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Brian Gentry speaks at Spokane Real Estate Forum

Landed Gentry President, Brian Gentry was recently invited to speak at the Spokane-Kootenai 2009 Real Estate Market Forum at the Cour d'Alene Resort as an expert in the 50+ housing market. Landed Gentry has had participation in Spokane real estate for some time, and Brian was able to address realtors, builders, title companies, banks and other industry professionals in the area to further enhance relationships and opportunities both in the Northwest Washington and Spokane regions.

Letters of Distinction

Do you know what CGR or CGB stands for? How about CAPS or AIA? Do letters after the name of an architect, builder or contractor confuse you or do they provide you with useful information?

In fact, these acronyms demonstrate something important: a commitment to professional business practices and project management skills that help ensure quality and a hassle-free experience for clients considering a construction project. Some acronyms can help you identify a builder's specialty. Others indicate a level of third-party support and certification regarding a contractor's ability to complete a project on time and on budget to a client's satisfaction.

Here's a primer on what some of the most common designations mean and why they are a component in the process of selecting the right builder or contractor for your project.

Certified Graduate Builder or Remodeler (CGB/CGR). Offered by the National Association of Home Builders, these certifications result from extensive classroom, correspondence, and job site curriculum regarding all aspects of running a successful building or remodeling operation. The *Graduate Master Builder (GMB)* program provides even greater depth for the most experienced builders.

Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS). Designed to serve both new and existing homeowners, this certification indicates that the contractor has the knowledge essential to creating and modifying homes that will accommodate changing lifestyle and physical needs as the occupants age.

Residential Construction Superintendent (RCS) and National Housing Quality (NHQ) certification. These programs qualify builders and specialty trade contractors, such as framers and insulation workers, to manage both their businesses and their work on the construction site. Once certified, contractors must submit annual reports to be re-qualified and maintain their status.

AIA. This designation marks members of the American Institute of Architects, the nation's leading organization for licensed architects. Achieving AIA status requires a degree in architecture as well as practical experience. Licensing includes an extensive test similar to the bar exam for attorneys. Members must adhere to the AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct and earn a minimum number of continuing education credits sanctioned by the association in order to maintain membership.



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Building Success 101

Q: What is "engineered" lumber, and is it better than regular lumber?

A: Engineered lumber, also called engineered wood or composite lumber, is an established alternative to traditional (or milled) lumber in a variety of building construction applications. Though made from smaller and younger trees (thus helping preserve stands of old-growth timber), it is manufactured (or engineered) into common lumber dimensions that are stronger, straighter, and more reliable than milled lumber. As a result, builders and contractors can use fewer pieces, helping reduce labor and materials costs while achieving a superior structure.

Member, *Institute of Residential Marketing (MIRM)*. A top-level achievement for people within an organization who focus on the marketing aspects of residential construction, such as market research, sales promotions, advertising, and public relations. Other sales-related distinctions include Master Certified New Home Sales Professional (Master CSP) and Certified New Home Marketing Professional (CMP).

This list is just a smattering of the certifications available to professional builders and contractors who want to enhance their technical and management skills. It should be remembered, however, that such distinctions are neither a shield nor a guarantee. Smart homeowners recognize these acronyms and what they represent, but use them as *part of* a thorough process of winnowing and selecting the right builder or contractor for their project. In essence, these and other distinctions provide a baseline of professionalism that consumers can rely upon to help ensure a successful construction project.

Warm regards,

Brian

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