

ENERGY STAR for New Homes Update September 2002



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ENERGY STAR Communities are Hot Sellers!

Astoria Homes in Las Vegas, Pardee Homes in Los Angeles, and Scaletta Development Corp in Avon, Ohio have all cited ENERGY STAR as a factor in their successful hot selling new-home communities, as reported by BUILDER Online.

New Homes Brochure Now Available

In order to support the ENERGY STAR Change campaign, we've created a new brochure for partners to distribute to their customers that highlights the benefits of owning an ENERGY STAR labeled home. The brochure is free and available through our hotline by calling 1- 800-STAR-YES. As a courtesy, we're sending a copy of the brochure to all active partners. To view the new brochure click on <http://yosemite1.epa.gov/estar/homes.nsf/content/ResMktgSalesMaterials.htm>.

Web Site Locator Map Up and Running

Our Locator Map is active once again! As many of you already know, the database that feeds partner information and home counts to our Web site has been down for quite some time due to a system upgrade. As a result, our Locator Map has been frozen since mid-March. But, now it's back! We truly apologize for the delay in getting this important marketing tool running again.

We have made every effort to make sure that all of your data came through the transition process correctly. However, we recommend that you verify the information listed for you by clicking on "Find Labeled Homes" at the top of the <http://www.energystar.gov> main page. Please email us at energystarhomes@icfconsulting.com if you find any problems.

2003 ENERGY STAR Awards Applications On-Line

The ENERGY STAR Awards recognize partners that make significant contributions to transforming local markets to ENERGY STAR. These awards are separate from the annual achievement awards that new homes partners receive automatically for reaching specific milestones of labeled homes. In order to be selected for these more-limited awards, partners must submit a 2003 application package to us by December 16, 2002. The 2003 application package is available on our Web site (available through the main ENERGY STAR homepage <http://www.energystar.gov>), under "What's New." Partners should note that we have modified the criteria and format this year to make the package less-burdensome, more targeted, and better able to showcase partners' success in the ENERGY STAR program.

Update on ENERGY STAR Change Campaign

Last November, EPA launched a two-year national public awareness campaign called Change, that encourages Americans to reduce air pollution by changing to energy-efficient practices. A key message of the campaign is to

choose homes that have earned the ENERGY STAR label. The Change campaign consists of high impact TV, radio, and print public service announcements that are running nationwide. The New Homes TV PSA was sent first to our most active markets: Dallas, Houston, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Orlando, and Indianapolis. However, interest in the TV PSAs has extended beyond the six active markets EPA originally targeted-requests for tapes have come from Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee and Illinois, from both broadcast and cable stations. In the spring of 2003, the New Homes TV PSA will be distributed nationally.

To become a part of this exciting campaign, please visit our web site at <http://www.energystar.gov/change>.

Las Vegas Partners Embrace the Change Campaign

In May 2002, Nevada Governor Kenny Guinn named the month of May "Nevada ENERGY STAR Month," thanks to the efforts of a coalition of local builders, energy inspection/certification companies, mortgage lenders and other partners. Nevada's ENERGY STAR partners launched a comprehensive, month-long campaign to educate Las Vegas homebuyers about the benefits of owning an ENERGY STAR labeled home. The Nevada campaign incorporated the look, feel, and messaging of the national ENERGY STAR Change Campaign. The campaign included the launch of a new Web site, a 13-week print advertising campaign in the local newspaper plus editorial articles about ENERGY STAR each week, and an ad with a special "map guide" section in the May issue of Southern Nevada Homes Magazine. To learn more, visit <http://www.NevadaEnergyStarHomes.com>.

2002 Advertising Partnership a Success!

In April 2002, EPA offered an Advertising Partnership to all of our new homes partners to promote consumer awareness of ENERGY STAR labeled homes. If local partners committed to cooperatively place a 13-week ad in a major local newspaper promoting ENERGY STAR labeled homes, EPA would match it with a separate 13-week ad placement. Partners could choose from one of four available ads and EPA would customize the selected ad to include partners' logos or names. At least three builder partners had to be featured in the cooperative Partner ad, and the ad must begin running by the end of September 2002. The deadline to sign up for the Advertising Partnership was June 1, 2002.

The response received was impressive. Seven markets accepted our offer. Phoenix, Las Vegas, Houston, Oklahoma City, Boise, Louisville, and Vermont signed up for the Advertising Partnership. Each, in different capacities, is meeting EPA's goal of local partners working together to maximize their marketing efforts and present to the public more consistent messages about ENERGY STAR.

Better Communication of ENERGY STAR Financing

For ENERGY STAR Finance partners, we will be implementing two new program enhancements in the coming months. First, we will provide our Financing partners with new customizable outreach materials so that they are better able to communicate information about their ENERGY STAR Mortgage offerings. These materials include a Q&A sheet and brochure on ENERGY STAR labeled homes and mortgages. To view these materials, please visit the following Web site: <http://yosemite1.epa.gov/estar/homes.nsf/content/ResMktgSalesMaterials.htm>.

Second, we are implementing a new policy to ensure that homebuyers who visit the ENERGY STAR Web site for a list of finance partners are able to call those partners and receive accurate and timely information about ENERGY STAR Mortgage offerings. Once a year, EPA will call each lender partner listed on our Web site to determine whether homebuyers' questions are adequately being addressed. Lenders not able to provide helpful information will be asked if they are interested in continuing their association with ENERGY STAR. If not, they will be de-listed from the ENERGY STAR Web site and considered 'inactive.' Lenders interested in continuing their association with ENERGY STAR will be given 30 days to develop a system to address homebuyers' questions. If at the end of this period a communication system is still not in place, they will be de-listed from the ENERGY STAR Web site and considered 'inactive.'

This new policy is not meant to be punitive, but to protect the investment in ENERGY STAR by our active partners, i.e., if consumers using our web site find that some partners listed are unable to provide helpful information, than the value of the listing is undermined for all.