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Media Contacts: Robyn Grossman / Chris Thiede
Hoffman York
414-225-9520 / 414-225-9556
rgrossman@hyc.com
cthiede@hyc.com
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Wisconsin ENERGY STAR® Homes Program Eases Minds and Wallets
- Building a Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home can alleviate concerns today and in the future -

MADISON, Wis. — Building a new home is an undertaking that involves hundreds of decisions; one of the most important is choosing the right builder. For an increasing number of people though, this decision is becoming easier to make. They've discovered that the difference is in the details. Builders who participate in the Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes Program know how building performance can help ease potential buyers' minds and wallets, by meeting their expectations today and tomorrow.

Easing Your Mind – Today and Tomorrow

When people get ready to build their dream home, they expect that it will be comfortable, safe, energy efficient and built to last. Unfortunately, not all homes are built with the same attention to detail. Everything from the design and selection of construction materials and insulation, to windows and heating equipment can affect how a home is built, how efficient it will be and if it will stand the test of time. That is where the Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes Program gives homeowners the peace of mind they are getting all of these things. The program performance tests to ensure that all builders who participate are using like materials, adhering to the same guidelines and creating for all of their customers a true dream home.

“The Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes Program has set standards for its 350-plus builders, that proves program certified homes are some of the best built homes in North America,” said Greg Nahn, program manager for the Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes Program. “Owning a certified Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home is having confidence that it was built right and will keep your family comfortable and safe for years to come.”

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Easing Your Wallet – Today and Tomorrow

Saving money on utility bills. High utility bills can commonly be traced to poorly performing components within a home. Windows that leak air and insulation installation problems are just two examples. In a Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home these, as well as many other issues, are addressed and often eliminated.

A certified Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home is one that is designed, built and performance tested to ensure it exceeds nationally recognized and proven building performance standards. As a result, a Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home is estimated to be 25 percent more energy efficient than a home built to Wisconsin's Uniform Dwelling Code. Moreover, as energy costs continue to rise, a Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home becomes even more cost effective. The savings begin the month the homeowner moves in and can add up to a lot of extra dollars over the years.

Rising energy costs was one of the principle reasons Debbie O'Connor of De Pere, Wis. decided to build a certified Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home. "With heating prices going up, we decided it would save money in the long run," said O'Connor. She moved into a 1,500 square foot Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home that was built in 2003. Her new house costs less to heat and cool than the smaller home she lived in prior to moving.

For Patrick Kocher and his family, energy efficiency was also important. "We took the monthly utility costs into consideration to determine what we could afford," said Kocher. "We looked at the rising cost of energy and what the future of those costs could be." Kocher believes his house in Oak Creek, Wis. is saving him as much as \$1,000 a year.

Saving money on maintenance. In addition to saving money on energy costs, the energy efficient features of a certified Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home tend to make it more durable than standard homes, reducing or eliminating the potential for costly repairs. Each home also comes with a homeowner's operations manual that shows the homeowner how to properly operate and maintain the house to maximize the home's potential and value for a lifetime.

When Lynn Anderson built his house in Sand Creek, Wis., he was concerned about durability and quality. "I like to do things right the first time," he said, explaining that he thought the program would provide a good return on his investment.

Making money on resale. With proper care, a Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home will maintain its superior performance for generations to come. This means that building a home certified to Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home Program standards isn't just a smart investment today, it can also pay significant dividends at the time of resale.

Due to rising energy costs, energy efficiency is increasingly becoming a key buying criteria. Because of this, the documented energy efficiency of a Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home can be more valuable at the time of resale. In order to recognize this value, it is important to do the following three things:

1. **Save key information** such as utility bills, homeowner's manual, certification report and certification plaque. Low utility bills help document the home's low ownership cost. The homeowner's manual will aid the new homeowner on the maintenance of the house. The certification report offers an analysis of the efficiency the home achieved when tested for air-tightness and ventilation capacity, and combustion safety verification. The certification plaque is displayed on the electrical box and reminds contractors and prospective buyers that the home is certified.
2. **Provide information to the real estate agent and appraiser** to let them know that the home has additional value and cost advantages. The realtor can use this information when marketing it to potential buyers and the appraiser can use it to more accurately assess the value of the home.
3. **Showcasing the information** in a way that potential buyers can understand to bring attention to the value the home offers. Assembling the report materials in a folder that buyers can take with them, or labeling features in the home such as ventilation capacity and high efficiency equipment will differentiate the house from others on the market.

"A Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Home helps to lower the cost of living while improving the quality of life for the people who own it," said Nahn. "The home building practices that are verified by the program results in enhanced comfort, control over indoor air, energy efficiency and a more durable home that will not only ease homeowners minds, but also their wallets."

For more information about the Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes Program, including the names of builder partners, visit focusonenergy.com or call 800.762.7077.

About Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes

Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes is one of the Focus on Energy Residential Programs. New homes are constructed to meet program standards and are estimated to be more than 25 percent more energy efficient than homes built to Wisconsin's Uniform Dwelling Code. To date, the more than 350 builders who have partnered with the Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes Program have constructed over 6,000 new homes. For information about the program, call 800.762.7077 or visit focusonenergy.com.

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