HIGH COUNTRY HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION · NOV 5

AI for Builders: What's Actually Working

Real workflows you can start using tomorrow.

Mountain Dev · with Preston Rodeniser, Declan Nishiyama, and Samantha Wright

Our mission: helping our clients and local communities navigate difficult technology transitions, especially AI, the most significant transition yet.

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THE MISCONCEPTION

"Buy the AI software, and it will transform the business."

Using AI is a habit change, not a software install.

For years, much of the job has been moving information: copying it from one place and passing it to the next person. Hand that part to AI, and keep your time for the real problem solving.

52% of construction firms now use AI, up from 32% a year ago. The average firm saves 4.7 hours a week.

In our experience - clients have seen much more.

Source: Houzz 2026 State of AI in Construction & Design report, 600+ U.S. pros, Sept 2026.

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YOUR TURN · GRAB THE SHEET FROM YOUR CHAIR

What's your biggest time suck?

Write down the two or three tasks that eat your nights and weekends.
What keeps you from providing more value?

Hold onto that list. Can what we share today, be applied to that? (Prep for the Q&A!)

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WHERE IT PAYS OFF

Five places builders win today

Proposals & letters

From a recorded conversation to a branded letter.

Takeoffs

A fast first pass from the plans. You spot-check.

Estimates & change orders

Your pricing, your format. See what changed and why.

Onboarding & training

How you work, in a guide new hires can ask.

Renderings & marketing

Concept images without outsourcing each one.

We'll show you three of these today.

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CHECK THIS FIRST

You may already own the AI

If you use...	AI that's already built in	Best fit
Buildertrend	Bill capture, client updates, submittals, plan organizing	Residential builders
Houzz Pro	Takeoffs, estimates and change orders, receipt capture, call notes	Remodelers, custom builders
JobTread	Estimating, plan counts, receipt scanning, plus a connector for Claude or ChatGPT	Residential GCs
CompanyCam	Walkthrough notes, voice captions, daily logs, checklists; connects to Claude or ChatGPT	Field crews, any trade
Procore	Procore Assist, plus Agent Builder for custom AI agents	Larger commercial GCs
Kreo, STACK, Togal, Beam	AI takeoffs from plan sets (Beam will also do them for you)	Estimators

We don't sell any of these. Features as of Nov 2026; check your plan, since some are add-ons.

DEMO 1 · FROM WALKTHROUGH TO PROPOSAL

Record it. Don't rely on notes alone.

CALL RECORDER · TRANSCRIPT

Site walk: New home client

Sat 9/19 · 9:12 AM
● 6:04 recorded



00:00 **PM**
Alright, I've got the recorder going, like I mentioned. Y'all good with that?

00:05 **Client**
Totally fine.

01:44 **Spouse**
The plans show a two-car. But honestly, we need a three-car. The three-car is a must for us.

02:15 **Client**
My mom might move in with us in a few years. I'd love to think about a suite for her.

02:46 **Spouse**
We told ourselves 1.1 million. But to be real clear, 1.1 is our ceiling. We'd really like to land closer to 950.

03:10 **Client**
The kids' school starts August 12th. We really need to be moved in by early August.

WHAT THE PM'S MIGHT MISS

- **Budget:** $1.1M is the ceiling. Target is $950K.
- **Move-in:** early August, not the 12th.
- **Garage:** 3-car is a must.
- **Missed:** the client's mom may move in.

Your notes are what you heard. The recording is what they said.

Record with: Pocket (clip-on recorder) · Granola (what we use) · Built into Houzz Pro and CompanyCam

DEMO 1 · WRITE THE LETTER

Recording in, proposal out

TEACH IT ONCE

- Your 3 best past proposals
- Your letterhead and logo
- Your terms and allowances

EACH NEW JOB

Give it the recording. You review and sign.

1 hour → a few minutes.

Also built into: Buildertrend and Houzz Pro draft client updates. This version learns from your own best proposals.



