

homesite

Local builder chooses to build green

■ Photos: Tommy Stafford
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Before Steve Crandall's hair goes gray, his business is going green.

"It's just the natural progression," Crandall says.

"[Years ago] the green building movement wasn't mainstream. Now the consumer is demanding it."

A Beltway boy born and raised, Crandall moved to Nelson County more than 20 years ago and has never looked back. His father founded Beech Grove-based Tectonics II in 1982, a design-build firm specializing in medium to high-end custom homes.

"We've had a tremendous opportunity in building incredibly unique homes for an incredibly diverse clientele from all over the world and that's been really exciting."

As Crandall's company has grown, so has the county. He admits Central Virginia's booming real estate market is changing the character of the land.

"We've built impervious structures: roads, roof lines, etc.," Crandall says of runaway real estate developments in neighboring counties.

"[Rain water] is rushing into storm sewers and rushing into the creeks. Those creeks are flooding more than they traditionally did.

"They're eroding the creeks, they're carrying the sediment down to the Chesapeake Bay through the James River watershed and polluting the bay."

A self-described "conservative tree hugger," Crandall says even though thoughtful, responsible development can't be regulated, it should be encouraged.

"This is something you can't force people to do but if you give them the opportunity that is right and makes sense financially and otherwise, they're going to do it. Your green home is going to be a more comfortable house to live in."

Crandall says an alternative to going totally green is by starting with the basics. Passive solar methods include "orienting the house in a certain way so that you capture sunlight to provide light or to generate heat in the house."

An example of an active solar application is transferring the sun's

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Steve Crandall (top right) is owner of design-build firm Tectonics II, an independent dealer of Lindal Cedar Homes. This mountain contemporary in Wintergreen (left) is an example of the company's green construction (Details page 10). Crandall employs roughly 20 employees in the office and on the field (opposite, bottom).

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Nelson County's **doubledose** of country doctors

As a kid, Stephen Schmitz was either going to be a fishing guide or a doctor.

He chose med school. But he still likes to fish and hunt, which is why he turned down a job offer in Charlottesville for a chance to team up with longtime Nelson County doctor Dr. Robert C. Raynor.

"Those are big shoes to fill," Schmitz says.

Raynor's patients would agree. Before rescue squads and emergency rooms, country doctors like Mr. Raynor had a tough job.

"If somebody got sick in the middle of the night, we all made house calls," says Raynor, who still keeps a black doctor's bag in the car. That was 1957.

Dr. Raynor had a few associates over the years but they never stuck around for long. Now that Dr. Schmitz has joined Raynor, there's a sigh of relief. Actually, it's more than a sigh. Ask Dr. Raynor how he felt when Dr. Schmitz agreed to join Afton Family Medicine, and he'll flash you a smile ear to ear.

"It's super!" he says. "And my wife likes it too!"

Speaking of doctor's wives, Schmitz says he wouldn't have been able to make it through the rigorous years of medical training if it weren't for his wife,

Mary, a teacher in Albemarle County. Now that those days are behind them, the couple can now focus on life in Nelson County.

Like Dr. Schmitz, Dr. Raynor practices what he preaches when it comes to exercise.

"I just do something just about every day," Raynor says. That includes running or even a swim at nearby pond when the weather is warm.

Dr. Schmitz likes to run and to bike. In fact, he's training for an iron man competition in Lake Placid this summer.

"In January, I start picking up the pace with my program. But I back off in the fall when

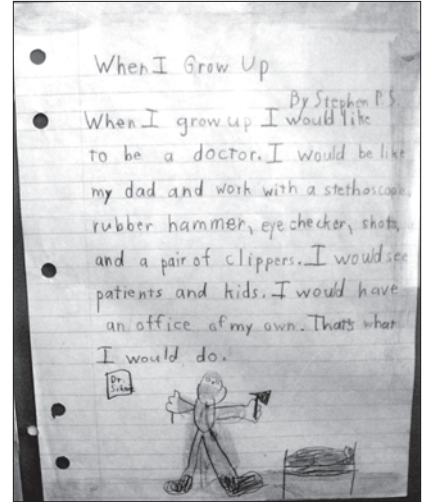
hunting season starts."

Either way, Dr. Schmitz says he's a lucky man to have ended up working in Nelson County.

"I don't like being in cities," Schmitz admits. "I'm much happier driving through the countryside with the beautiful views here and having [mountains] out my window."

The two doctors treat patients in the original building the local Ruritan club built decades ago. Early on, Dr. Raynor lived in the building. Today, the entire building is devoted to the practice, Afton Family Medicine, an affiliate of Martha Jefferson Hospital. The times and technology may have changed, but Dr. Schmitz says bottom line, being a doctor is about helping people.

"At the end of the day, what you do everyday is help take care of people. That will never change no matter what else changes. That is still what we do everyday." ■



Drs. Schmitz and Raynor (above center) together in their Afton office. Dr. Schmitz knew he wanted to be a doctor ever since he was a child (above right). When he's not working, he likes to run (far left) and is currently training for an iron man competition in Lake Placid this summer. In addition to practicing family medicine, the staff can treat minor medical emergencies and also focuses on women's health.



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energy into a battery or using it directly as an energy source in heating water and floors.

The allure of green building aside, Crandall says his company couldn't have gotten to this point if it weren't for his talented workers, both in the office and out on the field. He says his team puts a lot of care into a home's design and its construction.

"We're calculating wind load, seismic activity, elevation in every one of these designs," Crandall notes.

"It lets me sleep better at night. It lets my clients sleep better at night." ■



Tectonics II's Team of Talented Craftsmen

Every contractor knows building a reputation is like building a home: you take it one step at a time and it's never a one-man job. Tectonics II owner Steve Crandall says his company couldn't do what it does if it weren't for these talented craftsmen:

- A.J. Honeycutt
- J.K. Kennedy
- Tim Fails
- Gerald Moubray
- Dave Batton