

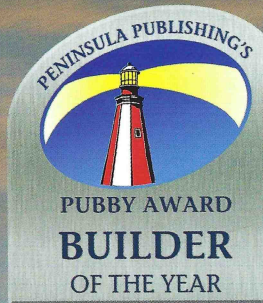
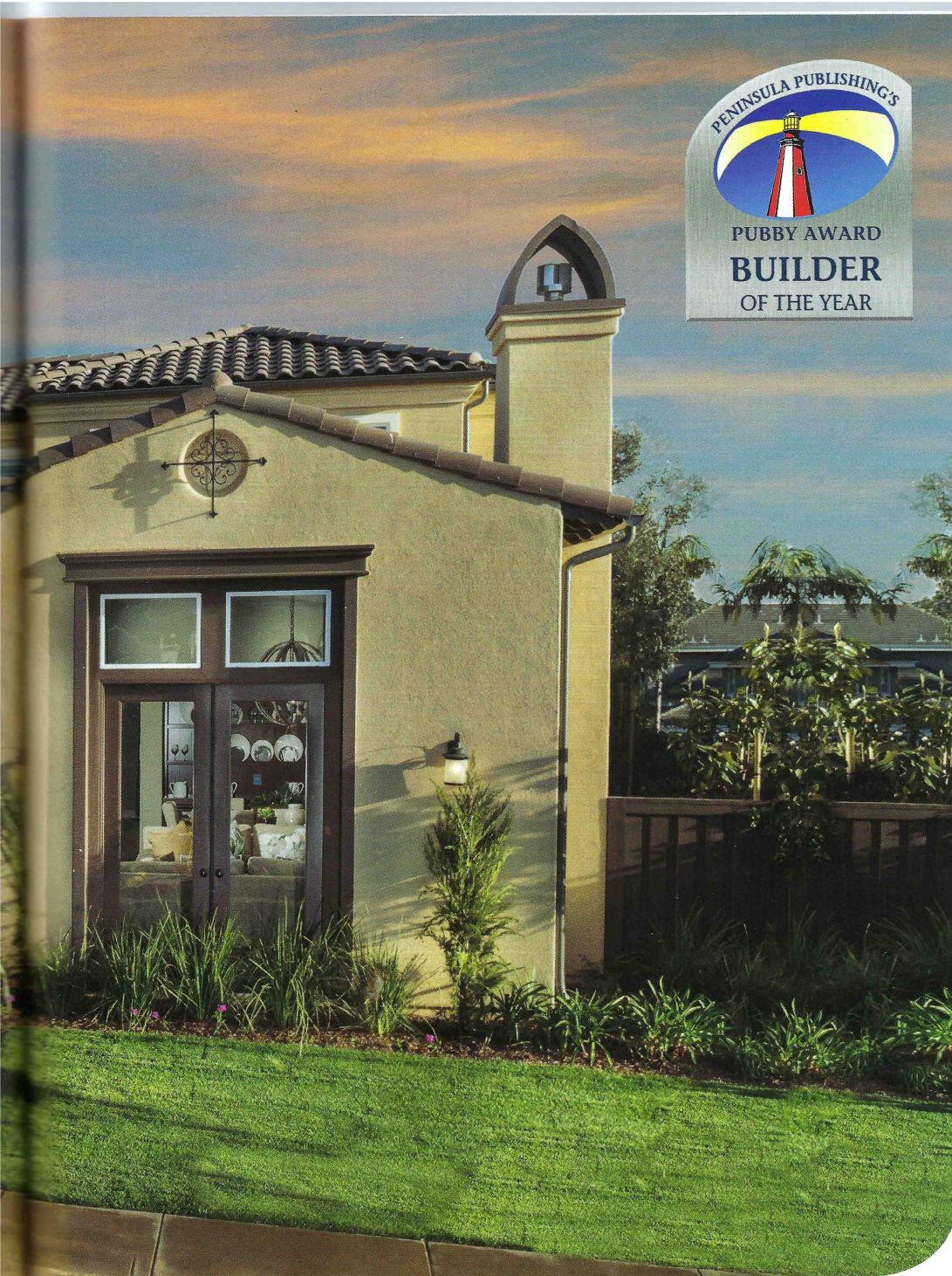
Green Builder of the Year: Lennar

