

BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION

SOUTHEAST

BUILDING A STRONGER REGION

TOTAL TEAM EFFORT

Epoch's Coventry Park will serve working professionals in Jacksonville, Fla. *Page 25*

MAKING HISTORY

Ameresco's work on the \$795 million Savannah River Site involves the largest renewable-energy contract in the nation's history.

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A HEALING

TOUCH

*Brasfield & Gorrie is using its relationships and expertise in healthcare construction to deal with challenges in its work on hospitals in North Carolina. *Page 66**

Each One Unique

+ Blue Ridge Log Cabins is not your standard log home company because instead of using kits, it allows clients to customize their homes. *By Luke Gillespie*

"We offer quality, and with our price, we give you value."

> Milton "Chip" Smith Jr., owner

Blue Ridge Log Cabins

www.blueridgelogcabins.com

Sales: \$20 million

Headquarters: Campobello, S.C.

Employees: 100+

Service: Manufacturer of residential log homes

> **Chip Smith, owner of Blue Ridge Log Cabins**, does not want people to think that log cabins are just secondary homes. With the quality Blue Ridge builds into its homes, he says they exceed typical building standards. "Our homes are built in a controlled environment inside our factory," Smith states. "This ensures quality without the problems of constructing outdoors."

Although Blue Ridge builds its homes in a factory, that does not mean every customer receives the same house. There are specific designs to choose from, but each customer has the ability to create a unique house with the company's designers. "A typical misconception is that the homes are cookie cutter," Smith says. "While we have 12 styles, each can be customized. We have never built the same home; each customer always has a certain way to customize and we find a way to do it."

Authentic and Contemporary

Blue Ridge offers a series of 12 homes that range from 500 to 5,000 square feet. The company uses eastern white pine for construction and constructs homes out of a solid-log style, not log siding. This means that the house is constructed out of whole logs and not framed with another building material with half logs placed on the outside of the home. "We are the only ones in the world who do this," Smith states.



Blue Ridge builds its homes in a controlled environment inside a factory. The company offers a series of 12 homes that range from 500 to 5,000 square feet.

Blue Ridge provides two log profiles, which it says allows the customer to decide how to best construct their dream home. The D-shape profile is a six-inch by eight-foot log and is the more popular of the two. It is rounded on the exterior and flat on the interior of the home.

“The rounded look of the exterior gives you the authentic look of a log cabin, while still providing practicality of the flat walls on the inside to conveniently hang pictures and shelves,” Blue Ridge says. The flat dovetail profile is a six-inch by 12-foot log, and Blue Ridge says it offers a distinctive look for the home. “[The] home will have a more contemporary appeal with the Flat Dovetail due to the smaller seams that give [the] home a clean, flawless finish,” it adds.

“Typically, customers want real log homes as opposed to the imitation,”

Smith claims. He says using solid-log construction is the only way to get a true log cabin. “A solid log is typically more energy efficient than log siding, as well,” he adds, stating that solid wood structures are 20 to 30 percent more energy efficient because of the log’s thermal mass quality, which allows it store and dissipate heat.

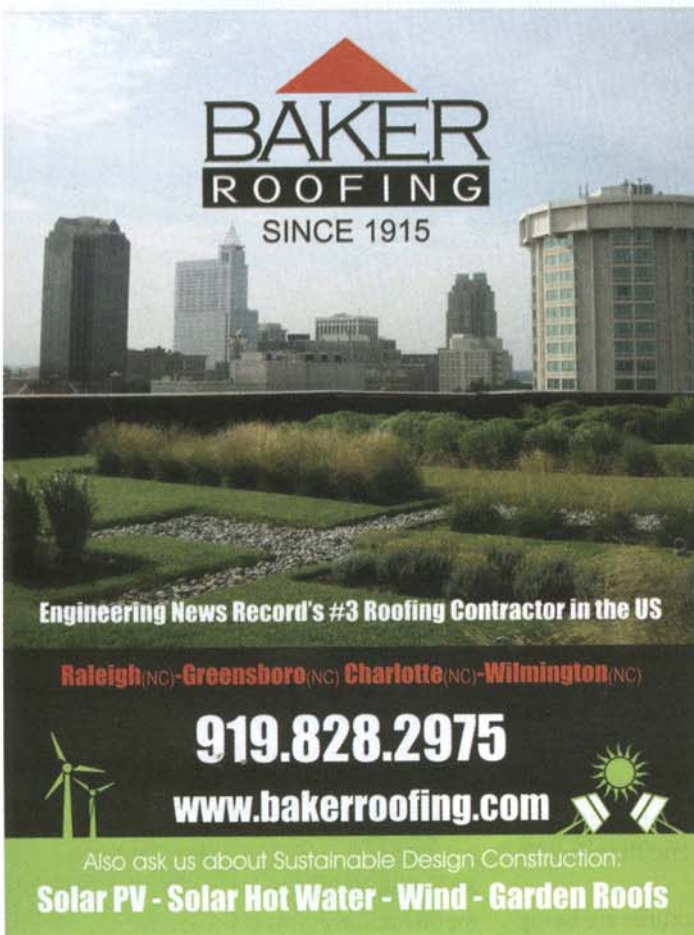
Extending Across the Country

Smith says the company is doing well in a competitive market. In 2008, the company moved into a new state-of-the-art 110,000-square-foot manufacturing facility. Blue Ridge builds two to three homes a week, but Smith says it has the capacity to build five times that amount. From the start of the manufacturing process, Blue Ridge can build a log home in 15 days, Smith notes, and the client is

usually moved in within 90 days. Blue Ridge is headquartered in Campobello, S.C., which is the site of its manufacturing plant and four model home sales villages. The company has another model center in East Ellijay, Ga.

Although Smith says the majority of homes are built for customers in the Southeast and Appalachian Mountain regions, the company is licensed in 22 states. It does all its own transport under Blue Ridge Log Cabins Transport Co. It has a fleet that includes tractor-trailers, flatbeds and support vehicles, as well as its own drivers.

“Recently, we delivered a 2,400-square-foot home to Devils Tower Wyo.,” Smith reports. “We also delivered a home to Niagara Falls, and during the summer delivered three homes to three different states in one week.”



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