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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher

As a regular reader, you may be a little surprised to see the cover story focused on Morrison Supply instead of one of Houston's outstanding custom builders. After all, the name of the magazine is The Metropolitan Builder! While we've never featured a supplier on the front cover of the magazine, we've made this month an exception, given the special circumstances.

We are pleased to announce that with this issue, the magazine celebrates Morrison Supply's sponsorship of the feature "Dialogue with a Designer"! Each month one lucky referred interior designer or design firm will be showcased in the magazine.

What's new and exciting about this sponsorship is that, unlike before, all featured interior designers will receive

a free digital reprint of their Q & A with a custom cover to be used for social media marketing. Designers will also receive the print PDF of their four-page Q & A to print as a unique marketing piece on an "as needed" basis, all compliments of Morrison Supply.

To celebrate the sponsorship, we decided to feature Morrison Supply as the front cover story. If you are interested in finding out more about this unique opportunity, please contact us.

-Giselle Bernard



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Morrison Expands to Include Expressions Home Gallery

By Kathy Bowen Stolz



Now operating under parent company, MORSCO, Morrison Supply continues to grow through acquisitions and store openings. In January 2015, Morrison acquired all of the assets of Kiva Kitchen & Bath. It's Texas and southern California showrooms now operate as Expressions Home Gallery, Morrison's national luxury showroom brand.

The MORSCO family of companies operates under two names in the Houston market. With Morrison, near the Heights, and Expressions Home Gallery near Hwy 59 and Bellaire, they can better serve the builders, designers and other industry professionals in the greater Houston area. Expressions Home Gallery has been in this location

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Liens - Know Your Rights and How to Perfect Them

By Ian P. Faria & Jon Paul Hoelscher of
Coats | Rose | Yale | Ryman | Lee, A Professional Corporation

A lien is a legal right or interest in another person's property that lasts until the debt secured by the lien is satisfied. Chapter 53 of the Texas Property Code provides that a person has a lien against real estate owned by a private individual if they provided labor or materials for the construction or repair of a house, building, or improvement. To perfect lien rights in Texas, Chapter 53's notice and filing requirements must be followed. This article highlights some of the more important requirements for liens.

Notice Requirements. The notice requirements vary depending on whether the claimant is considered an original contractor or derivative claimant (a subcontractor or supplier). An original contractor is a person or business that enters into a contract or agreement directly with the property owner or the property owner's agent. An original contractor is not required to send notice to the property owner prior to filing its lien.

A "derivative claimant" is anyone other than an Original Contractor (person who has contract directly with homeowner) that supplies labor or supplies for a construction project. Derivative claimants must provide written notice to both the original contractor (the person who hired him/her) and the property owner (homeowner). Written notice to the original contractor must be sent by certified mail no later than the 15th day of the second month following each month all or part of the work was performed or material delivered. This means that notice of unpaid balances to the original contractor for each portion of work must be sent to the original contractor approximately every 45 days. Written notice to the property owner must be sent by certified mail no later than the 15th day of the third month following each month in which all or party of the work was performed or material or specially fabricated material delivered. The notice from a derivative claimant requires certain statutory language putting the homeowner on notice that it could be personally liable for the debt. Failure to give the required notice can make any lien invalid.

Filing Deadlines. For a residential construction project,

the lien claimant must file its lien with the county property records "not later than the 15th day of the third calendar month after the day on which the indebtedness accrues." Indebtedness accrues on the last day of the month in which the contract is terminated, the work completed or abandoned. This means that if the original contractor's indebtedness accrues on January 15th, then it has until April 15th to file the lien. The filed lien is required to be an affidavit by an agent of the claimant who swears before a notary the grounds for asserting the claim and attaches invoices or statements to prove the claim. For commercial projects, the claimant must file a lien not later than the 15th day of the fourth month after the day the indebtedness accrues.

Other requirements. Once the lien is filed, the claimant has up to one year from the date the lien is filed to file suit to foreclose the lien on a residential construction project and up to two years for commercial projects.

