



Modular EarthCraft Certified Homes



By Allison A. Bailes III, PhD., EarthCraft House

In early June of 2008, five homes in South Carolina's North Charleston Hunley Waters development received EarthCraft House certification. The community achieved the second tier of certification—EarthCraft House Select.

In a city undergoing a burst of revitalization in recent years, the Hunley Waters homes join more than 200 other EarthCraft Houses in the state.

What makes these homes unique is that much of the construction occurred 75 miles on an assembly line in the plant of modular homebuilder, Haven Custom Homes. Protected from weather and benefitting from economies of scale, these homes left the plant with much of the construction already complete.



These modular homes, built in a factory environment meet and exceeded the “EarthCraft Select” standard.

Each house comprises from two to four modules. Once the houses arrived on site, Haven then assembled the modules, paying particular attention to air sealing the “marriage walls,” the places where separate modules are joined together. At that point, Haven turned the project over to Old Man Construction, who completed the construction, including the critical step of installing the HVAC systems.

The story actually began in the summer of 2007 when Haven approached Southface about building “EarthCraft-Ready Houses.” The EarthCraft team worked closely with Haven to make this happen, a process that flowed smoothly because of Haven’s enthusiasm for the project.

Haven contracted with Southface to offer a private training for its employees and contractors involved with the Hunley Waters project. Haven brought everyone together again a few weeks later for a design review.

“In the beginning, the EarthCraft process seemed overwhelming, but the [EarthCraft] team made it easy, and it was a pleasure to work with

Southface and get our homes certified as EarthCraft Houses," said Lee Moulton of Old Man Construction.

In October 2007, the two quality control managers from Haven's Ridgeland, S.C. plant attended the Home Energy Rating Training, so they could do a better job at building high performance homes.

Mel Laubscher, one of the two quality control managers, remarked, "Southface has an excellent program in the EarthCraft standard. They supplied tremendous support and helped me to realize that building green is basically a matter of building correctly."

To garner EarthCraft certification, a house must score at least 150 points; for EarthCraft Select, the minimum is 200 points. The first five houses in the Hunley Waters community scored between 244 and 258 points, easily obtaining the higher level of certification. The homes also achieved ENERGY STAR certification.

For Haven Custom Homes, which has been a driver in the movement to show that modular homes can be as high quality as site built homes, the Hunley Waters community is just the beginning. Currently, other projects are in the works and they will continue to hone the EarthCraft-Ready standard as they work with Southface.

For more information on Hunley Waters visit hunleywaters.com, and to learn more about Haven Custom Homes go to www.havenhomes.com