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From Record Albums to Maintenance-Free Homes, Vinyl and Baby Boomers Come Full Circle

Modern colors, low-maintenance make vinyl the siding of choice for Baby Boomers

KANSAS CITY, MO. — Baby boomers want to know: Will my home age as gracefully as me? According to a study by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), an overwhelming percentage of Americans aged 45 and older – more than 83 percent – want to stay in their current homes long after they retire.

In addition, baby boomers want a maintenance-free lifestyle, allowing them to travel, socialize and pursue active lifestyles, according to Kent Conine, president of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), the co-sponsor of a study on housing trends among boomers and seniors.

As a result, boomers are increasingly choosing vinyl siding for their new homes, or to give their existing homes a much-needed facelift, with confidence that this familiar material will see them through their golden years in style.

Vinyl's Coming of Age

Vinyl siding was first introduced to the exterior cladding market in the early 1960s and steadily increased in popularity over the next four decades because of its durability, versatility and ease of maintenance. True to its generation, vinyl siding matured to exhibit exceptional impact resistance, rigidity and strength. Forty years of improvements have produced a new generation of vinyl siding that is extremely durable and fade resistant.

“Vinyl siding has been around for decades, but recent advancements in technology have made it even more desirable,” says Jerry Blais, director of product marketing, Ply Gem Siding Group. “We have options now that just weren’t available even a few years ago. For example, there is a newer product called Timber Oak Ascent, a next-generation product introduced by Variform last year, which mimics the appearance of real, hand-stained wood grain. Variform’s new technology offers precise control to create naturally dissimilar color variations that maintain their integrity over time.”

Another example Blais cites is Mastic's Cedar Discovery product line which looks like hand-installed cedar shingles and shakes and comes in a wide range of colors including blues, greens and golds. "To create the authentic look and feel of these shingles, we digitized the grain from a real weathered wood shingle, so it looks like the real thing without all the maintenance."

"Vinyl has 'grown up' in a sense," Blais adds. "It used to be specified primarily because it was affordable; now it has become a preferred construction material that beautifully blends form and function with the added benefit of virtually no maintenance requirements and easier installation than other options like fiber cement."

Lasting Impressions

The Vinyl Siding Institute (VSI) also has recognized that builders and homeowners want good looks that will last. To that end, VSI sponsors a color-retention certification program that allows vinyl siding companies to certify products through Architectural Testing Inc., an independent testing administrator. To qualify for color retention certification, companies must first have received VSI certification for quality and performance, meeting or exceeding industry standards for weatherability, windload, impact resistance, expansion and shrinkage, surface distortion, as well as length, width and thickness verification. VSI offers an official list of color-certified products on their website (www.vinylsiding.org).

As baby boomers decide to spend more time enjoying life and less time on home improvement, it will be more important than ever for construction materials to withstand age and weathering.

Dave Verbofsky, manager, product and installation training, adds, "Many homeowners are surprised to learn about the color and style options of today's vinyl siding products, and delighted to realize that they improve the exterior of their home without worry about the painting or staining that fiber cement and wood siding require. Instead, we simply hang it and the homeowner can all but forget it, which saves them time and money on their home improvements."

For more information, visit www.alcoahomeexteriors.com or call (800) 962-6973.

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About Ply Gem

Ply Gem, headquartered in Kearney, Mo., is committed to providing North America's homebuilders, remodelers and homeowners quality exterior building solutions that add value to the structures in which they live and work. The company's siding group, a proud sponsor of Homes for Our Troops, is a leading manufacturer and marketer of premium vinyl and aluminum siding and accessories, fencing, and decking brands including Mastic®, Alcoa Home Exteriors®, Variform™, Napco® and Kroy®. Ply Gem's window group manufactures and markets vinyl, vinyl-clad, wood-clad, and aluminum window and patio door brands including MW®, Patriot®, Alenco®, Great Lakes®, and CWD®. The company's brands are sold through short-line and two-step distributors, Pro Dealers and big box retailers. Ply Gem employs more than 6,000 people across North America.