If the property is a homestead, then Chapter 53 has additional requirements. First, the original contractor is required to have a written contract with the homeowner, and if the homeowner is married, the contract is to be signed by both spouses. The contract is also to be filed with the county clerk where the property is located.

In addition to the filing and notice requirements, Chapter 53 contains additional requirements for contracts for residential construction projects. First, the original contractor must deliver a statutory disclosure statement to the owner at the time of contracting. The original contractor is also required to provide the homestead owner with a list of its subcontractors and suppliers expected to be utilized on the project. The original contractor is further required to update this list by the 15th day after the list changes due to addition or deletion of a subcontractor.

Additionally, a copy of the lien must be sent to the property owner's last known business or residence address within five days after the affidavit is filed with the county clerk.

Builders, remodelers, subcontractors and their suppliers should be mindful of the notice requirements and deadlines for liens as well as the contract requirements for homesteads. Instituting a system to send notices of unpaid balances and calendaring deadlines is essential for any construction company that wishes to preserve its lien rights.

Ian P. Faria is a Director with Coats | Rose and a member of the firm's Construction/Surety Law and Oil and Gas/Energy sections. Ian was selected as a Texas Super Lawyer in 2014 in Construction Law. This is an honor conferred upon only on 5% of the total lawyers in Texas (previously he was selected as a Texas Super Lawyer "Rising Star" in Construction Law in 2012 and 2013). He was also selected by his peers for inclusion in The Best Lawyers in America© 2014 and 2015 in the field of Construction Law. In 2015, he received the highest rating, AV Preeminent®, by Martindale-Hubbell® Law Directory. This is Martindale-Hubbell's highest possible rating for both ethical standards and legal ability



Jon Paul Hoelscher is Director with Coats | Rose and a member of the firm's Construction and Litigation sections. He has been selected as a Texas Super Lawyer "Rising Star" for Construction Law by Texas Monthly since 2012, an honor conferred upon only 2.5% of the total lawyers in Texas. He also has served a councilmember for the Houston Bar Association Construction Law Section since 2011.



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DIALOGUE WITH A DESIGNER

INTERVIEW WITH TORIE HALBERT

Morrison knows that dreams, reality and inspiration make a house a home. They also know that an interior designer or interior design firm often become an intricate part of this process. Design professionals should be committed to creating individualized and functional designs to meet the lifestyles of their clients' families. Morrison Showrooms works to inspire these ideas and is conveniently located in the heart of Houston. Morrison offers many brands and designs, all exhibited in unique settings with interactive displays. Whether it's appliances, plumbing, hardware, or lighting, they have brand to fit every budget and a style to fit every design. Contact Joann Ontiveros for more details. 713-861-2343.

This month Morrison dialogs with renowned Houston Designer Torie Halbert, Owner of To The T Interiors, transforming and recreating ideas that you may have about your dream living space and making them a reality. Focusing on residential and small commercial spaces, To The T Interiors offers a wide range of design services to those in need with a personal approach built off of trust.

Morrison: What motivated you to go into the interior

design field?

Torie Halbert: My obsession with fabric, trim, ribbon, rhinestones – literally anything decorative – began very early. I would always rather someone would take me to the fabric store to make something decorative than to buy toys or play outside.

By the age of seven, I was begging my Mom to teach me how to sew by hand, and I began sewing pillows and doll clothes. By nine years old, I was sewing on her Singer machine. I learned quickly to make clothes by patterns. By middle school I was designing and selling outfits to my friends. I loved making decorative custom pillows for gifts and still do for clients.

My love for textiles – all of the beautiful patterns, colors and textures are a huge part of why I truly wanted to go into the design field. The other part was my constant desire to rearrange furniture in all areas of our home on a regular basis and to redecorate.

There was no question what field I would go into upon high school graduation.

Morrison: How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?

Torie Halbert: Many aspects of the interior design field have changed, mostly due to the fact that as I was finishing my degree, the World Wide Web was really just getting started. Literally, all through college, design selections were made from huge books and catalogues. Now you can just look anything and everything up online. We designers all still have our catalogues, especially when selecting lighting and accessories when they can be beneficial. But for the most part, it seems much faster just to “google it.”

