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A family of seven is posed in a modern kitchen. The father, a man in a grey polo shirt, stands in the back right. The mother, a woman in a black sleeveless top, stands in the back right. Two boys stand in the back left, one in a red polo and one in a white polo. Three children are seated in the front: a girl in a light blue dress on the left, a boy in a red polo in the center, and a girl in a white dress on the right. The kitchen features white cabinetry, a brick wall, and three ornate pendant lights hanging from the ceiling.

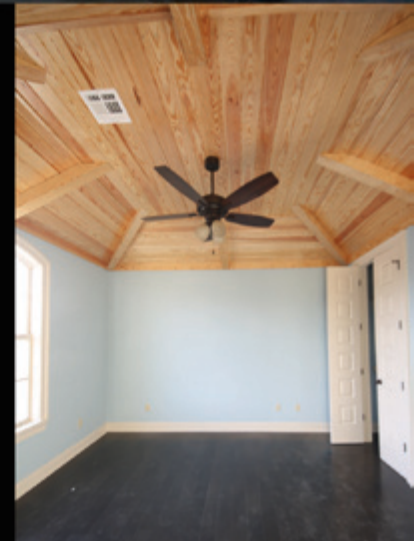
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NAHB
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Publisher's Note

What a great place to live! The construction industry is a vital part of the growth and development of our area. We are blessed to be here. With this blessing comes responsibility, building a better future for our children.

Participating in Baton Rouge on LHBA Legislative Day helped me to appreciate our Senators and Representatives and the long hours and hard work they put in to make a difference. Thank you to Representative Stuart Bishop and Senator Paige Cortez for your time.

AB features Michael Gallagher of Gallagher Homes. Michael has been a part of building Acadiana for several years now. He and his beautiful family share the cover, you will enjoy his story. Also in this issue a special feature on my favorite local musician, Roddie Romero. Roddie is an amazing musician and songwriter as well as a skilled artisan. He has been entertaining since he was a youth and has played with legends – Elvis Costello, Zac Brown Band, Jimmy Buffett, John Oates to name a few! It's my pleasure to share his story.

Enjoy,
April Becquet
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Gallagher Homes

Michael Gallagher Builds Relationships, Not Just Homes

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Lafayette builder Michael Gallagher's personal relationships are the foundation of Gallagher Homes' success. "Most of my business comes from word of mouth. In my profession your reputation is your biggest ally. People want to know [their builder], to see him at church and at school functions. I've been in Lafayette almost all of my life. I always tell customers that their kids will go to school with my kids, if not now, then later. I probably have had 200+ customers over the years, and I value the good relationships formed with them."

He counts on those relationships to bring him referrals, just as he counts on his relationships with vendors to spread the word. "A lot of my materials suppliers are my biggest spokespeople. I love working with the sales people and the friendly faces behind the counter."

Gallagher finds the same approach works for subcontractors. "I have good quality subs, the same electricians, the same plumbers, the same roofers [from job to job]. I have a personal relationship with all of them, and they like to work for me. My personal relationship is the most critical thing."

Also critical to the company's success is his ability to monitor and adapt to the economy. Until three years ago he was minimizing his risk by building smaller homes on smaller lots. Now that the economy has picked up, "we're specializing in a little bit larger homes on a little bit larger lots, while a lot of other local builders are building smaller homes. I saw a niche a few years ago, realizing that everybody tended to be in the smaller price range."

Gallagher Homes' typical

project nowadays is a five- or six-bedroom family home of 4,300 sq. ft. of living space, plus an outdoor kitchen/living space. The homes include a garage for three or more cars and other vehicles and a "drop area" for kids' toys, bikes and sports equipment. Because many of his homes are for large, active families, such as his own, he typically includes a "drop area" with five or six lockers in the homes' interiors. Prices range from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

Gallagher Homes works hand-in-hand with Structure APAC and principal designer for the firm, architect Randy Rivera, to create the open spaces its homes are known for. "We use arches and beams to make all rooms flow together. Functionality is critical to my design. I build every house like I was going to be moving into it. I'll make an attic into a bonus room. There is no wasted space,"

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Roddie Romero Rocks on Stage and in Workshop | Inside Story

Roddie Romero Rocks on Stage and in Workshop |

By Kathy Bowen Stolz

Musician and cabinetmaker. Cabinetmaker and musician. Whether he's playing the accordion with his Hub City All-Stars or designing fine wood cabinets for The Artisan Workshop, Roddie Romero can fill either role with equal skill, for he's had plenty of practice.

"The amount of time I put into both are just about equal. I think that's the way it should be. One always inspires the other, as if it's a dance between partners."

