

The American home has “Made In USA” stamped all over it!

Made in the USA means Jobs in the USA

By Larry Kush

Of all the material things we hold dear in life, home is treasured above all else. A home of their own is what young couples dream of, what families come back to, what middle-age couples cling to and what seniors quite often use the equity in to finance their retirement. The American Dream has always been the American Home. Little wonder the USA is widely considered to be the “best housed nation on earth.”

Part of our strong pride of ownership is an understanding that the American home is something that’s unique, something that is made in America and not something that has been designed, fabricated and then shipped in from a foreign land.

From the 15,000 board feet of American lumber that goes into a typical new American home, down to the caulking, almost everything that goes to build a new home can be made in the United States. Most of our windows are made in the upper mid west; plumbing trim comes from places like Kohler Wisconsin; dishwashers, washers and dryers from the new Whirlpool plant in Tennessee, carpet from Georgia, the list goes on and on. And what happens when we stray from American made products? Just ask that question to all of the homeowners who have Chinese made drywall in their new home.

Despite the current hardships of a poor economy, there’s still something great about home ownership in the USA. Even with increasing foreclosures and continued bad news on the real estate market, about 75 percent of Americans say that owning a home is worth the ups and downs, and even people who currently rent their home overwhelmingly say that their goal is home ownership. Throughout America, home ownership and success are solidly and inextricably linked. And pride of ownership is something virtually everyone understands. Simply, we don’t wash and wax rental cars.

Let’s not forget about jobs. According to Forbes, the United States has lost an average of 50,000 manufacturing jobs per month since China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001. Even the iconic Ford F150 truck is made from 40% foreign parts and many are assembled in Mexico. Additionally, Boston-based consultancy Forrester estimates that 400,000 service jobs have been lost to “off-shoring” since 2000 with jobs leaving at a rate of 12,000 to 15,000 per month. When was the last time you had an American answer the phone when you called about a credit card bill or wanted to discuss your TV Cable service? The truth is, more and more of the products that we buy and the services we need are coming from somewhere other than the USA.

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The good news is that housing means jobs for Americans. Every single family home built in America directly creates 3.1 jobs for one year. The ripple effect extends far into our economy and includes much more than just the actual construction workers. The 3.1 figure is direct employment. Indirectly, the effect is overwhelming. Right now, the U.S. requires approximately 1.3 million new homes per year to maintain a balance for growth and replacement, however, over the last two years the US new home industry has produced less than 500,000 new homes per year, and we are on track to build less than 350,000 this year. That's a job shortfall of 2.1 million homes!

Economists and historians alike, will tell you that housing has led the United States out of nearly every recession and yet all Congress and the President can do is come up with new ways to further handcuff the American new home industry. Congress gives Wall Street and "Too Big To Fail" Banks untold billions. Next, in order to save them, the government essentially buys Chrysler and GM, then we give billions in foreign aid to countries like Pakistan. Yet, when it comes to the American Housing Industry, Congress and the President turn a deaf ear. The American housing industry, unlike these other groups, is not asking for a handout, only that the government remove the roadblocks that they have placed and continue to place in front of the housing industry.

Perhaps it is time for Congress and the President to start listening to the people who build America's housing and recognize the part we can play in an economic recovery. For despite the slings and arrows of those who would demean us, America continues to be an exceptional nation where, if you look closely, you'll see "Made in USA" proudly stamped on every home in every community across the country.

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