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Nationally Recognized Green Building Initiative Partners with Focus on Energy

- Green Built Home to require Focus on Energy Program participation for certification -

MADISON, Wis. (Nov. 10, 2008) — On Nov. 1, 2008, Green Built Home (GBH), a national award winning green building initiative that reviews and certifies new homes and remodeling projects to meet sustainable building and energy standards, began requiring projects in Wisconsin to incorporate either Focus on Energy’s Wisconsin ENERGY STAR® Homes Program or Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® Program.

“A growing number of homeowners want to pursue sustainable home options, including improved indoor air quality, that incorporate energy efficiency when either building a new home or remodeling an existing home,” said Sue Hanson, program manager for Focus on Energy’s Single Family Homes Programs. “By forming a strategic partnership, these two programs are able to cover the various shades of “green,” and help homeowners achieve their goals.”

How does the partnership work?

One element of the partnership is all new construction homes carrying the GBH certification must also include the Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes certification. For existing homes, select remodeling jobs being certified as GBH are required to have an initial Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Energy Evaluation from a partnering consultant or qualified contractor.

Both GBH and Focus on Energy have been involved in many elements of green building throughout the state of Wisconsin for a number of years. While GBH covers areas such as indoor air quality, water conservation, recycled content, construction and demolition debris, non-point source water pollution and other environmentally preferable building products, Focus on Energy’s Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes Program and Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program focus on comfort, safety, durability and energy efficiency.

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What is the Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes Program?

The Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes Program and partnering builders work together based on the principles of applied building science and the recognition that a home is an integrated and interactive system. This system is designed, built and tested to meet program standards. Homes built under the Wisconsin ENERGY STAR Homes Program are estimated to be 25 percent more energy efficient than homes built to Wisconsin's Uniform Dwelling Code. A few of the practices and technologies that contribute to the program's exceptional performance include tight construction, improved insulation details, tested ventilation and energy efficient heating and cooling equipment.

What is the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program?

The Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program is designed to provide owners of existing Wisconsin homes a cost effective way to reduce their energy bills and enhance the comfort, safety, durability and energy efficiency of their homes. To participate, residents must contact a partnering consultant or qualified contractor and schedule a comprehensive evaluation of their home. This includes testing and measuring the house for air leaks, inspecting insulation levels, mechanical systems, exhaust fan ventilation, identifying sources of excessive moisture and evaluating safety issues like combustion appliance venting and carbon monoxide levels.

The customer then receives a list of home improvement recommendations, as well as a list of partnering contractors who will do the work to Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program standards. At the end of the project, the consultant will return to retest the house and verify the work was completed correctly, rectifying any problems. Homeowners may be eligible for Cash-Back Rewards on the improvements made to their home.

What is the overall benefit?

“By recognizing the need for a comprehensive and consistent approach to incorporating green requirements into Wisconsin's new construction and existing homes market, the partnership between GBH and Focus on Energy results in comfortable, safe and durable homes,” concluded Hanson. “This collaboration provides a unified green construction front throughout Wisconsin.”

About Focus on Energy

Focus on Energy works with eligible Wisconsin residents and businesses to install cost effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Focus information, resources and financial incentives help to implement projects that otherwise would not be completed, or to complete projects sooner than scheduled. Its efforts help Wisconsin residents and businesses manage rising energy costs, promote in-state economic development, protect our environment and control the state's growing demand for electricity and natural gas. For more information call (800) 762-7077 or visit focusonenergy.com.