Of course the design styles have changed drastically as well. Right out of college, we were still in the days of

very traditional styles, darker colors, with lots of detail. Now it’s clean, simple, bright, open, and shades of greys and whites reign.

Morrison: How can an experienced interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with his/her building or remodeling projects?

Torie Halbert: There is no substitute for an experienced designer when it comes to making selections for a new home or remodel project. The amount of experience, know-how, taste and, most importantly, the level of trust that you gain with your designer will keep you from making expensive mistakes.

As the homeowner, you will sleep better knowing you have someone leading you through it all that does this on a daily process. Experienced designers make solid decisions that they do not second guess. They have been through it all, and they know what works and what does not work. Most builders or remodeling contractors have an idea on choices but do not exude the level of experience or taste that a designer does. I know this is why my builder, Bryan Phillips at Cason Grayes homes uses my skills. He has excellent taste but leaves the designing to me.

The selections that are being made are costly investments, including the finishing elements of furniture, window treatments and accessories. With proper guidance from me, they are making wise selections that are not trendy or will become dated quickly but are timeless and classic on all levels.

Morrison: What sets you apart from other designers?

Torie Halbert: As a custom home interior designer, I often have the ability to design on a “dream level.” Many of my clients are able to use some of the most beautiful stone countertops, lighting and finishes there are to offer. I have designed hundreds of custom homes in some of the most amazing neighborhoods in the Houston area, including Riverstone, Sienna Plantation, Carlton Woods, West University, River Oaks and Bellaire.

But on the other hand, I have clients that hire me that do not have those same options and budgets are limited. I have the ability, they eye and the taste to make those clients just as satisfied by knowing where to go and what

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for nine years and the Morrison showroom at the Wynnwood location since 1998.

Morrison's national showroom brand debuted only a year ago with the opening of their Dallas location. Since then Expressions Home Gallery has opened various locations in California, Arizona and Texas. Chip Hornsby, CEO of MORSCO, said, "The Expressions Home Gallery brand has seen impressive success since opening in Dallas in early 2015. We attribute this success to our experienced consultants and to the outstanding caliber of products our showrooms offer, as well as the ease that our consultants bring to the purchasing process."



“We invite customers to immerse themselves in our fully functioning interactive displays....”

The gorgeous Morrison showroom occupies one half of the building that also houses their wholesale plumbing business, making this a builder and designer hub, conveniently located in the heart of Houston. Morrison offers many brands and designs, all exhibited in unique settings with interactive displays. Whether it's appliances, plumbing, hardware, or lighting, we have brand to fit every budget and a style to fit every design," says Joann Ontiveros, Morrison showroom manager. "Homebuyers can truly customize their selections.





Morrison has a 150,000-sq-ft warehouse in the same location that houses an expansive inventory. It also offers a wide delivery area. “We set our services up to complement our customers,” Ontiveros noted. “Our showrooms provide the same level of professionalism and attention to detail that our builders and designers provide their homeowners.”

Both Houston locations house nearly 20,000 square feet of plumbing fixtures, appliances and door & cabinet hardware. Lighting is also offered at the Wynnwood store. Both are Premier Kohler showrooms and have in-house appliance installation teams to service their customers. They are trained and certified on all appliance brands. Some brands offer additional warranties by having certified staff install the appliances. “By having our own in-house installation teams, we control the schedule, allowing us to finish more jobs the proper way,” Ontiveros explained. “Sometimes third party installers spend their days focused on the quantity of jobs as opposed to the quality of their jobs.”

“We understand that a new kitchen or bath design can be a form of self-expression, driven by passion and creativity. We set out to create a hands-on environment



where ideas can spark and thrive,” Jeff Kramer, Expressions store manager said. “We invite customers to immerse themselves in our fully functioning interactive displays of the most exclusive brands for the kitchen and bath. This makes it easier for guests to imagine the appliances and fixtures in their own home.”