RIDGELINE
CUSTOM HOMES · BOONE, NC

Ridgeline Custom Homes, LLC
PO Box 1142 · Boone, NC 28607
(828) 555-0147 · office@ridgelinehomes.example

Proposal RCH-2026-041 **Date** September 21, 2026 **Valid through** October 21, 2026

Jen and Mike Parker
Lot 7, Poplar Ridge Road
Boone, NC 28607

Re: Proposal for the Parker Residence

Dear Jen and Mike,

Thank you for walking Lot 7 with us on Saturday. We heard that the kitchen is the heart of this home, that a three-car garage is a must, and that you want to be settled before school starts. This letter covers what we heard, a preliminary budget, and how we'd move forward together.

What we heard

- About 3,200 heated sq ft, two stories plus a walkout basement. Four bedrooms, three and a half baths, primary suite on the main floor.
- Standing seam metal roof, fiber cement lap siding, and stone on the front elevation.
- A large kitchen island with seating for five and a true walk-in pantry.
- A three-car garage. Current plans show two, so we'll send the change to Blue Ridge Design Studio.
- A steep lot, with roughly 60 to 80 feet of block retaining wall at the driveway turn.
- Perc test passed and well drilled. Solar pre-wire included, panels later.

> **Planning ahead:** Jen mentioned her mom may move in someday. We suggest looking at wider doors and an accessible bath on the main floor now. It costs far less to frame for today than to remodel later.

Preliminary budget

You told us $1.1M is your ceiling and you'd like to land closer to $950,000. Based on the architect's current plans, we expect the home as drawn to come in between **$940,000 and $1,010,000**, before the garage change. A line-by-line summary is on page 2. We'll price the three-car garage separately and work toward your target through selections. We won't propose above your ceiling.

Schedule

Early August 2027 is tight with a retaining wall and a winter in the middle. We'll review the schedule with our site and framing crews and tell you honestly within two weeks whether August is realistic.

Next steps

- Sign the enclosed pre-construction agreement ($4,500, credited toward the build).
- We send the garage change and suite options to your architect.
- We deliver a fixed price within 3 weeks of final plans, then meet to lock selections.

This is a great lot, and we'd love to build on it with you.

Sincerely,

Travis Beck
Travis Beck
Owner, Ridgeline Custom Homes

Ridgeline Custom Homes, LLC · NC Unlimited Building Contractor · Sample document for demonstration
Proposal RCH-2026-041 · Page 1 of 2

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Proposal RCH-2026-041 **Parker Residence** · Lot 7, Poplar Ridge Road

Preliminary budget summary

Scope	Budget
Site work, grading, driveway	$62,000
Retaining wall (block, 60–80 LF)	$26,000
Foundation, walkout basement	$72,000
Framing, sheathing, trusses	$138,000
Standing seam metal roof	$46,000
Windows and exterior doors	$58,000
Fiber cement siding and stone veneer	$64,000
Plumbing	$48,000
HVAC (heat pump)	$42,000
Electrical, incl. solar pre-wire	$52,000
Insulation and drywall	$58,000
Interior doors and trim	$44,000
Paint	$26,000
Allowances (you choose the finishes)	**$136,400**
Cabinets and countertops	$70,400
Lighting fixtures	$9,600
Appliances	$18,000
Flooring and tile	$38,400
Permits, supervision, insurance, and fees	$71,600
Builder's contingency	$31,000
Preliminary total, as drawn	**$975,000**

Expected range $940,000 to $1,010,000. Three-car garage priced separately once plans are revised. Final numbers follow final plans, selections, and trade partner pricing.

Not included

- Septic system (by your contractor; we coordinate the schedule).
- Landscaping beyond final grade and seed.
- Window treatments, furniture, and low-voltage/AV.
- Rock removal beyond normal excavation (billed at cost plus 12%).

Payment terms

10% deposit at contract signing, then monthly draws based on completed work, with 5% held until final walkthrough and certificate of occupancy.

Pre-construction agreement

$4,500, credited toward the build. Covers final pricing with our trade partners within 3 weeks of final plans and one selections meeting at our office.

Acceptance

Signing below accepts the pre-construction agreement only. The construction contract and fixed price follow final plans.

Jen Parker · Date	Mike Parker · Date	*Travis Beck*
		Travis Beck, Ridgeline · Date

DEMO 2 · TAKEOFF

A first pass you spot-check



Real elevations, all four faces. We asked for cladding by material and windows and doors by type, with assumptions listed at the end.

