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Now that summer has arrived, the lush vegetation around us serves as a strong reminder of the importance of conservation. These days, it seems that businesses and individuals alike are intent on reducing their environmental impact. We in the construction industry are perfectly positioned to make a significant contribution to greening our world. That's why Meyer & Meyer is building its first Energy Star®-rated home.

As is explained more fully in an article in this newsletter, Energy Star buildings use at least 15 percent less energy than traditional homes. This reduction is achieved through optimally installed insulation, efficient heating and cooling systems, high performance windows, air-tight construction and ductwork, and Energy Star-rated appliances, light fixtures and water heaters.

The Kenilworth lakefront home highlighted in this newsletter is our flagship Energy Star endeavor. By meeting Energy Star guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Meyer & Meyer will achieve certification as an Energy Star partner upon completion of the project.

As you know, we strive to provide the utmost in materials and design, and seeking Energy Star certification is a natural path for Meyer & Meyer to follow. This way, we will not only help you create your dream home, but also protect the environment for future generations.

Best wishes for a safe, satisfying and green summer.

Sincerely,

Bob Kostelny



Energy saving elevated to a new level at luxury lakefront home

Nestled on Lake Michigan in Chicago's northern suburbs sits one of Meyer & Meyer's most exciting projects, built with Energy Star certification. The 27-room structure will soon be the home of Terry and Mary Claire, a local couple, and their five children. The family had long considered buying a great second home on a lake, but they eventually decided to build their dream home on a Great Lake.

The residence, complete with an elevator, takes advantage of its long, deep lot, and every room with an eastern exposure has dramatic lake views. Each child will have his or her own bedroom, and another bedroom is dedicated space for a grandparent's regular visits. A lower level has luxurious accommodations for other guests. Also enhancing this level will be a wine cellar with a tasting table, as well as a shuffleboard table, so the family can enjoy this favorite pastime year round. A lavish kitchen with sweeping vistas occupies a good portion of the main floor, and inviting fireplaces are situated throughout the house - and outside as well. A sumptuous hearth is the focal point of the exterior living space, while a private beach awaits down a quaint stone stairway.

While nothing is usual about Terry and Mary Claire's new home, one thing that truly sets it apart is its Energy Star features, which will make this exceptional living space 20 to 30 percent more energy efficient than comparable traditional houses. With so much to envision while planning this project, Energy Star features were not a top priority for the couple. "When Meyer & Meyer first mentioned the option of building an Energy Star certified home we were somewhat neutral about it. But when we looked at the long-term savings in energy costs, and with the benefits it would bring to the environment, we were sold," notes Mary Claire.

Designed by architect Chuck Cook of Myefski Cook Architects, Inc., the home's groundbreaking took place in September 2007, and the family expects to celebrate Thanksgiving 2008 in the new dining room overlooking Lake Michigan.

What Is Energy Star?

Energy Star is an international standard for energy-efficient consumer products. The logo appears on appliances, electronics and a wide range of other items, not the least of which are buildings and homes. The program was created by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in an attempt to encourage power plants to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gases.



Soon after its inception, the program began promoting and labeling energy efficient products, and in 1995 Energy Star introduced labels for residential heating and cooling systems and new homes. By 2006, about 12 percent of new housing in the United States was labeled Energy Star. According to the EPA, with the help of ENERGY STAR, U.S. residents saved enough energy in 2007 alone to avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 27 million cars - while saving \$16 billion on their utility bills.

Energy Star specifications differ with each item, and they are set by either the Environmental Protection Agency or the Department of Energy. For homes to have the Energy Star designation, they must use at least 15 percent less energy than standard residences. They usually consist of properly installed insulation, high performance windows, tight construction and ducts, energy efficient cooling and heating systems, and Energy Star appliances, lighting, and water heaters.

To earn the Energy Star, homes must be independently verified as meeting EPA's strict guidelines for energy efficiency. These homes are at least 15 percent more energy efficient than homes built to the 2004 International Residential Code. In addition, they must have energy-saving features that typically make them 20 to 30 percent more efficient than standard homes.