Their stores are staffed by highly trained sales consultants who can help their customers select the items that will make each home a unique reflection of its owner. “We believe it’s not just about providing our customers with the products they need, it’s about giving them the lifestyle they desire,” Kramer added.

Although Morrison and Expressions Home Gallery gets much of its business through word-of-mouth referrals, they practice strategic marketing to reach builders, remodelers and designers. They hold membership meetings and actively participate in the Texas Association of Builders, the National Kitchen and Bath Association, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry and the ASID. They are also very active in the Greater Houston Builders Association. “We make sure we are where our customers are,” Ontiveros explained. “Every facet of our business is based around the construction industry.”

.....

For additional information regarding MORSCO or any of its brands, including Morrison and Expressions Home Gallery, please visit www.MorscoUSA.com.

*Please visit:
Morrison Showroom, 6867 Wynnwood Lane,
Houston, Texas 77008, (713) 861-2343,
www.morsco.com.*

*Expressions Home Gallery (formerly Kiva),
7071 Southwest Freeway, Houston, Texas 77074,
(713) 781-2222,
www.ExpressionsHomeGallery.com.*

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to do. I also have the experience of giving them the same polished, completed look, even on a limited budget, and that is what sets me apart. As an experienced designer, I “sell” my designs, ideas and overall vision by truly gaining my clients trust, getting to really know what each client is striving their home or project to emulate and then overseeing it to come together beautifully, layer by layer.

Morrison: What are some common mistakes made by builders and homeowners?

Torie Halbert: In my opinion, one of the biggest mistakes made is choosing the wrong window and exterior color selections. Sometimes builders do not realize just how much of an impact a window frame color can make and how much richer and more attractive the perfect combination of exterior finishes enhance a home’s curb appeal if it is all pulled together by a designer. Other mistakes include stair railing choices and occasionally trendy backsplash/tile designs.

Morrison: What are other special things you have achieved as an interior designer?

Torie Halbert: Aside from constant growth with each and every client, home and projects? While working over the years for different custom home builders, we have won many PRISM awards, Parade of Homes awards, Houston’s Best Awards and Showcase Home Tour awards. As the designer for Cason Graye homes in Bellaire, we won three first place awards including Best Design, Best Kitchen and Best Master Suite on the 2014 Fall Bellaire Showcase tour.

I have traveled across the U.S. in conjunction with American Home Fashions Carpet and taught other designers how to upsell high-end carpet to their buyers. I also became a reality TV contestant on Season Four of HGTV’s “Design Star,” where I made it all the way to the Final Four on the show. From there, I became the national spokesperson for Nature’s Carpet (wool carpet out of New Zealand), the spokesperson for a fabric store and became the Design Expert on Great Day Houston for nearly two years. In a collaboration between GDH and Ashley Furniture, each month I would surprise a winning, deserving family and make over their space with a \$10,000 makeover. This was one of the most rewarding parts of my career.



I also started my own line of western belts and upscale rustic furniture called Strom Rinzen. I have also been featured in many design magazines, morning shows and judge design competitions and speak at Home & Garden shows across the U.S. I have also appeared on “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition” several times as a guest designer.



Photo by Amanda White

You may contact Torie Halbert at To The T. Interiors, 832-858-8519, torie.halbert@comcast.net www.tothetinteriors.com and www.stromrinzen.com.