Roddie, who's been a professional musician since age 13, began playing the accordion, his primary instrument, 28 years ago. "My folks always say I was showing interest at five, but I didn't get an instrument 'til I was nine. I also play some piano and dabble with the drum kit."

Being exposed to music at an early age made a lasting impression on him. "I'm self-taught with much help from the vinyl records that my parents had given me. I really have to give lots of credit to them as well. They really introduced me to so much music as a kid."

Family and music are intertwined in Romero's career. "The music bug has infected all! When I started the first band, it consisted of my brother on drums, brother-in-law on bass and other brother-in-law on percussion (scrub board). Now that we're older, it's really special to see the nephews picking up and making their own music. At every cook-out that we have, someone always brings an instrument."

A cabinetmaker for almost 20 years, Roddie learned the craft from a family friend when Roddie was between travels with his band. "He really showed me a new world. What I loved about it is that it was something that was passed down through generations. It wasn't just

learning a trade or just a job. It was bigger than that."

Romero joined forces with Brett Breaux of BECC Homes four years ago to form The Artisan Workshop in Lafayette. "I approached Brett, wanting to get back to swinging a hammer. In a previous cabinet shop that I owned, I had built a kitchen for him ten years prior, and we kept in contact. It seemed that it was the

right time because he was interested in opening a cabinet shop. He remembered the quality of work that I did, so we started The Artisan Workshop.

"I remember sitting at Barnes and Noble [book store] thinking of a business name. Much like my band name, I wanted it to last a long time. Craftsmen leave their mark, like the musicians in my life."



New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival 2013. Photo courtesy of Will Byington

Roddie Romero named his band the Hub City All-Stars not only because he's from Lafayette but also because "I wanted it to have the alumni feeling. Great 'all-star' musicians passing through, leaving their mark, influencing and changing the way I would play and approach music." The band is known not only for playing traditional Cajun and Creole music indigenous to South Louisiana but also for its original songwriting, which stays true to Louisiana inspirations.

He formed Roddie Romero and the Hub City All-Stars in 2001, but he's been leading bands for 25 years, teaming up with pianist Eric Adcock when they were boys. They began touring together when Roddie was 17 and Eric was 18. "Going on 20 years now, we feel like we're just starting!"

About his years as a bandleader, Romero said, "I did take a much-needed break from band leading and toured with Steve Riley and

the Mamou Playboys for about two years. I also enjoy being a side man for Zachary Richard and Marc Broussard, but my true heart is leading a band."

His musical background influences his cabinetmaking. "When I'm in the shop, it's leading my crew like a bandleader, working as a team and giving them their moments to shine." Nowadays, however, he's not spending much time in the shop because he's busy designing cabinets. Business has been good enough that he's hired an installation crew.

The music business has also been good lately. Nominated for a Grammy award in 2008 for their double record, "The La Louisianne Sessions," Roddie Romero and the Hub City All-Stars opened for the Neville Brothers at the Hollywood Bowl last summer. "It was incredible! Singing 'Walkin' to New Orleans,' a Bobby Charles song, and having a sold-out crowd



One of a kind French style mantel, with a time worn finish. Photo courtesy of Monica Lake Ramirez



Parade of Homes Kitchen, with Black Walnut handcrafted countertop on Island. Photo courtesy of Monica Lake Ramirez

Recent artists that have performed with Roddie Romero onstage: Zac Brown Band, Jimmy Buffett, Lionel Richie, John Oates, Elvis Costello, Allen Toussaint, Ani DiFranco, Dr. John, Jesse Winchester, Richard Thompson, Buddy Miller, Brandi Carlile, Shawn Mullins, Shawn Colvin, Doyle Bramhall II, The Neville Brothers and Asleep At The Wheel.



New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival 2013, Gary Usie(Drums), Chris French(Bass) Photo courtesy of Will Byington

of 18,000 singing back to you! Hard to describe the feeling!” At another date last summer the band opened for Jimmy Buffett and Lionel Richie in front of even more people – 45,000 – at Comerica Park in Detroit. The band also performs

worldwide, with Roddie citing the Festival International and Jazz Fest as favorites, in addition to some “amazing” European and Canadian festivals.

“Our summer schedule is not too

full right now due to recording a new record, which is coming out this fall. I will be touring a bit with Zachary Richard, as I’m on his new record.”

No matter which role – cabinetmaker or musician – Roddie Romero is playing, he finds the greatest satisfaction from the response he gets from the customer, whether that customer is in the audience of The Hollywood Bowl or in the kitchen of a Lafayette home. It’s all good.

