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## All-Green Neighborhood Wins "Coolest U.S. Neighborhood" Contest

### Building Green Communities

By: Alana Chandler - Thursday, June 18, 2009

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When homeowners Alex Weeks and Alana Chandler read about a national contest sponsored by Dreyer's Ice Cream (National Neighborhood Salute contest) to find "The Coolest Neighborhood in the United States" they figured their subdivision, Agave, in Austin, TX had a pretty good shot.

Chandler explains "I read there were 20,000 entries the prior year for this contest but coming upon Agave is truly like Dorothy must have felt when seeing Oz for the first time. There's nothing like it and no one has ever entered without declaring it--cool". So I knew we had a good shot.

And "cool" is both literally and figuratively...with EVERY home having a minimum of a 3 star green rating via amenities like Isonene sprayed insulation, tankless hot water heaters etc. along with additional "green features" such as Silestone countertops, polished concrete flooring, bamboo, and paralem stair treads...even these hot Texas houses stay cool and modern.

But, for the cherry on top (Dreyer's reference) the houses LOOK just as cool.

Vicinia development designed Agave as a one-of-a-kind experiment that took the top modern award-winning architects in Austin, asked them to make all houses energy-efficient and green AND affordable.

A rare combination.

And it worked. The houses were sold quickly, and although they first sprung up in the \$150,000 range, their popularity quickly soared the same plans into the range of \$200,000 to \$400,000 just over a year later.

The houses don't just stand out as unique because of their modern designs and angles & soaring equity, however. They are uber colorful, uber hip, uber modern in every sense. The colors--from lime green to orange to fire engine red--dot the Austin skyline (7 minutes from downtown) like sprinkles.

And the result of the contest? Agave took grand prize. Dreyers sponsored an ice cream party for all 1,000 residents with everything provided free of charge to help the homeowners celebrate...and the developer threw in a mobile outdoor movie under the stars on a field with a 60 foot movie screen and professional sound as his pat-on-the-back as well.

The selected movie? Field of Dreams of Course.

And, just as the movie's tag line says, no matter how new the idea, no matter how un-traditioinal the original thought may seem at first...when it's green...

"If you build it, They will come."