# Lennar Makes Solar Integration the New Standard

**Lennar Homes is voted Green Builder of the Year by virtue of its game-changing decision to offer solar power systems integrated into new home construction**

**By Jonathan Dean**





Division. "Lennar is on the forefront of designing and building homes that consume less energy, use cleaner materials, and truly reflect the way people live today," said Grove, who believed the win reflected all the "hard work and dedication of people across the company to keep pushing the boundaries of homebuilding." Lennar has seen great success with lively communities such as Fiore in Encinitas, Calif., and are now building on their reputation of quality and affordability to cause a disruption in the homebuilding world.

For many years, solar paneling on a home's roof has been considered a costly add-on that could save the homeowner money on the energy bill every month and pay for itself in time. Lennar decided to take the bold step forward in changing the rules on what constitutes a standard offering for a new modern home. Thanks to adjustments made to utility regulations in the City of Austin, Lennar was able to compliment over 120 new homes with state-of-the-art solar power technology provided by SunStreet Energy Group. The home undertaking was carried out with the support of Texas Rep. Eddie Rodriguez and Austin Energy Vice President of Customer Energy Solutions Deborah Kimberly, both of whom joined executives from Lennar and SunStreet Energy at the ribbon-cutting ceremony in September.

Solar systems do or will exist in over 150 Lennar communities and account for thousands of rooftops across the nation. While Lennar has offered solar homes in many of their other communities before, ground has been broken in Austin as the newest and most refined solar package offering to date. The solar systems on these homes will help Austin achieve its goal of increasing the amount of renewable energy procured by Austin-owned utilities to 55 percent by 2025, and at least 100 MW of local solar from customer homes.

However, Lennar solar communities are not simply houses with aftermarket solar panels installed on the roof. "SunStreet integrates the solar right into the construction process, meaning the buyer has the peace of mind knowing that it was installed right alongside the other major systems in the home and is covered by warranty," said Grove. The Austin Division president's sentiment is shared by Emily Frager, CMO for SunStreet Energy Group by stating, "Ultimately, the benefit is to have a compelling feature without adding tens

▲ Nowadays, building homes to be inherently eco-friendly as well as energy and water efficient has become the new standard among the best homebuilders who want to satisfy the needs of the modern buyer.

**W**ith every new generation of newly built homes, builders make great innovations in home design that eventually make their way into standard offerings rather than an expensive add on. Nowadays, building homes to be inherently eco-friendly as well as energy and water efficient has become the new standard among the best homebuilders who want to satisfy the needs of the modern buyer. Homebuilding giant Lennar Homes has taken this generation's

green building practices to a higher level by making quality solar technology a standard feature of their new Southwest and Oak Knoll II home collections offered in Colorado Crossing, one of Lennar's premier Austin, Texas communities. It is Lennar's efforts in Austin and in other Lennar communities that have earned Lennar "Green Builder of the Year" for Green Home Builder magazine.

Someone who was all too happy to hear the news of Lennar winning was David Grove, president of Lennar's Austin





▲ Another added benefit of integrating SunStreet's state-of-the-art solar technology into the planning and construction of Lennar solar homes is the reliability of the system and the ability to actively monitor how much power is being generated and/or saved in real time.

◀ The solar systems on these homes will help Austin achieve its goal of increasing the amount of renewable energy procured by Austin-owned utilities to 55 percent by 2025, and at least 100 MW of local solar from customer homes.

of thousands of dollars to the price of the home. Lennar and SunStreet install the system during the construction process and ensure it meets the same fit-and-finish requirements of the rest of the home."

