

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2007

© 2007 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

BUILDING GREEN... AND AFFORDABLE

ENVIRONMENTALLY friendly construction often is expensive and aimed at the high end of the housing market. Carlisle Development Group, a Miami-based for-profit developer, is trying to open “green” construction to housing designed for low-income people—a business where the government typically sets rents and occupancy standards.

Matt Greer, Carlisle’s chief executive, says the company is using green practices in developments that include 200 rental units in a project with the Broward County Housing Authority and a 100-unit project with the nonprofit Camillus House, in a historic building in downtown Miami.

Mr. Greer spoke with the Wall Street Journal Online about his strategies and the challenges of going green. Here are excerpts:

Q: *Tell me about your green building efforts. What are the challenges so far?*

A: The first step is getting the development community on board and convincing them that it isn’t going to cost an arm and a leg and that residents who live there are happy.

At the same time, there are developers who have said “over my dead body.” They don’t like having to tackle Florida’s

concept of what it means to be green. It’s a disruption, and inconvenience.

Q: *What specifically are you doing to make your buildings green?*

A: It involves a lot of things. . . . There are people who come in and inspect the air and lighting and tune all of the settings so they are tuned for the most efficiency. For example, making sure the size of the air-conditioning unit is suited for the size of the room.

We’re also diverting construction waste from dumps so that it can be reused. Ten percent of the materials we use are recycled waste. . . . We install bike racks, and we petition to have bus stops moved near our properties.

Q: *So how much do you estimate going green has added to your buildings’ costs?*

A: In terms of actual numbers, we don’t really know until the end of the job. I’d say 2% to 4% additional costs on a \$15 million building—which translates to maybe \$300,000 in additional incremental costs—is my goal. I’ve heard estimates of 3% to 10% from others. If we come in on the lower end of that estimate, we’ll move forward. If we’re on the high end, we’re going to have to go back and rethink our plan.

—Beckey Bright