



GONE GREENE

BY SAMANTHA PERSICO

Greene Construction founder Josh Greene stands proudly in what will be the living room of the home he and his crew just finished building. Like a photograph, the living room windows perfectly frame a view of Lone Peak. Soon, the owners of this house will move in and create their own memories. After 15 years of building custom homes in Big Sky, Josh still finds pleasure in all aspects of his career, from meeting with clients to talk about the vision of their home, to bidding jobs and scheduling subcontractors, to putting his construction bags on so he can help his crews build the home. As Josh remarks:

Everyday I come to work and I think about the things we want to accomplish with our business. We strive to generate dedicated, engaged crews who have a passion for building like I do. We build to the highest quality possible for our clients. We also streamline the building process, reducing stress and adding simplicity. Our other goal is to create a winning team mentality with our subcontractors and vendors by providing them with conditions where they can succeed and do their best work.

In 1998, when the Greens moved to Big Sky from Hawaii, they had a vision: to create a small construction company that would allow Josh to



work with his hands, be outside and put his creativity to use building quality, custom homes in beautiful Big Sky. They started out with one employee and a small Jeep Cherokee, and ran the business from their basement. Today, they have 10 employees and they work out of a 1,200-square-foot office they built from the ground up that overlooks the Meadow Village complex, where gorgeous views are visible from every angle.

The Greens feel they have accomplished many of the original goals they set for themselves and their company, and added new ones as well. They have a long list of satisfied clients singing their praises with phrases like, “they are a well-tuned ballet,” “calm, insightful and honest,” “meticulous attention to detail,” and “excellent communication.”

Greene Construction has kept things interesting by incorporating sustainability and green building practices into their business, as well. Their passion lies in bettering the homes they build by reducing the strain placed on the environment, while also trying to give back. “I care about the environment and the sustainability of being green was just something I naturally gravitated towards,” says Josh.

Josh, a true green pioneer, helped to found the first Montana Chapter of the United States Green Building Council (USGBC). He also built the offices he works from today, which earned him a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold Award. The Big Sky Health and Fitness Building in the Meadow Village Center was constructed in 2009 before the “going green” craze began and, at the time, was one of only two LEED Certified Gold buildings in all of Montana. The building earned its points for this prestigious recognition through energy efficiency. Greene Construction incorporated practices such as geothermal lake plates that heat the building in the winter; LED light fixtures that turn off automatically, allowing natural light into the building; and windows that open (surprisingly, not a standard feature in most office buildings); low flow toilets; and a heat recovery ventilation system that brings fresh air into the building, replacing the stale air. All of which saves the building a combined 66% on their utility bill.

Greene Construction has also built LEED-certified and Energy Star Homes and the company is, to this day, installing ground source heat pumps in homes to offset energy use and provide the homeowner with a 30% federal tax credit. Many of the practices that Greene Construction started years ago are now common practice, such as using low volatile organic compounds in sealants, paints, adhesives and carpets; installing LED lights; and diverting waste from the landfill through recycling and reusing.

After being in business in Big Sky for 15 years, the Greens have perspective only time can provide. “After weathering the economic boom and then the bust, we’re smarter, calmer and more mature, and I think that definitely carries through in our business,” says Debby. They have beaten the declines of the economy and have made a niche for themselves in a town they’ve seen grow up.

So, any wise words? “Be honest, authentic and adaptable. If you do the good work and stay true to your word,” says Josh, “you can do more than just survive the ups and downs. You can thrive.” And, with integrity and a driving dedication to the environment and its inhabitants at the forefront, you can do far more than endure a crumbling economic foundation, you can build right on top of it. ■