

# west coast king

With the first five-star Built Green certification in King County, Washington, the [Bender Chaffey Corporation](#) stands out even in the eco-friendly Pacific Northwest

by Yvette Stines

WHEN COMPANIES ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT THEIR purpose, clients, and craft, success is inevitable. Bender Chaffey, located in Kirkland, Washington, has been in business for 28 years. As a company that focuses on building and remodeling high-end homes, they also offer interior design and maintenance services. “We have created over 300 custom-home and remodel projects throughout Bellevue, Kirkland, the Seattle area, and the San Juan Islands,” says Steve Bender, vice president of Bender Chaffey Corporation. Owned by father-and-son team Don and Steve Bender, the company has remained successful despite the economy and understands what it takes to stay consistent. Bender Chaffey led the path toward sustainability long before it was labeled as such. “Before the green industry took off, we used many of the practices because it is smart construction and better for the environment,” explains Henry Wasenmiller, project manager for Bender Chaffey.

BELOW: Perched above Meydenbauer Bay on Lake Washington, this house shows off its blend of Northwest, Asian, and contemporary architecture.

Now that sustainability and green building are a common practice within the industry, Bender Chaffey is continuing the concept of sustainability at a higher scale. With the changes in the industry, the company is staying on top of the trends by educating their clients and staff on a regular basis. “We keep our staff educated by monthly staff meetings that touch on new green practices. Upon completion of each project, we have a company walkthrough led by the company manager and superintendent; we also talk about the process, job system, and challenges of the project,” Wasenmiller explains. With consistent communication between clients and employees, there is an extensive amount of trust built with all parties involved. The company is proud of the trust their strong reputation engenders.

With over 300 job sites completed, some memorable projects include the Washington Park Seattle Residence. The project included underground stormwater retention that enabled recycling for non-potable and irrigation uses, a vegetative roof, a solar-hot-water system, and exposed steel I-beams throughout the house. In addition, the Issaquah Highland Project attained the first five-star Built Green certification in King County, Washington. “Due to this certification, the county pushed the permit so we could complete the project in a shorter time frame,” Bender says. The Issaquah Highland Project includes advanced framing techniques, staggered studs for thermal insulation, compact-fluorescent lighting, natural carpets, pervious concrete for the





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driveway and courtyard, and crawl spaces conditioned to reduce heat loss from ductwork.

Always having the environment in mind, the company finds ways to preserve the earth from the inception to the completion of all projects. Bender Chaffey takes pride in recycling its used materials. “We don’t use a waste company. Most materials are recycled and used appropriately,” Bender explains.

Another sustainable practice within the company is a web-based, project-management system. “All of our projects are managed via this web-based system where clients, staff, trade contractors, designers, and managers can use tools such as a daily log report about the site’s activities, plan files, specifications, communication channels, virtual schedules,

LEFT: A floating, curved staircase over the dining room makes an impressive entryway. Photo: Gregg Krogstad. Krogstad Photography. Architect: Demetriou Architects. RIGHT: Exposed structural I-beams helped this project to achieve a LEED Gold and 5-star Built Green rating. Architect: Stuart Silk Architects.

video and photos from the site, etc. Previously, this was all done using copious amounts of paper,” Bender says.

Along with being a company that is taking the lead in green building, the company understands the importance of relationships. It takes pride in its reputation of trust and loyalty with clients, sub contractors, and employees. “Don worked hard to develop and keep a great reputation. Our clients know what they are getting (in terms of product) because of our strong reputation of trust and consistency,” Wasenmiller explains. Employees are no different at the company. “We are lucky that we hired the right people, and they truly care. They are passionate with a positive, can-do attitude,” Bender says. Wasenmiller agrees, “The bottom line is relationships. We are industry people who love what we do, find solutions, and have fun doing it,” he says. As a tight-knit, passionate group of employees, Bender Chaffey wants to stay successful and consistent.

In the future, the company would like to continue on its path towards consistency. “We are not looking to grow,” Bender says. “We are a midsize company of 22-plus employees with a very hands-on, flexible approach. We want to continue to give personal attention to each project but have the continued flexibility to handle big projects.” gb&d