



AT HOME IN Berks

Home Builders Association of Berks County

AUGUST 2014

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Interior Décor &
Finishing Touches

**Incentivizing
Efficiency**

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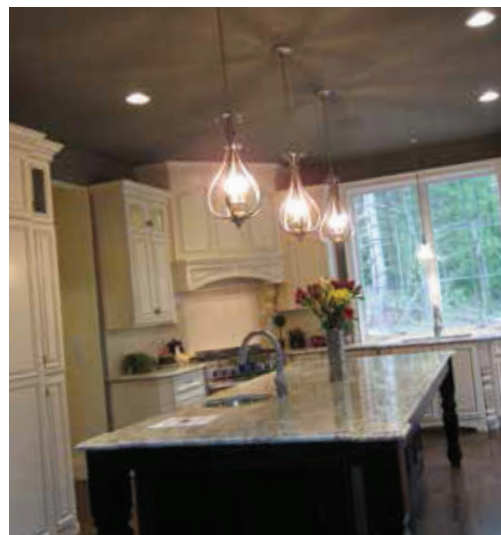
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10% Post Consumer Waste
Please Recycle



Incentivizing Efficiency

By Mike Arblaster

Home builders in Pennsylvania now have an additional incentive to build energy efficient homes. FirstEnergy's Pennsylvania utilities and ENERGY STAR® have partnered together to create the Pennsylvania Energy Efficient New Homes Program, which provides financial incentives to builders of new homes that meet ENERGY STAR V3.0 standards.

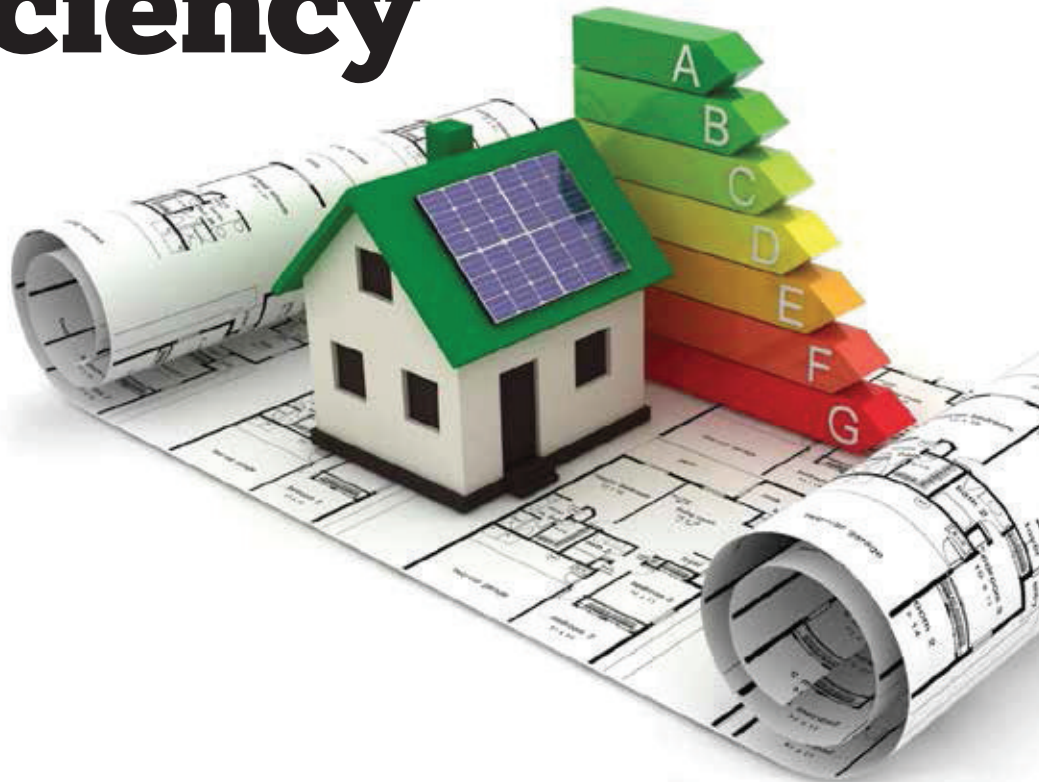
What's the Incentive?

For each newly built home serviced by Met-Ed, Penelec, Penn Power, and West Penn Power that receives ENERGY STAR V3.0 certification, the builder is eligible for a rebate of \$400 plus \$0.10/kWh saved annually over a non-certified "reference" home built to the standard 2009 IECC code.