Another added benefit of integrating SunStreet's state-of-the-art solar technology into the planning and construction of Lennar solar homes is the reliability of the system and the ability to actively monitor how much power is being generated and/or saved in real time. "We use state-of-the-art micro inverters that maximize the production of energy and allow us to monitor in real time every single panel in a



# **“Lennar is on the forefront of designing and building homes that consume less energy, use cleaner materials, and truly reflect the way people live today.”**

– David Grove, President, Lennar’s Austin Division

community,” said Frager. “Because the micro inverters are all networked and connected to the Internet, we can often address issues remotely without the homeowner ever knowing a panel wasn’t working properly.”

The added bonus to this system is that SunStreet Energy promises buyers that they will never have to pay more for solar energy than they would from their local power company in addition to the sheer affordability of the homes even with all the extra features that Lennar has made standards for each home. “Buyers are amazed that they can have a new home with features like granite countertops, smart home technology, and solar at prices families in Austin can afford,” said Grove. Lennar has impressed the Austin community and in other U.S. communities

in their ability to incorporate all their green features, particularly the solar system, without affecting the selling prices (which are below 200 in Austin). Frager agrees in saying, “While Lennar has been building solar homes since 2006, it’s only been in the last few years that a variety of factors made it practical to install state-of-the-art solar systems as a standard feature on virtually any home at any price point.”

Besides the smart solar systems in Colorado Crossing homes, there is a plethora of other green features that make the Southwest and Oak Knoll II home collections ahead of the curve; some of these features include smart thermostats with a built-in WiFi bridge, Schlage smart locks, gas furnaces, and Lennox 16 SEER systems. “New homes are marvels of