IT FLAGGED FOR YOU

2 untagged openings on the left side · 2 clerestory windows missing from the schedule · rear siding only says "lap siding"

WHAT CAME BACK

Item	Net qty
Lap siding (LP SmartSide)	1,618 SF
Board & batten	242 SF
Stone, walls & wainscot	988 SF
Stone, pilasters & piers	263 SF
Stone, chimneys	140 SF
Windows, 13 types	26
Exterior doors, 8 types	13

Also built into: Houzz Pro, Kreo, STACK, and Togal. · Plans: Abide Residential Design, bid set 4/24/26, client details removed.

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DEMO 2 · FROM TAKEOFF TO ESTIMATE

Your pricing, your format

YOU GIVE IT

The takeoff, your current pricing or cost codes, and 2–3 past estimates.

YOU ASK

"Build an estimate from this takeoff using my pricing and past estimates. Group it by cost code, show your math, and list anything you had to guess."

Cost code	Item	Order qty	Total
Siding	LP SmartSide lap, +10%	1,780 SF	Current price here
Siding	Board & batten, +12%	271 SF	Current price here
Masonry	Stone, walls, +10%	1,087 SF	Current price here
Masonry	Stone, pilasters/piers	289 SF	Current price here
Masonry	Stone, chimneys	154 SF	Current price here

FLAGGED FOR YOU

Rear siding priced as LP SmartSide (assumed). Roof, soffit and fascia need the roof plan.

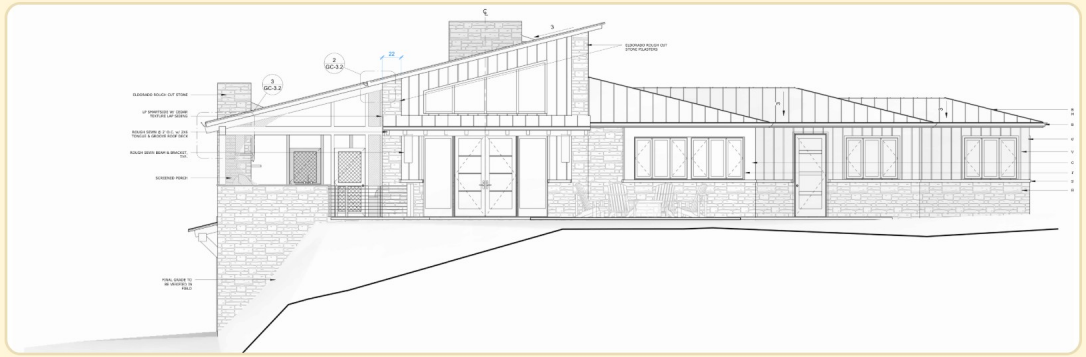
Also built into: JobTread and Houzz Pro (AI estimating). · Quantities from the takeoff; your current pricing goes in the Total column.

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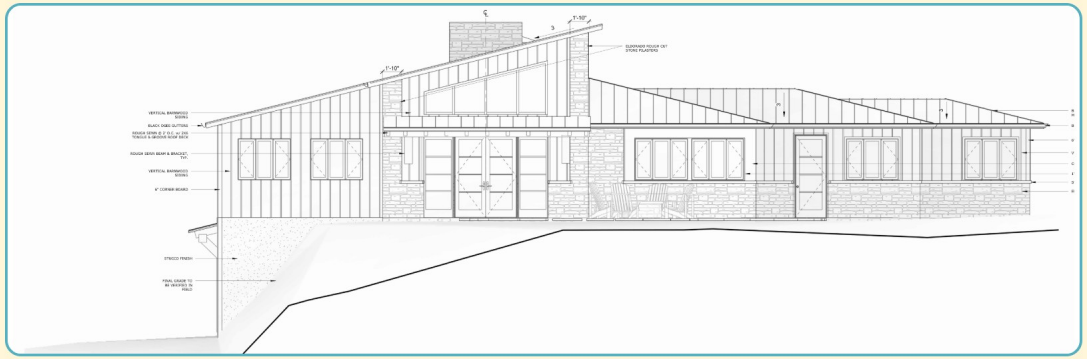
DEMO 3 · CHANGE ORDER

The plans just changed

WHAT WE BID · 4/24



REVISION · 8/26



CLIENT · 7:42 PM

We're enclosing the screened porch and swapping some stone for stucco. Updated plans attached. What does that do to the price?

