

# THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR



Cocoon™ Cellulose insulation is made with recycled paper, high in density and flame retardant. A blown-in cellulose insulation is environmentally responsible, can be less expensive and prevents the improper installation of fiber glass batts, leaving "cold pockets" in walls promoting condensation and possibly even mold.



"Builders should be mindful of the environment and implement re-manufactured, recycled or reclaimed materials with low formaldehyde emitting glues during the building process, from framing materials all the way down to the plumbing. That is the single largest thing a builder can do for green construction."

photos courtesy of Keeneland Builders, Westfield



Certaainted Fiber Cement Siding™ makes a fiber cement siding made with a large portion of fly ash, a waste by product from coal.

## it's time for a green home

### energy-efficient homes can save costs and be environmentally friendly

6

by teresa nicodemus  
house & home feature writer

**W**hat is a green home? A green home, as defined by the U.S. Green Building Council, uses less energy, water and natural resources, creates less waste and provides a healthier living environment for the homeowner. So, what can a homeowner do to get green? Local building experts share a few green building techniques for you to consider, from energy-efficient construction, heat-

ing and cooling to proper insulation.

#### INSULATION

When considering insulating your home for maximum energy efficiency, "it's best to insulate walls, not just windows," says Bryan Kuhn, owner of FoamXperts LLC in Carmel. "If you have lots of air penetration through your walls, you are losing heat in the winter and cool air in the summer."

An option for homeowners is foam insulation sprayed directly into the wall cavities. A notable

decrease in heating and cooling costs of up to 30 to 50 percent can be seen when all exterior walls are foam insulated and there is sufficient insulation in attic areas, according to Kuhn. "Insulation can do several things. It can act as a sound barrier, vapor barrier and wall stiffener," explains Kuhn. Properly insulated walls resist mold formation. Improperly insulated walls form condensation when hot and cold air meet, which promotes mold within the walls. Homeowners can take advantage of the energy tax credit distributed by the state and

federal government of up to \$1,500 if using an environmentally sound and upgraded insulation product.

#### BUILDING MATERIALS AND MECHANICS

Chris McKinney, chief construction executive for Keeneland Builders in Westfield, states, "Builders should be mindful of the environment and implement re-manufactured, recycled or reclaimed materials with low formaldehyde emitting glues during the building process, from framing materials all the way down to the plumbing. That is the single largest

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Storage area for pool equipment and misc. The owners first wanted to have a concrete foundation for the storage area. We then had a discussion and decided it would be best to do a cedar deck foundation for the storage area and how much better it would be for the environment. We are using more and more man-made materials for our projects. People are willing to pay a little more knowing that they are doing something good for the environment.

photo courtesy of Steve Gray Renovations

thing a builder can do for green construction."

"Using environmentally friendly building materials is becoming a global issue. The number of home owners concerned about the environment is increasing, and it's the builder's responsibility to learn more about products they are selling," states Steve Gray owner of Steve Gray Renovations of Indianapolis. "Every remodeler needs to learn about the background of the products he is selling to determine where the products come from and how they are harvested and manufactured. Some manufacturing processes are easier on the environment than others. Homeowners need to

do their homework and ask the builder good questions about the materials they are using."

When searching for a green builder, it is important to make the distinction between the building business and the home. A key certification for a green builder is to be an Energy Star partner, but McKinney says it is more important that the individual home is certified. "Just because the builder is a partner does not necessarily mean your home is energy efficient."

Homeowners should not only be mindful of building materials, they should consider green mechanics within the home. For instance, tankless water heater sys-

tems conserve energy. Most of the energy loss with a water tank is due to maintaining water temperature when not in use, according to McKinney. "Also consider using airtight cans for canned lighting, using high-efficient furnaces and condensers with a 94 percent or higher efficiency level."

Existing homeowners can do a number of things to become more environmentally friendly says McKinney. "You can recycle, upgrade your windows and doors, change your lighting from incandescent to fluorescent and upgrade attic insulation. These small changes alone can make a difference."

## WINDOWS AND DOORS

Upgrading the windows and doors is an important factor in improving the energy efficiency of your home. According to Bill Clifford, department manager for Windows and Doors of Indianapolis, the number one issue in cost and energy savings is to make sure your home is equipped with high performance glass windows with a low-emittance (Low E) coating, which blocks a significant amount of radiant heat transfer.

