

Innovative

A variety of construction methods are being used

Concrete Homes

By Joe Nasvik and Bill Palmer

Being innovative does not mean just being creative with design. It encompasses all aspects of the construction process. Of the many market applications for concrete homes each takes advantage of different benefits of the material. Many companies are innovating in the construction of concrete homes for very different reasons, as described here.

Doing it the Mercedes way

Vince Heuser is the manager of Solid Wall Systems, a subsidiary of employee-owned Mercedes Homes, Cocoa, Fla. Heuser thinks Florida is the nation's most competitive market for home construction. Therefore, using concrete as the building material—in competition with steel frame, wood frame, and concrete block—is a challenge. In Heuser's world, he must win over a customer to an innovative approach in four areas:

- The home must cost less than one built with other materials.
- The finished product must provide significant energy savings.
- The building must take less time to construct.
- Maintenance expenses must be reduced.

Solid Wall Systems is focusing its activity in central Florida, where its specialty is 1200- to 3500-square-foot homes; in the past 2 years it's completed 500. The company currently constructs



This all-concrete home located in the Raleigh, N.C., area has 10,000 square feet of living space. Jon Ruffy, the builder, states that the home will be on view for 3 years after construction is complete and will feature the latest technology for homes. Ruffy feels strongly that concrete is the best material for building homes.

The Ruffy home features interior and exterior concrete walls and decks. When complete, the home will provide ultimate safety and energy savings for the new owners.

