



# Virginia Building Solutions

By Audrey T. Hingley

**J**ohn Garrett, a Rocky Mount, Virginia native, founded Virginia Building Solutions, LLC in 2004 after working as a general manager for two of the largest factory-built homebuilders in the nation. The Roanoke College graduate's company was the first modular builder to offer systems built homes for sale in Williamsburg's gated planned community Ford's Colony in 2004.



By 2007, Garrett had opened a model home/design center in Tappahannock. Wife Paige, who previously spent a decade in the mortgage business, is co-owner and daughter Rachel also works with the company. Today, with a satellite location opened in 2019 in Rocky Mount that serves all of southwest Virginia, and another satellite location being planned at Lake Anna in Louisa County, the company's reach is extending around the Commonwealth.

Like most builders, Garrett found the pandemic era and its aftermath challenging. But he points out, "The niche we are in gives us an advantage. The cost of building materials [during and post-pandemic] nearly doubled; lumber skyrocketed and has never come down. Some of it [costs] is market and regulation driven. But [home manufacturers] would lock in our price for 30 to 60 days, as they warehoused materials... thousands of homes built has always been our advantage."

Garrett's niche is a custom modular approach, with custom systems built home design, installation and construction. Systems built homes are highly-engineered and built to the same building codes as stick built homes.

Garrett explains, "Our homes are built indoors in a quality-controlled environment. We are an option: people who come to see us are also seeing stick built builders. But if [clients] are comparing us to a typical builder, the average cost is 10-15 percent less than the typical build."

Another important focus is a custom-built approach. Garrett notes, "Our manufacturers do custom features, and we have a crew of framers and carpenters [who do the finish work on the home on-site] that are as good as any out there."

He adds, "I just did a 5,000-square-foot custom home in White Stone with over 3,000-square-foot in

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porches. They were told [by stick builders] it would take two years. It took us a year to complete."

Garrett says his company saw "a rush to rural" in the aftermath of the pandemic. He continues to see a shift, noting, "Many people are leaving high-priced markets and going to rural resort areas. Waterfront, rural areas are still affordable when compared to higher-priced markets in the Northeast and Southeast. And according to the National Homebuilders Association, nationally we are still about five to seven million homes [short] in terms of inventory."

One major change since he first began—2024 marks Virginia Building Solutions' 20th anniversary—involves client education.

"When I first started, you had to do a lot more client education. There have now been so many studies done by the Modular Homebuilders Association that most people come to us [with their minds made up]. We are comparable to stick builders, but we can build it in half the time. Currently, our turnaround time [from order to completion] is six to eight months." Virginia Building Solutions has for more than 20 years, offered a quality, timely, custom, and cost friendly alternative to traditional site building all over VIRGINIA.



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