Tim Quigley, owner of 1HourDoor in Indianapolis, recommends paying attention to condensation or fogging in your windows,

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which means the thermal seal surrounding the window is failing. "Thermal seal failures need to be replaced as soon as possible. You are losing heat or cool air, depending on the season, and it's not the most attractive feature on your house if your windows are fogged."

Another easy way to spot energy loss within your home is to check for any tears or cracks in the weather stripping around exterior doors. "You can easily replace weather stripping, and it does cut down on drafts around the doors, keeping cool air inside during summer and heat from escaping in winter," says Quigley. "Caulking is another

approach to energy efficiency. Caulking can become cracked or separated from the doorway, which allows air to get in and moisture and condensation to develop that causes the door frame to rot over time. Your two best friends to help with energy efficiency are caulking and weather stripping with caulking being your number one method."

According to Quigley, many older homes sport wooden doors with single glass panes, not thermal panes as in the doors of today. Consider replacing these doors with a steel or textured fiberglass door that is foam-filled for better energy conservation.

Are the **ELEMENTS** creeping into your home?  
Problems with **DRAFTS, DUST, MOISTURE?**

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#### HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEMS

Uriah Bontrager, owner of Bontrager Homes in Indianapolis, cites not only insulation of windows and doors as a critical energy saver, but also efficient, energy conserving heating and cooling systems. "You can have two houses with the same square footage and one home can have a lower heating bill by hundreds of dollars if using an energy-efficient system," states Bontrager. "Geothermal water furnaces are the most economical way you can heat and cool your home. The initial cost is greater but the savings over time will lower your energy bills. This type of heating and cooling is done with water underground."

Another energy-saving system, says Bontrager, "is an inline water heater, which heats water on demand. Only when you turn on the hot water on the faucet will the system be in use. This saves a lot of energy and you never run out of hot water as in the tank water systems, which only hold a limited number of gallons of water."

Green building and green living seem to be the buzzwords of the day. With continued strides in technology and environmentally sound building practices, we are protecting our environment and even protecting our pocketbooks. ■

#### RESOURCES:

1HourDoor  
11631 Fox Rd.  
Indianapolis  
317.826.4527  
www.1hourdoor.com

Amy Forbush Desgin  
321 N. Rangeline Rd.  
Carmel  
317.844.0845

Bontrager Homes, Inc.  
Indianapolis  
317.845.5686  
www.bontragerhomes.com

Custom Window Tinting  
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317.823.4305

FoamXperts, LLC.  
13295 N. Illinois St., Ste 125  
Carmel  
317.607.3767  
info@foamxperts.com

Garage Doors of Indianapolis  
5041 W. 96th St. and  
510 E. Southport Rd.  
317.396.5446



Foam insulation is sprayed directly into the wall cavities. A notable decrease in heating and cooling costs of up to 30 to 50 percent can be seen when all exterior walls are foam insulated and there is sufficient insulation in attic areas.

photo courtesy of FoamXperts, Carmel

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www.keenelandbuilders.com

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317.596.0928  
www.stevegrayrenovations.com

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Greenwood  
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317.396.5446  
www.windowstoday.com

Window World  
1229 Country Club Rd.  
Indianapolis  
317.209.0008  
www.windowworldinc.com

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An option that is gaining in popularity is utilizing Rhino Shield, a ceramic coating that is not paint and is able to resist fading caused by the sun. The coating reflects over 90 percent of the sun's energy, giving it a 25-year fade rate virtually undetectable to the human eye.

Another great way to spend home improvement dollars is on replacement windows that will pay for themselves in lower energy costs

with all-weather insulation performance and freedom from maintenance.

Imagining how much more attractive your home will look with beautiful improvement projects can be the motivation you need to help you get started.

Indianapolis House & Home is pleased to furnish information about local professionals who will be happy to help you with all of your home improvement needs. ■



photo courtesy of Northgate True Value, Anderson

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Indianapolis  
317.826.4527

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Cicero  
317.758.5942  
800.203.5143  
www.extwoodrest.com

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Indianapolis  
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Fishers  
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www.rhinoshield.net

Simplicity Siding & Windows  
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Greenwood  
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