Builders Post-Tension Offers 'Mom and Pop' Customer Service

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

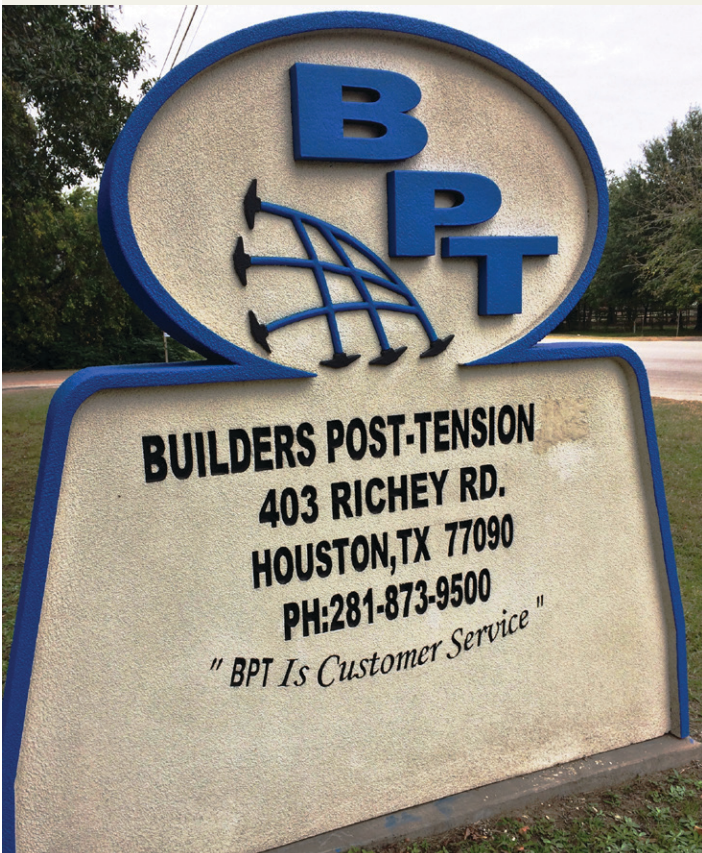
“Big company expertise with mom and pop customer service” is the way Greg Tomlinson, president of Builders Post-Tension (BPT), explains his company’s approach since its founding in 2001. “We’re the kind of operation where a construction superintendent can call the guy who owns the company to solve a problem,” said Tomlinson. “We know there are going to be issues in any construction project, it is just the nature of this business. We strive to solve problems as quickly as possible to avoid jobsite slow-downs. BPT always has the materials and services our customers need.”

Builders Post-Tension extrudes and fabricates its cable from raw strand. Its certified plants have been PTI-certified since its founding, Tomlinson noted proudly. “We not only meet but exceed the guidelines from the Post-Tensioning Institute.”

In addition to PT cable, the company’s inventory includes

rebar, wire mesh, stirrups, corner bars, tape, poly, mastic, anchor bolts, mudsills, and most other tie-down products. In addition to PT slabs, it also sells materials for conventionally reinforced slabs. BPT’s field services include coordinating stressing operations with partnering engineering companies. They also track pour dates daily to ensure cables get stressed according to the engineer’s specifications. BPT’s experienced staff can install post tension slabs and perform post tension repairs for high-rise and slab-on-ground projects. They will even calibrate other companies’ stressing equipment.

BPT has offices in Houston and Dallas/Ft. Worth. The company serves the state of Texas and beyond and is able to ship across the continental United States and into Mexico. “BPT’s shipments include all of the necessary concrete reinforcement materials to get the customer’s foundation completed in a timely manner,” Tomlinson said.



Much of the company's business comes from single-family and multi-family home construction, but it also provides services for tennis courts, commercial slabs on ground and high-rise commercial structures.

BPT's 2015 sales hit \$25 million in Houston and \$7 million in Dallas/Fort Worth. The average price of one of its packages is \$2500.

Brian Q. Conley, Tomlinson's business partner, oversees the company's sales operation while Tomlinson focuses on the day-to-day operations, and both worked together at another post-tension company. "It's a perfect marriage," said Tomlinson. "We share the same philosophy and the same goals but have different strengths." They each have almost 30 years of experience in the business and their Dallas office principals add even more.

BPT employs 50 people in the Houston office and another 15 in the Dallas office. Those employees work in accounting, inside sales, outside sales, estimating, fabricating and field services.

Tomlinson shared that 60-70 percent of the shop and office employees have been with Builders Post-Tension since Day 1. "We don't have a lot of turnover. We think the only way to make customers happy is to make employees happy. We don't micromanage. We believe in hiring the right people, giving them the tools they need to succeed and letting them do their jobs."

