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*Today's*  
**CUSTOM HOME**

ATLANTA'S COMPLETE GUIDE TO BUILDING OR REMODELING YOUR CUSTOM HOME • OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2007



**Green Building**

Full Circle – Find New  
Homes For Old Materials



# Full Circle

## Finding New Homes for Old Materials

By Carl Seville

It's often been said that what comes around, goes around. An innovative pilot program is hoping that adage holds true for remodelers who take some simple steps to raise the efficiency of renovation projects.

Created by the National Association of the Remodeling Industry's (NARI) Atlanta Chapter, the Circle of Good Deconstruction and Recycling Program seeks to teach remodelers how to reduce the volume of waste generated by deconstruction. Goals of the program include limiting the amount of materials deposited in landfills, salvaging useful items from worksites and either donating them to non-profit organizations for reuse or using other appropriate methods of recycling, and developing a toolkit to help NARI members incorporate recycling into their operations.

Those goals are particularly applicable to high-end remodeling projects. Consider a typical upscale kitchen renovation. Oftentimes, these projects are undertaken to replace dated but functional appliances, cabinetry and countertops for which charitable organizations can readily find uses. Changes in room layouts to create better traffic flow often result in the replacement of serviceable windows and doors. Exterior renovations may call for the removal of existing brick and stone that could easily be used in other projects, such as the creation of outdoor living spaces. When constructing the 2007 EarthCraft/TecHome Showcase house for the Southern Building Show, for example, we made use of every possible material that was removed from the existing home. Lumber was ground into wood chips to be used for on-site erosion control, while large boards were given to furniture makers. Stone and brick were used in a nearby renovation project. Asphalt shingles, concrete and excess brick were ground up and used as gravel.

But many homeowners and remodelers don't know where to turn to make the best use of materials removed during the course of their projects. That's why three Atlanta remodeling firms are carrying out the initial Circle of Good pilot projects, which began this spring. Summers & Sons, a full-service general contractor based in Tucker, is renovating 34 apartments into condominiums. Pinnacle Custom Builders is adding a second story and making other renovations to a bungalow in downtown Decatur. Atlanta Design & Build is renovating the interior of an executive home in Country Club of the South. Each of the contractors has identified materials that will be removed from the waste stream through reuse on site, sale for profit, donation to a non-profit organization, or recycled through other methods. The contractors are providing regular reports on diverted material and their experiences with both non-profit and for-profit recycling resources. A consultant will collect data from the reports and interview the contractors. This material then will be used to develop a toolkit for NARI members as they embark upon future projects.

By finding new uses for old materials, remodelers and homeowners can benefit from the knowledge that their project is giving back to the community. 

*Carl Seville is managing the Circle of Good pilot program for NARI Atlanta and working with the outreach committee to develop the toolkit that will result from it. Seville is a green builder, consultant, educator and writer on sustainability. He founded, and for 25 years served as Vice President of, SawHorse, Inc., an Atlanta design/build firm. Through Seville Consulting, his firm helps homeowners and builders create healthy, efficient and durable buildings by incorporating sustainable practices. Visit [www.sevilleconsulting.com](http://www.sevilleconsulting.com) or [www.nariatlanta.org](http://www.nariatlanta.org) for more information.*

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NARI Atlanta's  
Circle of Good  
program  
has sparked  
the interest  
of NARI's  
national  
organization,  
raising the  
possibility that  
the effort will  
be expanded  
into other  
cities.

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