



Kristin and Tod Sakai's Auburn-based company continues to perform well, despite a challenging economy.

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## Sockeye Homes garners top honors

By [MARK KLAAS](#)  
**Auburn Reporter Editor**  
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An Auburn couple found the right opportunity and fit in the homebuilding and remodeling industry.

Having weathered an economic downturn, Auburn-based Sockeye Homes continues to stand up to today's larger competition by following a simple concept.

"We're small enough to be agile but large enough to handle anything big," said Tod Sakai, company owner and president. "With our in-house carpenters and superintendents, we keep our quality where we want it to be and where it needs to be."

Tod and his wife, Kristin, established the first-generation family-owned company two years ago after working in management positions for large companies. Tod, an award-winning businessman and builder, decided to use his expertise to launch a smaller company headquartered in Auburn.

Despite tough times for the housing market, Sockeye Homes has persevered as one of the leading regional remodelers and custom homebuilders, posting sales volumes between \$1.5-2 million last year. The challenging projects included several remodeling and additions to area homes.

"I never use the economy as an excuse for me," Tod said. "We're into customer service ... and you make adjustments along the way to stay in the game."

For its efforts, Sockeye Homes swept the 2009 national and state remodeling award Competitions. Sockeye Homes was the only winner from the state in the 2009 Chrysalis Awards, a national competition that included 233 companies and more than 500 project submissions. Sockeye Homes won in the category of Addition \$100,000-\$250,000 (Western Region) with an entry whose cost was more than \$100,000 less than the category cost cap.

"To win an award in this highly competitive category is quite an achievement," said Ken Kanline, director of the Chrysalis Awards.

Winners were featured in the June/July 2009 issue of Qualified Remodeler magazine.

In addition, Sockeye Homes won the Building Industry Association of Washington Excellence in Remodeling Award for the category of Addition \$75,000-\$150,000 for the same project, beating out stiff competition from across the state.

The honors are rewarding and humbling, yet reflect the company's good standing.

Sockeye Homes has its share of trade partners, but operates with low overhead. The company employs eight, five of whom are full-time.

The company prides itself in quality work at low prizes, specializing in customized care for customers and projects. Sockeye Homes is a full-service (design and build) general contractor, and handles all aspects, from custom designing to landscaping. The company has joined the green-friendly wave of doing business.

"I love my work," Tod said. "We make sure sure we work closely with our customers. In the end, our

customers become our friends."

The Sakais, both Western Washington University graduates, remain involved in their church and community. They are active in various ministries such as Habitat For Humanity, Kairos Ministry, United Methodist Junior and Senior High Youth Ministries and Amor Ministries.

The couple received the 2007 Department of Corrections Volunteer Award from Gov. Christine Gregoire for their service in Rebuilding Families Inc., where Tod, Kristin

and other volunteers connected inmates with their loved ones while providing education, funds and housing arrangements prior to their release.

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*For more information about the company, call 253-737-4456 at [www.sockeyehomes.com](http://www.sockeyehomes.com) or call 253-737-4456.*

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