

Insulating Your Wallet With Home Insulation

by Eric Caspary
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Heating and cooling for an average home account for 50 percent to 70 percent of a homeowner's energy usage. If your home isn't adequately insulated that can mean added costs that deplete your wallet each month.

The Energy Efficient Codes Coalition (EECC) strives to achieve an initial 30 percent boost in the energy efficiency of the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) over its 2006 counterpart. The EECC writes on its Web site, "Because homes and other buildings are the largest sectors for US energy and electricity consumption, using 40 percent of US energy and 71 percent of its electricity, respectively and, at 37 percent, the largest single source of American's greenhouse gas emissions, they represent the nation's last great frontier of wasted energy.

The move toward building more energy-efficient homes is increasing. According to the 2006 McGraw-Hill Construction Residential Green Building SmartMarket Report, by 2010 green homes will make up 10 percent of new home construction; that's up from just 2 percent in 2005.

In the aftermath of Katrina the community of homes being built under the "Make It Right New Orleans" housing charity is considered the largest and greenest community of single-family homes in the world. Four years after the devastating hurricane struck, green houses are rising from

the wreckage. So far there are only about 15 homes completed in the Lower 9th Ward, but there will be 150 by the end of 2010. The families living in these homes are paying significantly reduced electrical and utility bills.

But energy-efficient homes still remain the exception. There are approximately 45 million homes in the U.S. that lack the proper levels of Insulation.

That causes not only higher household utility expenses but also more health hazards. According to the Harvard University School of Public Health, thermal insulation not only helps with energy efficiency but also

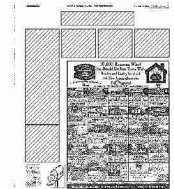


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contributes dramatically to public health. Studies show that increasing insulation reduces energy usage and emissions which result in fewer deaths and instances of

respiratory and cardiovascular ailments that are often associated with air pollution.

Experts say that homes under 10-years old could be lacking the proper amount of insulation. Taking steps to adequately insulate your home can help your current financial picture (federal tax credits and incentives may apply). Increased insulation can also be considered a very valuable benefit when it comes time to sell. If you've already upgraded your insulation and are listing your home on the market, it's a good idea to make that known in marketing materials. Insulation is a hidden advantage. It's not as easy as



showing off a newly remodeled kitchen, however, it can be a big influencer for buyers – especially if you educate them about the upgrades that you’ve made and how that transfers to savings for them once they’re living in the home.

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