For more information about Roddie Romero and the Hub City All-Stars, visit www.roddieromero.com. For more information about The Artisan Workshop, contact Romero at 337 565-2349 or roddie@theartisanworkshop.com



Parade of Homes, Buffet style storage with custom designed glass inserts. Photo courtesy of Monica Lake Ramirez

Continued from Page 6
this father of six said.

“We include a lot more detail and customization [than other builders]. We use a lot of antique beams and antique ceilings and custom tile showers.”

Gallagher focuses his building in Lafayette Parish, typically in the city of Lafayette, although he is considering moving beyond its borders. He tends to stay in a neighborhood for a while, building multiple homes. He moved from 101 Archangel to 103 Archangel to 105 Archangel, for example,

in his St. Michael’s Cove project. “I’ll stay in a neighborhood until it’s complete if I can get enough lots.” This approach allows Michael to be a custom builder but to build fast, he said, “I have all of my subs in the same area, rolling from house to house. Since they’re nearby, I can bring them



over from one house to another [so work doesn't stop]."

Spec home construction comprises about half of the eight or so larger homes Gallagher now is building each year. (He previously built about 25 smaller homes each year.) Many of the homes start as a spec project but turn into a custom home after potential customers walk into another home that's already sold. "I will help them see their vision for a home a few lots down. I sell them an unfinished space house, but we will customize it to fit the customers' needs."

Gallagher noted, "When customers are interviewing me, I am interviewing them to learn what they need. They may discover that their needs are different than what they thought they were."

The company's business office is in the Gallagher home. He uses his home as a showroom, explaining the differences in appearance and cost between hollow core and solid core doors, for example. "I show them 'this is what a 10-foot ceiling is; this is what a 12-foot ceiling is;

this is what a 7-inch baseboard is' to help them visualize.

"I love working with the customers. I usually have a personal relationship with them before [construction begins] and work with them from A to Z through construction." He has noticed that husbands tend to ask questions about construction materials and budget while wives focus on colors and how a house will function for their families.

The increased use of technology is one way that the construction business has changed since he started Gallagher Homes in 1997. "My No. 1 tool is the cell phone; I'm available 24 hours a day, basically. I take pictures at job sites and e-mail field reports to keep customers aware, but what I really love to do is walk-throughs with customers. I try to do these weekly so they can ask questions."

Michael left his position at a



local Catholic high school where he taught physical education, science and religion and coached football and basketball to open his construction company. "Although I loved teaching and coaching, I always wanted to own my own business, and I always loved construction." He started by doing remodeling projects on his own house and then by building a house for his family. He noted that he still works with young people in a sense because they are often the unskilled labor on a work site.

He also tries to get his children – three girls and three boys ages 5 to 17 – interested in the business by having them do manual labor, such as sweeping at job sites. His wife does a lot of the work on the insurance side of the business.

Although Gallagher Homes keeps its payroll lean by employing only two or three employees directly, Michael takes satisfaction in knowing that building just one home encompasses 150 or more people and helps support their families.

Being able to see the finished

product makes homebuilding a very rewarding profession, he said. "I love that 10 years later I can take my kids and show them what I did."

What's in the next five years for Gallagher Homes? Land development, he hopes. "I would like to develop another subdivision, building the same type of homes, to make it its own community that fits in Lafayette."

No doubt that community will be based on the personal relationships that have been the foundation for Gallagher Homes.

*You may contact Gallagher Homes by calling **337-288-1046** or by e-mailing gallagherhomesmg@cox.net or by writing 607 River Oak Circle, Lafayette, LA 70508.*



"My No.1 tool is the cell phone; I'm available 24 hours a day...."



2013 LHBA Legislative Day Rally for Homeownership and 21st Annual Crawfish Boil!



Acadiana's representation wasn't as large as in the past several years, but we let our Senators and Representatives know we were there for our industry. In 2014, we challenge all of our members to participate on this special day! With only 50 members, AHBA will charter a bus to take AHBA members to and from the Capitol and Crawfish Boil. Snacks and adult beverages will be provided for the trip! Let's support our association and our Congressmen by representing Acadiana at the hill in 2014!!





Apartment and Condominium Market Remains Strong after Small Correction in the First Quarter of 2013

May 30, 2013 - The Multifamily Production Index (MPI), released today by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), inched down two points to an index level of 52. It is the fifth straight quarter with a reading over 50.

The MPI measures builder and developer sentiment about current conditions in the apartment and condominium market on a scale of 0 to 100. The index and all of its components are scaled so that any number over 50 indicates that more respondents report conditions are improving than report conditions are getting worse.

The MPI provides a composite measure of three key elements of the multifamily housing market: construction of low-rent units, market-rate rental units and “for-sale” units, or condominiums.