Builders Post-Tension also rewards all of its employees by paying them regular bonuses when the company is doing well. "It's the 'Circle of Life' for us. I'm a big believer in karma. Being honest, above board and doing things the right way will come back to you. Happy, contented employees will provide outstanding customer







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Pace Concrete has been a leading turn-key concrete subcontractor in the Greater Houston area for over 30 years. The principals & leadership team at Pace Concrete each have 30+ years of experience in the concrete & construction industry. Pace specializes in slab on grade foundations (conventional reinforcing and post-tension), paving, sidewalks, and other flatwork.

service and make for happy customers,” Tomlinson said. And the company’s motto is “BPT is customer service.

In fact, what Tomlinson likes best about his job is taking care of customers and having happy employees. “I get a lot of satisfaction from that. I’m very proud of having happy, long-term employees. The employees have our back, and they take care of our customers. That’s a big deal to me.”

On the flip side, Tomlinson said it can be a challenge to keep up that high level of customer service, getting things done in a timely manner and making sure customers have what they need. “But this is our commitment and this is what defines us,” he added.

During the next five years, Builders Post-Tension plans to grow their market share in both of their locations. Dallas/Fort Worth is centrally located in the U.S. and is ideal for shipping its products all over the country. Tomlinson explained that the company just bought a rebar stirrup machine for its operations to better serve its customers all over the U.S.

Tomlinson concluded by touching on one of his favorite topics, charity. “Builders Post-Tension supports a lot of charities all over Texas,” he said, “but three of our favorites that we go out of our way to help in our local community are the Greater Houston Builders Association’s Adopt-a-Family, Operation Finally Home and Home Aid Houston. We are a big believer in giving back to our community.”



Greg Tomlinson

For more information, contact Builders Post-Tension at 403 Richey Road, Houston, TX 77090 or at 281-873-9500. The company website is www.builderspt.com.



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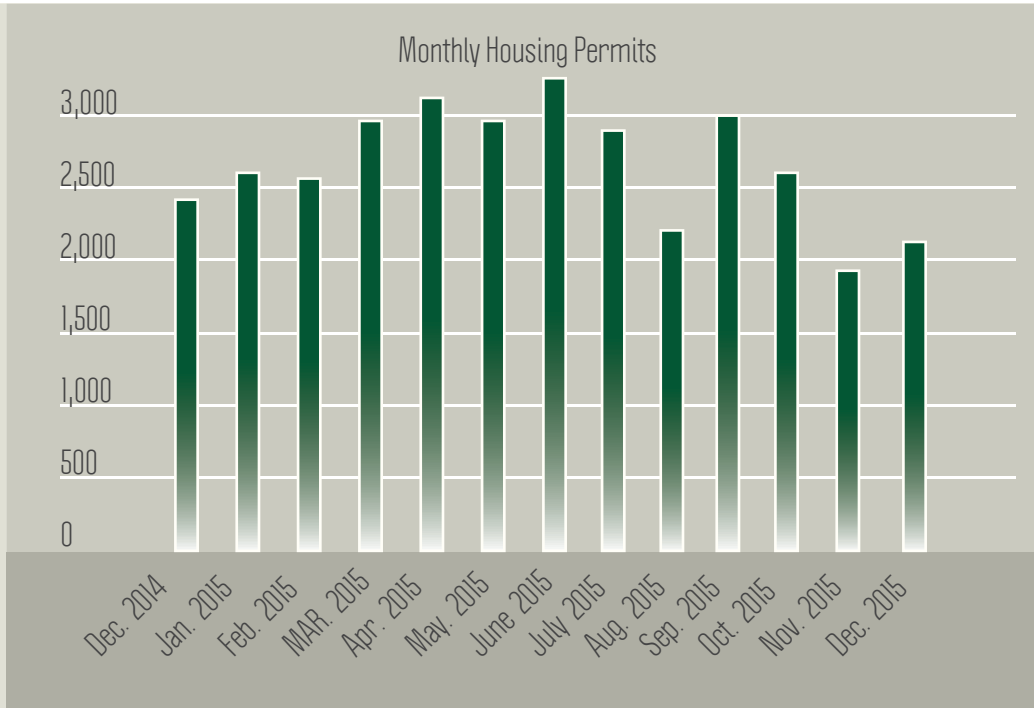
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Houston Housing Picture

Bohlke Consulting Group, LLC

Monthly housing permits filed by builders in the Houston Area.

