

Energy-efficient homes increase resale value

The EnerGuide for New Houses service, a new initiative from the Office of Energy Efficiency of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), is putting money back into the pockets of new homebuyers. The service was created to provide independent expert advice on energy-efficient housing construction to homebuilders and homebuyers.

Builders like the program because it imposes no new mandatory codes or standards—any new house can be tested and receive an EnerGuide for New Houses rating—and because it requires minimal investments on their part. They say that the program's labelling affords them the opportunity to build more energy-efficient homes and identify their features to their customers.

The attention to detail that goes into making houses energy-efficient pays off in improved quality control in the construction process. The EnerGuide for New Houses service, one expert said, has led to "changing construction methods, more attention to detail and better air sealing." The results are improved home comfort and indoor air quality and significant-



ly lower energy costs, all of which leads to greater perceived market value when it is time for homes with EnerGuide labels to be resold.

Rating a house using the EnerGuide for New Houses service is a two-step process. Before construction starts, the energy advisor evaluates the basic house design using NRCan's state-of-the-art software and makes recommendations for upgrades to

improve the house's energy efficiency. Once the house is finished and before anyone moves in, the advisor returns to confirm that the energy efficiency upgrades have been incorporated and to perform an air leakage test to confirm the house's EnerGuide for New Houses rating.

The results are posted inside the house on an EnerGuide for New Houses label, which estimates the home's expected elec-

tricity, oil and/or gas consumption under standard operating conditions and rates the house overall on a scale of 0 to 100. A typical new home might score about 68, while homes built to the R-20001 standard score 80 or more. Many experts believe that scores in the high 70s are widely achievable through inexpensive, tried-and-true techniques and greater attention to detail.

The EnerGuide for New

Houses rating may soon become an important factor in property assessments and a valuable resale feature. It can prove to buyers that your home is warmer in the winter, cheaper to heat, and more energy-efficient than other comparable homes. A recent housing study has shown that energy-efficient homes have a higher market value. Let the EnerGuide for New Houses label help you resell your home for what it's really worth.

In addition, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has announced a 10-percent refund on its mortgage loan insurance premium when a borrower buys or builds an energy-efficient home that has an EnerGuide for New Houses rating of 80 or more, or that has been R-2000 certified.

By making their homes more energy-efficient, new homebuyers are helping reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. The Government of Canada is asking all Canadians, through the One-Tonne Challenge, to reduce these emissions by one tonne or 20 percent. Energy-efficient upgrades in a new home can save up to two tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.
 - News Canada

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