC, which is championing new methods and materials for the construction of houses that are economical to build and operate, earth friendly and architecturally satisfying, will begin building its first prototype all-steel home on March 10 in the Southern California desert town of Yucca Valley. The home is the first to utilize the Blue Sky Homes Building System™ and the company intends to launch a catalog of homes based on the system in the near future.

The company plans to assemble the exterior envelope of the home – including the frame, floor, roof, walls, doors and windows – in three working days. In addition to quickly creating a lockable and weatherproof work environment, such rapid construction will dramatically reduce the number of trips to the job site by contractors and tradesmen, reducing costs and further improving the home’s environmental credentials.

“Unlike some builders who have experimented with prefabricating entire homes in factories, we are fabricating the elements of this house in a factory and then assembling those perfect pieces at the job site,” said David McAdam of Blue Sky

Homes. “We think the Blue Sky Homes System offers significant advantages in terms of cost, speed and design flexibility.”

Rather than employing the labor-intensive and wasteful lumber framing method that is used in the vast majority of “stick-built” house construction, the Blue Sky system uses a highly efficient steel framing design utilizing what is known as a moment-resisting frame.

Moment-resisting frames are commonly used in commercial buildings but are most often created using very heavy hot-rolled structural steel. The house will be built almost entirely with cold-formed, light-gauge, high-tensile galvanized steel. In addition to being substantially less expensive than structural steel, light-gauge steel can be assembled largely by hand with no on-site cutting, drilling or welding.

The Blue Sky Homes Building System also provides substantial design flexibility not found in wood construction. Steel beams in the Blue Sky Homes system will span up to 30 feet unsupported, thus giving architects greater design flexibility because such elements as windows and doors can be located virtually anywhere in the house due to the small number of support columns to get in the way.

The system utilizes a method for connecting light-gauge cold-formed steel elements that was devised by FCP Inc., headquartered in Wildomar, Calif. FCP is a leader in the design, fabrication and construction of steel structures. The American Iron and Steel Institute recently certified the type of connection used by FCP.

Another key innovation in the prototype house will be the use of modular wall panels for all exterior walls. Because the moment frame of the house carries the entire structural load, none of the walls in the house need to be load-bearing. This allows for the use of modular preassembled panels that are very light, highly efficient and which can be quickly installed. Blue Sky Homes is using panels that offer the superior insulation qualities of expanded polystyrene (EPS) and require

only a small amount of light-gauge steel. These innovative panels are known as steel thermal efficient panels (S.T.E.P.), carry the trade name accel-E® and are manufactured by Accelerated Building Technologies LLC. Accelerated is a joint venture of Dietrich Metal Framing and Nova Chemicals and is headquartered near Pittsburgh, Penn.

The Blue Sky Homes Building System features a modular layout using standardized dimensions and connection details. This means that there are fewer unique parts and pieces, making it easier to assemble. The company anticipates offering homes in a range of sizes and configurations that all will take advantage of the modular efficiencies of the system.

The architectural firm of o2 Architecture in Palm Springs, Calif. designed the Yucca Valley prototype house. The firm, which is headed by Lance O'Donnell, AIA, and Project Architect Martin Brunner, is known for its modernist designs for a range of residential, commercial and institutional projects.

The prototype house will “float” above its rocky desert site on six steel columns that require only small concrete footings. That means virtually no land grading was required – sharply reducing the cost of site preparation and ensuring that the house sits lightly in its natural setting. Indeed a small seasonal stream will continue uninterrupted under the home.

The steel utilized in the Blue Sky Homes System is manufactured from at least 70 percent recycled material and is itself 100 percent recyclable. Other environmental attributes include photovoltaic solar panels to generate electricity and solar thermal panels to create hot water (both for domestic hot water and for heating). All exterior doors and windows will have low E double panes for energy conservation. A high-tech combination grey water and septic system will reduce groundwater

contamination. And because the only wood in the house will be found in cabinetry and furniture the home will be highly resistant to fire, termites, mold and rot.

The general contractor for the house is Solterra Development, which is based in Palm Springs. Solterra is known for taking mid-century modern home designs and rendering them as brand new homes – thus marrying the much-loved classic designs with modern construction materials and environmentally up-to-date features.

Palm Springs-based Blue Sky Homes, which is led by David McAdam and Robert Brada, is seeking contractors in other parts of the country who would be interested in becoming exclusive builders for the Blue Sky Homes Building System. To request information contact info@blueskyhomesllc.com, visit www.blueskyhomesllc.com or call (760) 774-2495.

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