Dec 2014	2,435
Jan 2015	2,645
Feb 2015	2,621
Mar 2015	2,958
Apr 2015	3,248
May 2015	2,884
June 2015	3,181
July 2015	2,630
Aug 2015	2,292
Sep 2015	3,069
Oct 2015	2,287
Nov 2015	1,958
Dec 2015	2,177
Dec. 14 v. Dec 15	-10.6%



MARKET	2014	2015	ANNUAL % CHANGE	-	-
BUILDER	35,004	31,950	-8.7%	-	-
Lennar Homes	1,797	1,792	-0.3%	-	-
DR Horton Homes	1,896	1,592	-16.0%	-	-
Perry Homes	1,523	1,409	-7.5%	-	-
Postwood/Long Lk	1,395	1,207	-13.5%	-	-
KB Homes	1,064	956	-10.2%	-	-
Taylor Morrison	800	921	15.1%	-	-
Meritage Homes	956	919	-3.9%	-	-
LGI Homes	888	831	-6.4%	-	-
Beazer Homes	592	820	38.5%	-	-
Express Homes	646	807	24.9%	-	-

Annual permit activity shows a 8.7% decrease in total activity between 2015 and 2014. Of the top ten most permitted builders in 2015, two showed positive growth year over year.

ANN SACKS COLLECTION

MODERN EXPANDS ITS LINE WITH NEW RIBBED DESIGNS

Distinct contemporary styling and virtually limitless application are all hallmarks of ANN SACKS Collection Modern stoneware designs, originally introduced in 2012. ANN SACKS now brings a complementing alternative, ANN SACKS Collection Modern Ribbed. The inspired crisp geometry and simple, fluid details continue in this new collection, yet take it up a notch with the embellishment of ribbing to sections of the tile face.

ANN SACKS Collection Modern Ribbed designs are crafted by ANN SACKS in-house artisans in its Portland, Ore. facility. The tile face features a raised edge detail that is then ribbed in an etched design to add depth and definition with a tactile quality that is visually captivating. The clay has been specifically formulated to achieve a smooth, flat surface, and is then finished with an interactive glaze that breaks across the raised line and



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gentle ribbing across its stage to bisect, trace and slant in subtle play of shadow and light.

The simple, sophisticated designs showcase the tiles' precise execution and the spare beauty of the material. Available in all ANN SACKS Stoneware colors, the collection currently hosts five 3x9 field designs: Ribbed Criss Cross, Ribbed Peaked Diamond Curve (shown), Ribbed Rectangle (shown), Ribbed Split Left and Ribbed Split Right; four 8"x 8" field designs: Moon, Valley, Split and Connected Square; and one Triangle.



About ANN SACKS

Founded in 1981, ANN SACKS has built its reputation with inspiring designs in tile, stone, plumbing, lighting and accessories. Based in Portland, Ore., the company is a division of the Kohler Co. Interiors Group, a wholly owned subsidiary of Kohler Co. Ann Sacks Tile and Stone, Inc., along with Kallista plumbing and Robern mirrored cabinetry and vanities are part of the Kohler Interiors Decorative Products sector. Under its Furniture sector resides Baker Knapp & Tubbs, Inc., Baker furniture, Baker Knapp & Tubbs Showrooms and Baker Stores, and McGuire Furniture Company. Founded in 1873 and headquartered in Kohler, Wis., Kohler Co. is one of America's oldest and largest privately held companies. Kohler is a global leader in the manufacture of kitchen and bath products, engines and power generation systems, cabinetry, tile and home interiors, and international host to award-winning hospitality and world-class golf destinations. For additional information regarding ANN SACKS Modern Ribbed or other ANN SACKS products, consumers can call toll-free 1-800-278-TILE or visit the ANN SACKS website at www.annsacks.com.

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