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Roundtable

Engineers discuss what's shakin' in seismic

Consumer Track

In-demand copper offers curb appeal

Focus on Boise

Why you should take root in the City of Trees

FLOOR PLANS

Contemporary in Carmel

GREEN

A 100-year-old beach house gets an Eco makeover

LAW

Beware of excessive property assessments and taxation

TOOL REVIEW

Cordless Reciprocating Saws

PRODUCT/TECH FOCUS

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NEWS // REGIONAL

IDAHO

Steve Pinther Construction

Steve Pinther, owner and operator of Steve Pinther Construction in Ashton, started building custom luxury log homes in 1979. Because of the detailed hands-on nature of Pinther's work, he only builds a few custom homes a year, overseeing most of the construction himself and subcontracting support services on an as-needed basis. Recently, in response to market demand, Pinther has focused on building more traditional wood frame homes with timber accents throughout the interior. Pinther uses large manufactured timber beams for decorative and structural purposes in family rooms, living areas and entrances. For these applications, he favors locally manufactured timbers and recycled materials.

Pinther's latest project utilizes a unique stamped concrete log system that was requested by the client. The concrete logs are manufactured by Cultured Log Systems of Missoula, Mont., which transports the system to the site and erects the shell. The innovative concrete logs are made of composite materials that have the external character of high-quality wood logs, but without the costly maintenance issues and susceptibility to fire, mold, insects and other problems commonly associated with log construction. The concrete logs are intentionally designed with a flat interior surface to allow for the flexibility to finish



COURTESY STEVE PINTHER CONSTRUCTION

Steve Pinther Construction emphasizes use of natural light and ambience by installing large windows and skylights and utilizing detailed timber highlights throughout his homes.

interiors with timber frame, post and beam, log accent, or Sheetrock. According to recent studies, Cultured Logs perform at an R-19 insulation value. When properly constructed, concrete log designs are up to seven times more air tight than a comparable wood log home.

"Working with this system is similar to doing a remodel because you end up building the house inside of the frame," says Pinther.

Natural lighting is increased in Pinther's homes through use of large windows and numerous skylights. For these applications he prefers Pozzi and Anderson windows and doors. Pinther is licensed to do construction in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming and is a member of the Eastern Idaho Home Builders Association and the Idaho State Home Builders Association. ☎

IDAHO NEWS

The construction industry in Ada County posted a 23 percent gain in 2006, the largest increase of any sector, according to Department of Commerce and Labor statistics. Total employment in Ada County reached 211,000 during June 2006, up 5.8 percent, or about 12,000, over June 2005. According to Construction Monitor, which tracks sales of building permits across the country, 3,835 single-family home permits were issued for the Inland Empire (consisting of Bonner,

Kootenai, Spokane and Stevens counties) in 2006, a 23.5 percent drop from the 5,015 issued in 2005. The value of the 2006 permits totaled \$739,291,146, a 12.9 percent drop from 2005. Meridian experienced a stark 74 percent drop in single-family residential building permits during the first four months of fiscal 2007. Despite the housing slowdown, Sullivan Homes nearly doubled its 2005 total of \$13,379,171, purchasing 99 permits as opposed to the 77 it was issued in 2005, accord-

ing to Construction Monitor's report.

A study by the Idaho Statesman indicates that 43 percent of people that migrated to Ada and Canyon counties between 2000 and 2005 came from other places in Idaho, not California as is often believed. According to the report, the valley drew as many people from Phoenix, Seattle, Portland and Salt Lake City as from Southern California, which

City Development Corp. found that the downtown area could accommodate as many as 400 new condominiums a year for the next 10 years.

The state's soft housing market is causing the Ada County Highway District to fall \$4 million short in predicted impact fee revenues. As a result, no new projects will be initiated for at least the next year. Fire department consultants are

If all existing plans are developed, the number of new condos in downtown Boise could reach more than 1,000 within the next three to four years.

accounted for only 11 percent of new residents.

C-Squared Development LLC announced plans for a multimillion-dollar mixed-use neighborhood development on two square blocks of historic Old Boise. Tentatively named Sustainable Community 1, the development would cover the area from Main Street South to Front Street, and from Sixth Street East to Fifth Street. As part of the plan, a 23-story condominium tower will be built where the Boise Rescue Mission now stands. C-Squared Development claims that the community will be the most environmentally friendly development in Boise, incorporating numerous Green features including energy derived from solar panels and rooftop wind turbines. When completed, the development will add 240 new condominiums to downtown. Downtown Boise already has a number of other residential projects under way including CitySide Lofts at 13th and Myrtle, Boise Place at 8th and Main, The Royal Plaza at 12th and Main, and The Aspen at 9th and Front. If all existing plans are developed, the number of new condos in downtown Boise could reach more than 1,000 within the next three to four years. A housing study conducted by Capital

recommending a revised development impact fee of around \$700 per new resident.

Coeur d'Alene has hired a consultant to study the city's affordable housing problem and provide an outline for solutions. According to the initial study, residents making the median income of \$31,000 have few options for purchasing a home. The final version of the study with specific measures and timelines is expected to be issued in April. The city is expecting to implement zoning changes and provide developers incentives for creating affordable housing options.

The Old Nampa Neighborhood Association recently lobbied Nampa City Hall for a neighborhood park and asked the city to crack down on illegal duplexes and triplexes along Mississippi Avenue. ONNA, which is fighting the trend toward large new subdivisions on the city outskirts, represents residents of approximately 850 mostly Craftsman-style homes that were built southeast of downtown from 1910 to 1929 and are still largely intact. The only grass-roots group of its kind in Nampa, it is also close to getting the neighborhood listed in the National Historic Registry. ☎

IDAHO BY THE NUMBERS

IDAHO VS. NATIONAL LABOR FORCE		
LABOR FORCE	DEC. 2005	DEC. 2006
Civilian Labor Force	746,138	759,128
Total Employment	720,252	733,665
Unemployed	25,886	25,463
Idaho Unemployed %	3.5%	3.4%
U.S. Unemployed %	4.9%	4.5%

Idaho's average annual unemployment rate has been below the national level since 2002. The construction industry constitutes slightly more than 7 percent of state employment. SOURCE: IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR