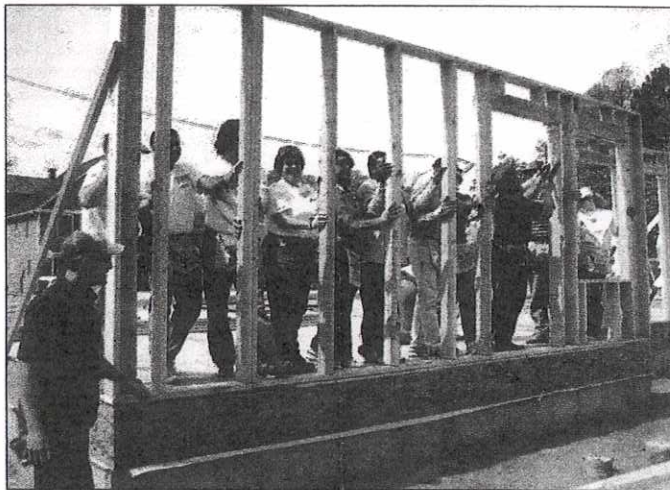




Bacon's

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**Oakleaf and Habitat for
Humanity team up** *DVS*

by David J. Fournier, Jr.

Oakleaf Waste Management is putting its considerable industry know-how to work for Habitat for Humanity. Habitat is a non-profit organization that uses monetary and material donations, along with volunteer work, to refurbish or build homes for families with lower incomes. The homes are sold to the families at cost, financed by interest-free loans. Aside from the cost to buy the house, families also invest "sweat-equity" by working side by side with the volunteers to construct their homes.

Habitat recently began a 33-home project in Hartford, Connecticut. Some of the homes scheduled to be built were intended to be green homes, constructed with materials and processes that reduce their ecological footprints and promote sustainability. Habitat's construction project manager Shea Hagy believes that these homes will provide templates for more like them to be built in the future.

When Oakleaf, headquartered in East Hartford, Connecticut, heard that Habitat was hard at work on a local project, they decided that they wanted to give something back to the Hartford community. So they used their industry connections to find an Oakleaf-certified vendor, Waste Resources, to donate the cost of material pick-up and hauling.

The Oakleaf team also worked with construction supervisors to help the Habitat volunteers better manage their waste stream. Rather than multiple roll-offs for separate types of waste, Oakleaf decided to provide a single 20-yard container and pay for the material to be sorted and recycled at a local facility. A separate container exclusively for cardboard was also provided.

The homes themselves are superb

examples of sustainable building. A special framing process is utilized that consumes 30-40% less lumber than traditional methods, and even the lumber itself is different. It is an engineered lumber, harvested from faster growing trees. The site of the homes used to be an asphalt parking lot, and even that has not gone to waste. The asphalt will be recycled and used in the foundations and driveways of the homes.

The homes also make use of environmentally sound materials and appliances such as recycled carpet, dual-flush toilets, low-flow shower heads and faucets, and solar panels; all of which reduce the homes' ecological footprint. It is estimated that the green features built into these homes will save their residents almost \$1,000 annually on energy costs.

These special features are not without cost, however. The additional cost for the green homes amounted to approximately \$10,000 each. According to Hagy, the increased cost mainly came from the use of solar panels, which accounted for nearly \$6,000 of the total.

Hagy went on to say that these costs could be reduced in the future by tweaking several building techniques. He was also quick to point out that the added cost would not significantly restrict the number of people who would be eligible for Habitat housing, and that many companies would be willing to sponsor these homes, just as United Technologies and Nationwide sponsored this project.

Habitat is trying to continue the green construction initiative across the East Coast by holding informational conferences for interested Habitat affiliates. Oakleaf has plans to support the initiative outside of the Hartford area, but details are still being worked out.