

When looking for a new home, homebuyers are often focused on the initial sales price of the house. This makes sense as a new home is often their single biggest purchase. But what buyers should also consider are the costs to maintain the home over the time that they will live in it. One of the major costs that homeowners will face is their utility bills.

In these days of rising energy costs and concerns about our national energy independence, you can help homebuyers' make a smart decision by recommending ENERGY STAR qualified homes. These homes offer significant utility bill savings, but also provide a more comfortable living environment. At the same time, buyers of ENERGY STAR homes are doing their part to help protect the environment. Because these homes use less energy, they help prevent greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change.

ENERGY STAR is the government-backed program that makes it easy for consumers to identify energy-efficient products. New homes, commercial buildings, and more than 50 types of products can earn the ENERGY STAR for superior energy efficiency. Homebuyers may not be interested in learning the technical details behind energy-efficient construction. Instead, they can find the home of their dreams and simply look for the ENERGY STAR to enjoy the peace of mind of knowing that their new home will be truly energy efficient.

To earn the ENERGY STAR, a home must meet rigorous guidelines for energy efficiency set by the U.S. EPA. And while many builders claim that their homes are energy efficient, ENERGY STAR builders back up that claim with third-party verification by an independent Home Energy Rater. ENERGY STAR qualified homes can include features such as:

- **Effective insulation:** Properly installed and inspected insulation ensures even temperatures throughout the house while using less energy. The result is lower costs and a quieter, more comfortable home.
- **Tight construction and ducts:** Advanced techniques for sealing the home and its ducts help reduce drafts, moisture, dust, pollen, pests, and noise. A tightly sealed home improves comfort and indoor air quality while lowering maintenance and utility costs.
- **Efficient heating and cooling equipment:** Energy-efficient heating and cooling systems can be quieter, more comfortable, and reduce humidity.
- **High performance windows:** Energy-efficient windows use advanced technologies like protective coatings and improved frame assemblies to keep heat in during winter and out in the summer. These windows also block ultraviolet sunlight that can discolor carpet and furnishings.

ENERGY STAR New Homes Article to Broker/Agent magazine in Cincinnati, 6/01/07

- **Efficient products:** Energy-efficient lighting fixtures, compact fluorescent bulbs, ventilation fans, and appliances, such as washing machines, refrigerators, and dishwashers offer additional energy savings.

With more than 50 ENERGY STAR builders in the greater Cincinnati area, the number of local homes that meet EPA's rigorous guidelines is taking off. Make sure to tell your homebuyers about these new homes that are more comfortable, cost less to heat and cool, require less maintenance, offer improved indoor air quality, and help protect the environment. Find ENERGY STAR builder partners in your area at www.energystar.gov.

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