YOU GIVE IT

Both plan sets and your original takeoff. "Is this already in my estimate? Tell me what changed, price it, and draft the change order."

Also built into: Houzz Pro drafts change orders from a description. · Plans: Abide Residential Design, client details removed.

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DEMO 3 · WHAT CHANGED

Before and after, line by line

Item	Bid · 4/24	Revision · 8/26	Change
Lap siding	1,618 SF	2,013 SF	+395
Board & batten	242 SF	376 SF	+134
Stone, all types	1,391 SF	553 SF	−838
Stucco	—	385 SF	new
Windows	26	29	+3
Exterior doors	13	11	−2

DRAFT CHANGE ORDER READY

Stone credit, new siding and stucco, sunroom windows · Net: *current price here* · You check it, then send.

WHAT IT FOUND

- Porch enclosed as a sunroom
- ~840 SF of stone swapped for siding and stucco
- One window grows to 3'×7'
- 2 basement windows, 2 screen doors and a side door removed
- New 9' rear slider

IT ALSO TOLD US

Its measurements may run ~4% low: a new 42'-4" dimension measured 40'-7".

Quantities from our dry run on these plans. Net SF, before waste. Your current pricing sets the net.

LET HUMANS BE MORE HUMAN. LET ROBOTS BE ROBOTS.

AI does the obvious 95%.
You own the other 5%.

It drafts, counts, and sorts. You make the judgment calls and also win your time back.

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TRY IT TOMORROW

Three easy wins

1

Proposals

Record your next client meeting (tell them first). Give AI the transcript and 2–3 of your best past proposals.

2

Takeoffs

Drop in a plan set. Ask for square footage, window and door counts, and materials. Then spot-check it.

3

Estimates

Give it your pricing and 2–3 past estimates. Build one from the takeoff, then check it before it goes out.

Works in Copilot, ChatGPT, or Claude.

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WHERE TO START

Pick your starting point

If you're...	Start with	Cost / month
Brand new to AI	ChatGPT, Claude, or Copilot Chat (free with Microsoft 365)	Free
Using it daily, just you	ChatGPT Plus or Claude Pro	$20
A team sharing client info	ChatGPT Business, Claude Team, or Microsoft 365 Copilot Business	$20–25 per person
Recording conversations	Granola or Otter for meetings and site walks	Free–$17
Already on Buildertrend	AI Bill Capture and AI Client Updates	Check your plan
What we use	Claude for the work, Granola for every meeting	Team plans above

Monthly list prices as of Nov 2026. Annual billing is cheaper. Team plans start at 2 seats.

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What we're seeing

20+ hrs ⟶ 10 min

A quarterly report built by hand from emails and receipts. Now it takes one message.

36+ hrs ⟶ a quick check

Vendor price updates retyped by hand. Now AI does it in Teams, and a person checks the odd ones.

Missing invoices caught

AI reconciled the books and flagged invoices and mismatches a careful bookkeeper missed.

Words ⟶ a dashboard

You know what you want to see but can't draw it. Describe it, and AI builds the dashboard or design for you to react to.

BEFORE YOU START

Four rules of the road

1. Start organizing your data, leveraging it to reduce repetitive tasks.
2. Start with what you already own.
3. Keep a person in the loop. AI does the first pass; you check it.
4. If you repeat it, save it. Keep teaching it to improve accuracy and reduce effort over time.



Thank you! Preston Rodeniser · Declan Nishiyama · Samantha Wright · Mountain Dev

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IF YOU WANT A PARTNER

Where we can help

Adopting AI

Pick the right tools, get your data in order, and train your team until the habit sticks.

Getting more from your software

Make what you already pay for work harder. We run our own business on these tools first.

Building what doesn't exist

Custom tools, built fast. You see real value in weeks, not after a year-long project.

Start with one workflow. Lay the groundwork right, and the rest gets easier.

Q & A

What's the biggest opportunity you see?

And what are your concerns? Tell us now, or write it on your sheet and leave it with us. Scan for tonight's notes and recording.

mtndev.com/ai-for-builders

Thank you! Preston Rodeniser · Declan Nishiyama · Samantha Wright · Mountain Dev

Mountain Dev helps businesses pick the right AI and build what doesn't exist yet · mtndev.com