

# Supersizing A Big Deal On Home Front

CHICAGO—Don't just blame McDonald's: Not only do Americans supersize their portions in fast-food restaurants, they also do it in their own kitchens.

In a new study, researchers looked at foods like hamburgers, burritos, French fries, sodas, ice cream, pie and cookies and found that the portions got bigger between the 1970s and the 1990s, whether people ate in or out.

It's no surprise it happens at fast-food restaurants; McDonald's helped bring the word "supersize" into the American lexicon.

But nutrition expert Margo Wootan of the Center for Science in the Public Interest said the practice has caused Americans to suffer portion distortion at home. "We're getting so used to these big portion sizes when we eat out that when we go home we forget what a normal portion is," Wootan said.

Portions of all the popular foods studied, except pizza, increased both inside and outside the home. Homemade burgers beefed up to 8.4 ounces in 1996 from 5.7 ounces in 1977, while fast-food burgers grew to 7.2 ounces from 6.1 ounces during the same period.

The study by the University of North Carolina appears in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The findings come at a time when Americans are getting fatter. A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found more than 44 million Americans were obese in 2001.

## HOME BUILDING AS A CAREER

By: Dave Armstrong

As the triad continues to grow, the demand for skilled workers in all facets of the construction industry, both commercial and residential, continues to increase. The ability to find competent, knowledgeable workers is getting harder every day. When considering a career in this industry, it is important to understand that your perception of what the industry is all about, may be far from what is truly required to be a skilled trades person.

First, it is important to realize that the building industry is the largest industry in the United States. Home building alone is a multi-billion dollar industry as more than 1.5 million homes are built annually. You can see then, that the home building industry offers exciting career opportunities. Almost 350,000 people will be hired every year to fill new jobs and replace workers leaving the industry. Most of the jobs are in the "trades" (e.g., carpentry, plumbing, etc.) and there are many in management positions such as finance, human resources and sales. The opportunities are endless!

Home builders work under many business plans. Most home builders build from one to twelve homes per year. These skilled craft workers run a small business (usually family run), and have only a few employees. Custom builders may build fewer units, but these homes as a rule cost \$200,000 or more.

It is amazing the number of complex jobs that it takes to complete just one single family home. Many of the basics you will need to know can be learned in high school and/or college. It takes years of practical knowledge to be considered a successful builder and also to become a company that supports the many facets of the construction process.

Although not required, a minimum high school education is desired. The complex nature of the construction process, plans examination, development and implementation, would be virtually impossible without a clear-cut understanding of mathematics, English, basic bookkeeping, and fundamental economics, not to mention public speaking. Along with that, you will need a strong work ethic and pride in craftsmanship if you expect to demand top-dollar for your product.

The construction industry as a profession is currently among the higher end of the pay scale, though it does require a committed desire to constantly learn new practices, procedures and products. Our industry is continuously changing, not only due to innovation, but as a result of government regulations and licensing requirements.

Should you choose a construction career early in life, or be considering switching paths at a later date, it definitely comes with one core benefit - the personal reward you gain from seeing your contribution to the construction process develop into a completed project you can be proud of for many years to come.

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