

## Sustainable Development? MCAD Digs up the Truth

The population growth that we have been experiencing in Western North Carolina is projected to continue for years to come. As more people move here, we will continue to see development on a scale that was previously unimaginable to residents who have lived here for generations.

Practicing responsible, sustainable development in WNC's means dealing with challenging terrain issues. Non-local and first-time developers realize quickly these challenges come with a significant price tag. Many developers run into unexpected pitfalls that equal lost time, misdirected efforts, on-going headaches, and potentially hefty fines.

Traditionally, wading through the legalities and environmental considerations has been trial-by-fire for builders & developers. While some larger-scale developers may hire experts and professionals, most builders are on their own.

In response to this need, MCAD, the Mountain Council for Accountable Development - a coalition between the Asheville Homebuilders Association (AHBA) and the Asheville Board of REALTORS® (ABR) - is proud to introduce the first session of its Developer Certification course.

Greg Spicer, 2008 MCAD President, said, "MCAD is proud to offer this program, which is the first of its kind. The presenters, who represent a variety of private and non-profit organizations, are experts in their fields. They will be invaluable resources for course participants. Our goal is to familiarize builders with WNC regulations and building practices, thereby preventing costly and destructive mistakes. It's a true community effort: We are all committed to encouraging responsible, effective development."

The purpose of the Developer Certification is twofold:

To familiarize builders with issues and regulations unique to building in Western North Carolina.

To introduce builders to the individuals & organizations that provide resources & direction.

This program is not intended to teach developers the basics of construction. Rather, it is intended to teach developers how to build responsibly and effectively in Western North Carolina.

Modeled after the ABR's ECO Consultant Course, Inside and Out, the 2-day course will include presentations from various community members and organizations, as well as representatives from the City of Asheville and Buncombe County. The course is

designed in a way that takes developers from the beginning of the planning stages all the way through completion of the homesites and any necessary augmentation to the surrounding area.

Course topics include Site Plans, Wells / Water Systems, Septic / Sewer Systems, Building Permits, Penalties, Foundations & Footings, Low Impact Development, Steep Slope Regulations, Erosion Control, Storm Water Control, Wetlands, WNC HealthyBuilt Homes Program, and Affordable Housing. Each topic in the course is to be taught by local experts in their respective fields.

There is no charge for the course, as participants will be asked to provide feedback regarding course material and effectiveness. MCAD encourages any builders, REALTORS®, and members of the public to attend — even if they are already developing in the area and utilizing sustainable building techniques! MCAD is looking for input on ways to tailor this course to the realities of local development. The more feedback that is received, the more the course can grow.

For more information about this course, please contact Corean Hamlin, Director of Education at Asheville Board of REALTORS®, at 828.255.8505, ext 25.