For a home to qualify for the program (in addition to meeting ENERGY STAR V3.0 standards), it must be 15% more efficient than the current 2009 IECC code, must be located within the service area of a FirstEnergy's Pennsylvania utilities (Met-Ed, Penelec, Penn Power, or West Penn Power), and must have a certificate of occupancy date on or after October 28th, 2009, for Met-Ed, Penelec and Penn Power, and June 1st, 2013, for West Penn Power.

What's Does This Mean?

ENERGY STAR® Homes are differentiated by the performance of the home's building envelope and installed energy-consuming equipment. Examples include:



- **Effective Insulation Systems:** An effective Insulation System ensures even temperatures throughout the house, lowering utility costs and improving quality. The quality insulation also keeps a home much quieter.
- **Tight Construction:** A tightly sealed home improves comfort and air quality by reducing drafts, moisture, dust, pollen, pests and noise. The tight construction will lower utility and maintenance costs.
- **Efficient HVAC Equipment:** Energy efficient HVAC systems are quiet and regulate humidity to improve comfort while using less energy to operate.
- **High Performance Windows:** High performance windows use advanced technologies to help keep a house warm in the winter and cool in the summer.
- **Efficient Lighting and Appliances:** Energy efficient products such as lighting, fixtures, fans, and appliances help further conserve energy throughout a home.
- **Third Party Testing:** A HERS rater is responsible for ENERGY STAR certification. When a rater certifies the home, they provide the ENERGY STAR seal on the home for guaranteeing ENERGY STAR quality and adding credibility. Make sure to show your home buyers the ENERGY STAR seal.

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There are many reasons why a builder should get involved with The Pennsylvania Energy Efficient New Homes Program. First, ENERGY STAR certified homes have shown to sell faster and for more money than comparable non-certified homes (based on average sales price and time on the market in the study: *Market Impacts of ENERGY STAR Qualification for New Homes*, Appalachian State University 2011).

Customers want a comfortable home, especially during hot summers and cold winters. Nobody likes sleeping in a bedroom on the top floor that is uncomfortably hot during the summer, or spending time in a room during the winter that is drafty, or so dry that they get a static shock when they touch a doorknob. ENERGY STAR V3.0 ensures a home is tightly sealed and comfortable during any season.

unwanted dampness and mold. This not only adds to the comfort of the home, but also increases its durability, which means even less repairs down the road when the buyer is interested in selling the home. For these reasons, customers are demanding ENERGY STAR certification when buying a new home.

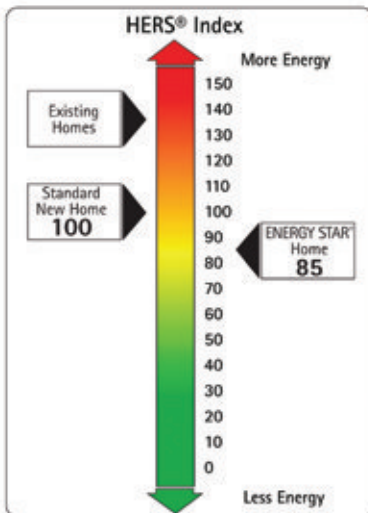
Third, FirstEnergy's Pennsylvania utilities are providing incentives to builders to build ENERGY STAR V3.0 certified homes. FirstEnergy's Pennsylvania utilities are also providing builders with \$400 + \$0.10 kWh saved annually over a non-certified reference home. Since ENERGY STAR homes can save 30 percent or more in energy use than non-certified homes, the \$0.10/kWh rebate could amount to hundreds of dollars or more depending on the home.

The more efficient the home, the higher the rebate, and builders of multifamily projects receive an incentive per unit, which could equal thousands of dollars per building! Builders who participate in the program will also receive free technical training, marketing materials, and recognition on the program's website.

In today's housing market, home buyers look at many houses and weigh countless options before they ultimately choose the house that they will call "home." Partnering with The Pennsylvania Energy Efficient New Homes Program and building to ENERGY STAR V3.0 standards helps your houses stand out from the rest by providing homebuyers with more comfortable, durable, energy-efficient homes. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mike Arblaster is Program Coordinator at Performance Systems Development, a FirstEnergy / ENERGY STAR partner to encourage high performance home building. For more information go to energysavepa-newhomes.com or contact Mike by phone at 814.282.3689 or by Email at marblaster@psdconsulting.com.



Second, customers also want to spend less on their utility bills. With the efficiency standards of ENERGY STAR V3.0, they will save money all year. Additionally, ENERGY STAR V3.0 certification means that builders are using higher quality products in the home that last much longer, so customers can save long term on replacements and repairs.

Certified homes are tightly sealed, which not only keeps them cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter, but also prevents