



Greg Schatz, Builder

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Building in Montana since 1989

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At Greg Schatz Builder, we believe that every home should offer quality, comfort and peace of mind.

Each house we build is an expression of its owners—their tastes, their personalities, and their passions.

Let us build your Montana dream home.



Congratulations, You Bought a Lot: Now What?

by Greg Schatz

It's time to start interviewing builders. Talk to your friends and neighbors about builders whom they know. At your first meeting, the builder should give you a list of references for you to call, this is very important. He should also take you to look at some of the projects he has built. While checking out the projects, look to see if the doors shut properly. Check out the floors, are they flat, do they feel bumpy when you walk over them? See if the windows open. Check out the cabinets. Do the cabinet doors rattle? Do all of the cabinets line up? When you find a builder who puts you at ease, he is the one to use.

Budget, square footage and finishes are the three main items that determine the cost of your new home. Each item should be carefully discussed with your builder before moving ahead with any building plans.

Now that you have had the important discussion about your budget with your builder, it's time to pick someone to design your home. The builder will be able to point you to a designer or architect who will understand your needs. We will all work together in the creative process of designing your new home.

Depending on the lot you bought, there are additional costs involved that aren't considered in the cost of your home. If your lot is in town, then the utilities (power, phone, TV and gas) should be close by, so the cost to run these to your home will be reasonable. If the lot has city water and sewer services, the city charges a fee for each plumbing fixture. For lots inside the city's planning jurisdiction, they will review your house plans and charge you for a building permit. Your builder will take care of all of these things for you.

If your lot is not set up for city services, you'll need to apply for a septic permit from the county and drill a water well. Power and phone will need to be brought to your property from the nearest source, and you'll most likely use propane instead of natural gas for heating and cooking. Your builder will take care of all of these things for you.

The designer will draw a preliminary set of plans, so you and your builder can go to your lot and stake out your house. I bring ladders and scaffolding along so you can check out the views from the level of the main floor. Now is the perfect time to make changes. Does the house have the best views available or does it need to be turned? Will the access into the garage work? Do the rooms that are staked out feel right? After we have all of the changes written down we give them to the designer who then makes a final set of building plans.

When the final set of plans is ready, we start to dig. It usually takes two to three months from the time you chose your builder until we are ready to start digging. It is very important to get the design as complete as possible before you start building because making changes along the way can blow your budget.