



HINTS FOR HOME BUYERS

Shopping For Value, Comfort And Quality

(NAPSA)—If you're looking for energy-saving features in your new home, you're in good company.

Recent homebuyer surveys have found that energy efficiency is the top upgrade homebuyers choose in new homes. Builders following the Department of Energy's Building America guidelines build homes that are more durable, energy efficient, more comfortable and have better indoor air quality than the average new American home.

The rising demand has made it easier to find energy-efficient homes since builders find it is easier to sell these homes.

Since the energy efficiency features found in these homes vary by region, the Department of Energy has created a series of Energy Efficiency Guides, titled "Building America's Best Practices Series," showing contractors how to build energy-saving homes in different climates around the country. The Building America approach has so far been used in the design of more than 25,000 houses in 34 states.

The Best Practices also include information and a checklist that a homeowner can use when shopping for an energy efficient home.

Recently released Volume 2 of the Best Practices covers the hot, dry climate area of the Southwest.

Features that work in the Southwest include windows that help keep the area near the window cooler and block the ultraviolet light from the sun which causes fading of drapes and furniture. Other features include compact and tightly sealed ducts which make the heating and cooling system operate more efficiently and high-efficiency heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment.



Building energy efficiency into your home can make it less costly over the long run and more comfortable.

One way to know you have found an energy-efficient home is to look for the ENERGY STAR® label.

ENERGY STAR homes are built to strict energy-efficiency guidelines using proven technologies and construction practices.

Depending on how a builder structures his costs, the home's size and design and the prevailing cost of building materials, the additional cost of an energy-efficient home may range from zero to \$1,500 or more. The investment in energy efficient measures may raise the purchase price, but through lower monthly utility bills, those costs can be recovered over time.

Lenders have developed energy-efficient mortgages to encourage consumers to purchase these types of homes. These mortgages can make it easier to buy more home for your money.

Homes use more than 20 percent of the energy consumed annually in the U.S. The Building America program aims for a future when homes will become zero-energy homes and produce as much energy as they use. For more information, visit www.buildingamerica.gov.