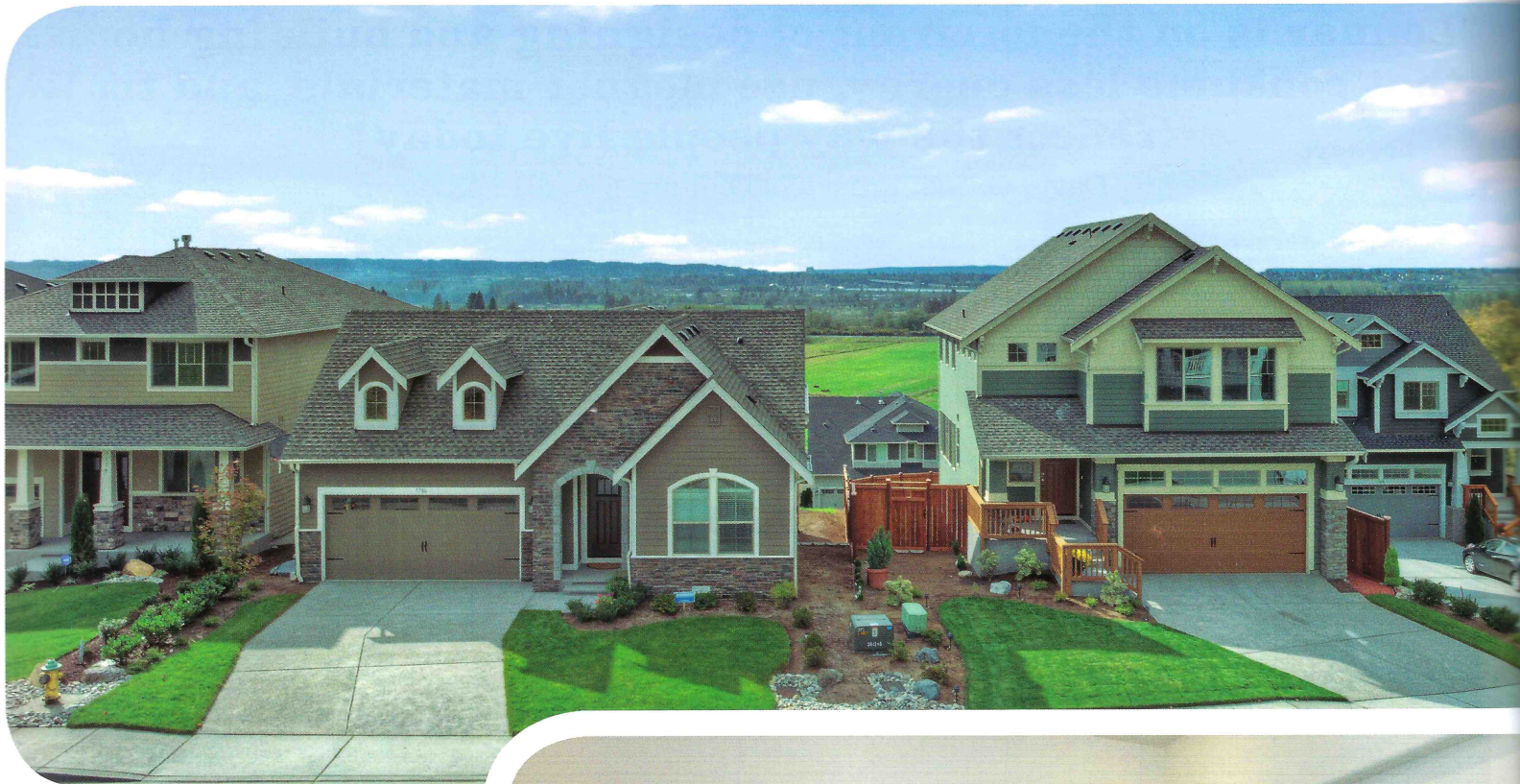


▲ David Cross, president, Lennar’s Austin Division) The combination of sustainability and affordability has proven to be a successful business model for Lennar at Colorado Crossing, and looks to become a full standard offering in future Lennar communities including Plantation Lakes as well as Boyers Ridge in 2016.

▼ The new standard for solar homes offered by Lennar has definitely garnered the attention of the Austin community, and became an instant hit upon the announcement of the community.







▲ Lennar has impressed the Austin community and in other U.S. communities in their ability to incorporate all their green features, particularly the solar system, without affecting the selling prices.

materials and building science, but most of that happens behind the scenes to make the home more efficient, cleaner, and safer," said Grove. "Buyers also want their new home to be exciting and reflect the way they live." Combining all of these green features together has also helped improve Lennar's scores on the famous HERS index. According to David Grove, "while the HERS index for Climate Zone 2 (Austin) is 77, our homes consistently receive scores in the mid 60s; when solar is factored in, our effective HERS scores are in the 30s."

The new standard for solar homes offered by Lennar has definitely garnered the attention of the Austin community, and became an instant hit upon the announcement of the community. "Before our model homes even opened, we had more than one-third of the first phase sold," said Grove. The combination of sustainability and affordability has proven to be a successful business model for Lennar at Colorado Crossing, and looks to become a full standard offering in future Lennar communities including Plantation Lakes as well as Boyers Ridge in 2016.



▲ Homebuilding giant Lennar Homes has taken this generation's green building practices to a higher level by making quality solar technology a standard feature of their new Southwest and Oak Knoll II home collections offered in Colorado Crossing, one of Lennar's premier Austin, Texas communities.

The future for Lennar Homes is looking brighter with each new community added, disrupting the homebuilding industry by making solar system integration a more practical endeavor on a large scale. On the opening of Colorado Crossing, David Grove had this to say in a press release: "Integrating the SunStreet solar program allows us to provide a unique product at lower cost to our buyers. And because the system carries a limited 20-year

warranty, buyers do not have to worry about maintenance or repairs. It's a big win all around." Nothing says "Green Builder of the Year" like changing the dynamic of building a home in the industry.

Jonathan Dean is an Assistant Editor for *Green Home Builder* magazine. He may be reached at [jonathan@penpubinc.com](mailto:jonathan@penpubinc.com).

