

REAL ESTATE
Serving Northern Colorado **WEEKLY**

FORT COLLINS
COLORADOAN
Bringing Fort Collins Home
www.coloradoan.com

Real Estate Weekly is
produced by the
Fort Collins Coloradoan
Custom Publishing
Department

Publisher
Christine Chin
Phone 970.224.7885

Advertising Director
Konan Hauser
Phone 970.224.7702

Marketing Director
Lisa Barkley
Phone 970.224.7796

Custom Publishing Editor
Michael St. Clair
Phone 970.416.3930

Business Editor
Tom Johnson
Phone 970.224.7740

Energy efficient homes are now more important than ever

With the fall and winter months once again upon us, and energy costs making the headlines almost everyday, homebuyers must do all they can to ensure their new home is as energy efficient as possible. By doing the proper research and finding a home builder that is committed to energy efficiencies you as a new homeowner can save significant dollars monthly on your energy bill. The way to determine those savings is to ask your builder to provide the results of independent testing done by a certified energy star rater. If your new home does not take advantage of the new construction techniques dealing with energy efficiencies then it is sure to become a drain on your pocketbook and eat into a home's equity.

Some of the things a homebuyer should be asking builders to make sure they are getting the maximum value from their home in regards to energy efficiency include:

ARE THEY AN ENERGY STAR PARTNER? Energy Star was introduced by EPA in 1992 as a voluntary, market-based partnership to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency. Now in partnership with the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Energy Star works with more than 8,000 organizations to improve the energy efficiency of products, homes and businesses. It is a government-backed program helping businesses and individuals protect the environment through superior energy efficiency. Results are already adding up. Americans, with the help of Energy Star, saved enough energy in 2005 alone to avoid greenhouse gas emis-



By David and Jon Tschetter
FOR THE COLORADOAN

sions equivalent to those from 23 million cars - all while saving \$12 billion on their utility bills.

Only 10 Colorado builders have achieved the Energy Star designation, and homes built by these companies are at least 30 percent more energy efficient than homes built to the 1993 national Model Energy Code or 15 percent more efficient than state energy code, based on whichever is the more rigorous standard. Efficiencies are based on heating, cooling and hot water energy use, and are typically achieved by the following:

- building envelope upgrades
- high performance windows
- upgraded heating and air conditioning systems
- tight duct systems
- upgraded water-heating equipment

ARE THEY USING ENERGY EFFICIENT PRODUCTS? Homebuilders that are truly meeting energy efficiency standards are using the best products and materials possible. Some of these products include insulating glass that is 35 percent more energy efficient than ordinary double pane windows in winter, and 41 percent more efficient in summer. Special coatings allow light to enter your home, but blocks the passage of heat. So, if it's 0 degrees outside and

70 degrees inside, the temperature of the innermost glass pane is a comfortable 57 degrees. In the summer months, the glass helps keep your home cool by filtering the heat out of sunlight coming from high angles. The proper glass can cut energy bills up to 25 percent.

In addition to high quality windows, other systems are available to cut energy costs, including effective seals to thermal bridges. For example, products for a home's exterior are available that have been proven to be far more energy efficient than other common exteriors (including brick, pre-cast concrete and wood) and are equally appealing.

In regards to heating and ventilation, the EPA and the DOE have both selected Lennox Industries Inc., a subsidiary of Lennox International Inc. (NYSE: LII), as an ENERGY STAR® Manufacturing Partner of the Year for Lennox' outstanding contribution to developing, manufacturing, and promoting energy-efficient products. Lennox is the only heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) manufacturer ever to be chosen for the annual EPA award.

WHAT AM I OVERLOOKING? Advanced insulating techniques in walls, floors and other enclosed cavities that typically have been poorly insulated by builders in the past will make your home more thermally efficient and help reduce your energy bills. Heat

loss through walls may account for up to 10 percent of the total heat loss in a home therefore properly insulating those areas can help eliminate uncomfortable drafts in winter and keep you cool in summer, adding year-round comfort.

Proper insulation will keep drafts and wind out of wall cavities sealing in thermal performance for greater comfort and reduced energy consumption. Weather-resistant barriers help protect the installed R-value of insulation, allowing the HVAC system to run more efficiently. Regardless of the thickness of the insulation or the type of sheathing used, the proper barriers will help to eliminate air leaks and reduce the overall operating costs. In addition, protecting the wall cavities from bulk water prevents deterioration, increasing the asset value of the structure. Improved indoor air quality and increased insulation value provide a healthier, more comfortable environment.

A home's value must include features that aren't as apparent as the floorplan or size of a home, but must also take into consideration its energy efficiency. This is especially true in a day and age when energy costs are only continuing to rise.

David Tschetter is the CEO and Jon Tschetter is the president of Colorado Custom Homes. Both can be reached at 970.674.0200 or at www.cocustomhomes.com.

MORTGAGE RATES	Sept. 14, 2006	Sept. 15, 2005
U.S. Fixed-rate 30 year	6.43%	5.74%
U.S. Fixed-rate 15 year	6.11%	5.32%
Southwest Fixed-rate 30 year	6.41%	5.73%
Southwest Fixed-rate 15 year	6.11%	5.29%