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ENERGY STAR CERTIFIED HOMES GET MORE EFFICIENT WITH VERSION 3.0

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By Dan Bridleman, Senior Vice President Sustainability, Technology & Strategic Sourcing, KB Home

The old mantra of “location, location, location” still rings true for many new homebuyers. Amenities such as granite countertops, gourmet kitchens and luxurious bathrooms are still top requests by many homebuyers during their search for newly built homes. What’s changed, however, is that most homebuyers now expect their new homes to be energy and water efficient and more comfortable than ever before.

Homebuilders have many options when offering energy-efficient homes and KB Home has found great success in partnering with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s ENERGY STAR program. In 2000, we partnered with ENERGY STAR to offer customers energy-saving features while increasing our competitiveness in a tight homebuilding market. That first year, we built 50 energy-efficient homes in Arizona and have built more than 70,000 homes nationwide to ENERGY STAR standards since then.

KB HOME AND ENERGY STAR

- Committed to building 100% ENERGY STAR certified homes in all of its communities since 2009
- Built over 74,000 ENERGY STAR certified homes
- First division partnered with ENERGY STAR in 2000
- 2011 and 2012 ENERGY STAR Sustained Excellence Award winner

In July 2012, the ENERGY STAR Certified Homes program fully implemented a set of new, more rigorous energy efficiency guidelines. These new guidelines are commonly referred to as Version 3.0. Adhering to this new version of the guidelines allows KB Home to continue to offer the most energy-efficient homes on the market as Version 3.0 guidelines exceed increasingly rigorous national green building codes.

If you already have solid processes and scheduling in place, the transition to Version 3.0 should be feasible and practicable. We worked closely with EPA, which provided the necessary training and materials such as updated checklists, field guides and technical support to achieve Version 3.0.

We only work with highly trained and qualified subcontractors (running the gamut from HVAC contractors, electricians, insulation contractors and framers) that can build to the new version. Our building process lets us develop long-term relationships with subcontractors who need to stay qualified and trained in order to continue working with us.



DEMONSTRATING SAVINGS IS KEY

The ENERGY STAR brand is very marketable, but it’s really the performance of the home that’s the true selling point for us. This includes lower utility bills, better home performance, and certification by the federal government that the home meets stringent requirements set by EPA.

courtesy of KB Home



ENERGY STAR allows us to offer these performance benefits to our customers and ensures our homes perform to strict, government-backed, independently verified standards. To obtain this independent verification, KB Home works with home energy raters trained by the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) using RESNET's standards and rating system. This third-party rating system puts our homes through rigorous tests but also produces and assures us impressive HERS Index scores and estimates on the energy efficiency performance of a home.

Using the HERS Index, we are able to offer homebuyers an Energy Performance Guide, or EPG on how their new home performs and how much energy it uses. Created by KB Home, the EPG is a powerful marketing tool that gives buyers a real-world, tangible figure—similar to a vehicle's miles per gallon. Together, the ENERGY STAR label and the EPG are very effective sales tools.

NEW SYSTEMS MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

- Now that KB Home builds ENERGY STAR certified homes to Version 3.0 guidelines, there are three major systems that we—and every builder—need to build into every home in order to meet the new guidelines. This includes:
- A complete thermal enclosure system. Quality installed insulation, high-efficiency windows and doors and a complete air barrier to minimize air leaks gives the home a tighter shell, which reduces energy loss and improves comfort.
- A comprehensive water management system. This system protects roofs, walls and foundations to help minimize damage or problems that result from moisture or water such as mold.
- A high-efficiency HVAC system installed by a credentialed HVAC installer. This system is designed and installed for optimal performance to provide homeowners a constant supply of fresh, filtered air that reduces indoor air pollutants such as dust, pollen and other allergens. Employing these three systems, plus energy-efficient lighting and appliances, has made KB Home successful in offering our customers a higher performing home that is also more valuable and comfortable.

By partnering with ENERGY STAR, we can offer our customers the peace of mind of knowing their home contains the popular amenities they want, plus the benefits that come from living in an ENERGY STAR certified home: wall-to-wall comfort, enduring quality and proven value.

Homes that earn the ENERGY STAR® prevent air pollution by meeting strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. www.energystar.gov

