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## Make Sure Your New Home Plans Are *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR*

If you are like many home buyers today, energy efficiency is an important concern when you're looking for a new home plan. In fact, a recent survey<sup>1</sup> found that more than 85 percent of Americans planning to build or buy a home within the next 2 years would choose one home over another based on energy efficiency. By choosing a home designed with energy efficiency in mind, you can help ensure that you will be more comfortable, have lower utility bills, and protect the environment.

But how can you figure out which home plans are truly energy efficient? It's simple! Just look for the new *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* logo from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the plans.

### How are home plans *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR*?

Home plans that are *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* incorporate energy-efficient details and specifications to meet rigorous guidelines set by EPA. To qualify, a plan is independently reviewed and verified to include energy-saving features and construction practices that will result in a home that is 20–30 percent more energy efficient than a standard home.

*Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* home plans typically include:

- **Tight Construction and Ducts.** Advanced techniques for sealing holes and cracks in the home's "envelope" and in its heating and cooling ducts help reduce drafts, moisture, dust, pollen, pests, and noise. A tightly sealed home improves comfort and indoor air quality while lowering utility and maintenance costs.
- **Effective Insulation.** Properly installed and inspected insulation in floors, walls, and attics (the "envelope") ensures even temperatures throughout the house while using less energy. The result is lower utility costs and a quieter, more comfortable home.
- **Efficient Heating and Cooling Equipment.** Energy-efficient heating and cooling systems use less energy to operate, which reduces your utility bills. They can also run more quietly, reduce indoor humidity, and improve the overall comfort of your home. When properly installed and sized, this equipment won't have to work so hard to heat and cool the home.
- **High Performance Windows.** The windows specified in *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* home plans employ advanced technologies, such as protective coatings and improved frames, to help keep heat in during the winter and out during the summer. They also block damaging ultraviolet sunlight that can discolor carpets and furnishings.
- **Efficient Products.** *Designed to Earn* home plans may also specify ENERGY STAR qualified products—lighting, ventilation fans, and appliances—that offer additional energy savings.



<sup>1</sup> Energy Pulse 2006: Where America Stands on Electric Utilities, Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Conservation. The Shelton Group, 2007.

## What are the benefits of choosing a *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* home plan?

Home plans that are *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* offer you:

**A Smart Investment.** To date, more than 6,000 home builders have partnered with EPA to construct over 860,000 ENERGY STAR qualified homes. By the end of the decade, more than one million homes are expected to earn the ENERGY STAR. The trend is clear—by choosing a home plan that is *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* and working with your builder to make sure your home, when built, earns the ENERGY STAR, you can be confident that its energy efficiency will be an increasingly valued feature when the time comes to sell.

**Added Confidence.** Choosing a home plan is complex enough without having to know all the details of energy-efficient construction. Look for the government-backed *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* to easily identify which plans will bring you a home that is truly energy efficient. Once you find the home plan of your dreams, you can enjoy peace of mind knowing that it also meets the strict energy efficiency guidelines set by EPA.

**Better Performance.** Specifying properly installed energy-efficient improvements in the home plan helps ensure that your new home will deliver better protection against cold, heat, drafts, moisture, pollution, and noise. An energy-efficient home can provide consistent temperatures between rooms, improved indoor air quality, and greater durability.

**Lower Ownership Costs.** Homes that earn the ENERGY STAR use substantially less energy for heating, cooling, and water heating compared with standard homes. Over the average 7 to 8 years you may live in your home, the resulting savings on your utility bill can add up to thousands of dollars. In addition, you can also gain substantial savings on reduced maintenance.

**Environmental Protection.** Energy used in our homes often comes from burning fossil fuels at power plants. Because ENERGY STAR qualified homes use less energy, they help prevent greenhouse gas emissions—an added benefit for environmentally conscious consumers looking for “green” choices.

## Does a *Designed to Earn* home plan mean that my home is automatically ENERGY STAR qualified?

No. A home built according to a *Designed to Earn* home plan must also meet EPA field verification requirements to earn the ENERGY STAR qualified home label (image right). You’ll need to make sure your builder follows the home plan’s ENERGY STAR construction specifications and works with a Home Energy Rater, who will conduct the onsite inspection and testing to verify that your home qualifies for the ENERGY STAR.

Learn more about EPA’s *Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR* at:  
[www.energystar.gov/DesignedToEarn](http://www.energystar.gov/DesignedToEarn)