In the first quarter of 2013, the MPI component tracking builder and developer perceptions of market-rate rental properties dropped four points to 61, but has been above 60 for seven consecutive quarters—the longest sustained period of strength since the inception of the index in 2003. For-sale units dipped four points to 42, while low-rent units rose two points to 55.

“The apartment sector overall has largely recovered since the downturn, so we have now reached a level of development that is close to equilibrium and can continue at this pace,” said W. Dean Henry, CEO of Legacy Partners Residential in Foster City, Calif., and chairman of NAHB’s Multifamily Leadership Board. “With that said, there are still certain markets around the country that have room to grow.”

The Multifamily Vacancy Index (MVI), which measures the

multifamily housing industry’s perception of vacancies, rose seven points to 38. With the MVI, lower numbers indicate fewer vacancies. After peaking at 70 in the second quarter of 2009, the MVI improved consistently through 2010 and has been at a fairly moderate level throughout 2011 and 2012.

Historically, the MPI and MVI have performed well as leading indicators of U.S. Census figures for multifamily starts and vacancy rates, providing information on likely movement in the Census figures one to three quarters in advance.

“The multifamily market has recovered substantially since the end of 2010, and is well on its way to reaching a sustainable level,” said NAHB Chief Economist David

Crowe. “However, there are still issues facing builders and developers that could have an impact on future production, such as a shortage of labor with basic construction skills and rising prices for some building materials.”

For data tables on the MPI and MVI, visit www.nahb.org/mms.

Please pass me around the office. Acadiana Builder makes great reading material for anyone interested in the building market.

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New-Home Sales Rise 2.3 Percent in April

May 23, 2013 - Sales of newly built, single-family homes rose 2.3 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 454,000 units in April, according to newly released figures from HUD and the U.S. Census Bureau. The gain builds on a strong upward revision to sales numbers reported for the previous month.


“Builders are reporting an active spring buying season as consumers become more confident about going forward with a new-home purchase along with steadily firming prices in local markets,” said Rick Judson, chairman of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and a home builder from Charlotte, N.C. “While the cost of constructing homes is rising due to tightened supplies of materials, lots and labor, to some extent, this may be creating greater urgency among potential buyers.”

On a regional basis, new-home sales rose 3.0 percent in the South and 10.8 percent in the West, but fell 4.8 percent in the Midwest and 16.7 percent in the Northeast in April.

The inventory of new homes for sale edged up to a still-thin 156,000 units in April. This is a 4.1-month supply at the current sales pace.

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Lafayette Ranked #1 of Mid-Sized Cities in the U.S.!

100 LEADING LOCATIONS for 2013

Lafayette ranked #1 in Area Development's list of 380 U.S. MSAs surveyed. Lafayette also finished 1st on the lists for best mid-sized cities and best southern cities!

Lafayette, LA The Lafayette MSA was ranked 24th out of 200 metro areas in the Milken Institute's Best Performing Cities Index for 2012 — a jump of 69 spots over last year's placement. The city also ranked first in current job growth and second in five-year wage growth on Milken's list. And, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Lafayette MSA experienced the largest increase in employment in the nation from December 2011 to December 2012 with an 8.6 percent gain.

"The growth in Lafayette's economy over the past several years can be greatly attributed

to steady growth in the energy and healthcare industries, which account for 40 percent of the area's GDP," says Lafayette Economic Development Authority president and CEO Gregg Gothreaux. "These industries remain relatively recession-proof and will continue to contribute to Lafayette's steady economic growth, while providing an impetus for our growing finance and entertainment industries."

The vibrant energy sector is a big reason Louisiana Plating and Coatings decided to open a \$9 million, 80,000-square-foot facility in Scott, just outside Lafayette, to provide comprehensive coating and plating services for its clients, including many oilfield servicing companies. The plant will employ 120 workers with an annual local payroll estimated at \$3 million.

These rankings are based on data for 21 indicators from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, and the U.S. Census American Community Survey. The magazine also calculated rankings for four specific categories: Economic Strength, Prime Work Force, Recession-Busting Cities, and Year-Over-Year Growth.

Lafayette topped the mid-sized city list and the overall list for Economic Strength which looked at workforce and labor factors including per capita real GDP, goods-producing employment, and employment growth. Lafayette ranked 1st for Recession-Busting mid-sized cities (2nd overall) and 8th for Prime Workforce in mid-sized cities. New this year, Lafayette ranked 1st overall for Year-Over-Year Growth which looked at growth since 2011, measuring short-term economic success.

To read the full article:
<http://www.areadevelopment.com/Leading-Locations/Q2-2013/Leading-Locations-2013-Full-Results-262716.shtml>

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