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Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

DOE Zero Energy Ready Home

April 2015

A Note from Sam Rashkin:

How many of you are over 60?

My friend Joe Lstiburek was kind enough to give me another speaking slot at last year's Building Science Symposium in Westford, Massachusetts. I began with a simple audience poll asking how many of the 400-plus building science stakeholders in attendance were over 40 years old. About 85 percent raised their hands. Then I said, "keep your hands up if you're over 50." About 75 percent of the hands remained up. Finally I said, "only keep your hands up if you're over 60." About 60 percent of the hands remained up, including mine--how scary is that?

It's scary, not that I'm over 60 - which is a little scary truth be told, but that the community of professionals committed to building science is getting so old so quickly. Ensuring an adequate workforce with core competency in critical building science skills is nothing short of a crisis. That's why DOE is implementing two building science education initiatives. This article is about one of them, the DOE Race to Zero Student Design Competition.

This year about 400 students from 33 multi-disciplinary teams representing 29 universities in U.S. and Canada are competing to design, analyze, and document a Zero Energy Ready Home that is cost-effective and consistent with mainstream builder construction practices. All of the teams are required to take a two-day course by Joe Lstiburek and John Straubbe to provide a solid building science foundation. Who better to learn from? Thus, the key to this competition is that it is facilitating building science education and design integration largely left out of university programs which are constrained by jam-packed curriculum filled with accreditation requirements.

The hope is that the continued growth of this competition makes building science a common component in all major degree programs for architecture, engineering, and construction management. In other words, the Race to Zero is a back-door strategy for breeding next generation professionals. Stay tuned for the big event at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory on April 18 to 20. In

the next newsletter I'll talk about the other DOE building science education initiative



Building America Building Science Translator Published

Words are a big deal. A very big deal. With that in mind, DOE has worked extensively with housing industry representatives and building science experts over the past year to compile a new building science glossary that translates technical jargon into an improved consumer experience. Now there is a huge 'collective impact' opportunity to more effectively convey the value of high-performance homes to consumers and the media using these 'power words.' It's about time, because this value is too little understood. The [final report](#) is now available. More importantly, this content is currently being integrated into the Building America Solution Center for maximum accessibility and as part of a sales tool that will produce customized fact sheets. The fact sheets will itemize long lists of compelling innovations relevant to a specific home or project based on 'power words' from the glossary. Look for an announcement about the launch of this important new sales tool in June. Lastly, please recognize that the Building Science Translator will always be a 'work in progress.' DOE looks for the community of users to provide ongoing feedback for improvement based on experience and other inspiration. DOE will apply a rigorous review and integration process for all recommended changes.

Take Caution: Know Your Vendors

It has come to our attention that some of our partners are being contacted by outside vendors who found their contact information through the DOE Zero

Energy Ready Home [partner locator](#) tool. That's the point of the tool - to find partners - but, unless you know who these organizations are and have a strong knowledge of their track record, we recommend caution. Just remember it is possible that a vendor, legitimate or otherwise, may contact you by finding your contact information on the DOE website, but just because someone found you on our program site, doesn't mean they represent DOE or the program.

We offer a number of resources to our partners. Our marketing toolkit provides partners with the use of program logos, a customizable point of sale fact sheet, and a customizable brochure. In addition to these marketing services, we also highlight your successful projects through in depth case studies, as well as through the soon to be released Virtual Tour of Zero. We offer technical support and training through live and [recorded webinars](#), as well as one-on-one technical support to help partners solve specific issues. We are proud of our innovative industry partners and are happy to provide you with the recognition you deserve for your impressive accomplishments. We encourage you to put labels on your certified homes, print the customized fact sheets for your homebuyers and to link back to your profile in the ZERH partner locator.

Please remember that program communications should be coming from DOE or from our support contractors, Newport Partners and Energetics, Incorporated. Please use your best judgement and research carefully when interacting with any other private organizations claiming to be connected to the program.

Virtual Office Hours: Get the Answers You Need Quickly & Efficiently

Whether you're new to DOE Zero Energy Ready Home or have been involved for a few years, our partners often have a lingering question or two about qualifying a home. If you're not in the mood to search another PDF or website for the answer – let us help! We talk to partners daily and realize that most of our partners could benefit from our answers and those of their peers. To reach more people and to answer questions you might not have thought about, we are rolling out Virtual Office Hours for four weeks beginning in late May. The webinar based Virtual Office Hours will allow raters and builders to ask our program experts specific questions (no more mute!) about rating and certifying DOE Zero Energy Ready Homes. The attendance for each session will be capped at 15 participants to allow for conversation and the sharing of ideas and solutions. Come join us and get the answers you need...quickly and easily! Register now to reserve your seat at the virtual table!

[Register Now](#)

Tuesday, May 26, 2015, 12-1 PM ET

Tuesday, June 2, 2015, 12-1 PM ET

Tuesday, June 9, 2015, 12-1 PM ET

Tuesday, June 16, 2015, 12-1 PM ET

Keep an Eye out for Rev05 of the DOE Zero Energy Ready Specs

In early May 2015, DOE will release an update of the DOE Zero Energy Ready Home National Program Requirements ... "Revision 5". This update establishes how the DOE Zero Energy Ready Home program operates in states with the 2012 IECC, defines a phase-in period for the new ENERGY STAR windows specs, and adds a few details to the duct location provisions. Perhaps most significant for many of our partners, Rev05 establishes the solar hot water-ready provisions as encouraged, rather than a mandatory specification. The PV-ready provisions will still apply, subject to the exceptions already found in the program specs.

The Rev05 specs go into effect for homes permitted on or after August 10, 2015, although the change to the solar hot water-ready can be implemented immediately. Please join us on May 13 at Noon Eastern for a [webinar](#) reviewing the Rev05 changes – give us an hour and we can make sense of it for you!

The Value of a Zero Energy Ready Home

The DOE Zero Energy Ready Home program has launched a partnership for lenders, hoping to improve the relationship between energy efficiency and appraisal values. If you have a preferred lender, encourage them to become DOE Zero Energy Ready Home Lender Partners [today](#).

2015 Housing Innovation Award Applications

Look for the DOE Zero Energy Ready Home (ZERH) Housing Innovation Award application available early April 2015. This year, winners will be selected for each of four categories: custom, production, multifamily, and affordable homes. One DOE ZERH Grand Housing Innovation Award Winner will be announced from among the winners in each of these categories at the 2015 Housing Innovation Awards Ceremony held on October 6, 2015, at the EEBA Excellence in Building Conference & Expo in Denver, Colorado.

Leading builders who have certified ZERH homes within the last year (April 1, 2014 – May 31, 2015, that have not been formerly recognized) will not want to miss this opportunity for recognition that also includes complimentary registration to the full EEBA conference, a networking poster session following

the ceremony and opportunities to present at the conference education sessions.

Each winner receives a customized case study highlighting their winning home that is featured on the Housing Innovation Awards webpage and in their profile on the DOE Zero Energy Ready Home partner locator. Plus, winners receive a page featuring their award-winning home on the DOE Tour of Zero, a virtual home tour designed for homebuyers that will launch in June 2015. Applications are due May 31, 2015 and winners will be notified by August 15, 2015.

Upcoming Webinars

Title: ZERH Lighting Efficiency

Description: LED lighting offers efficiency and performance benefits we've never seen in traditional lighting technologies. Commercial buildings have seen rapid growth in LED deployment, and in the residential arena leading builders are now integrating LED lighting packages. And as with any new building system, there are integration challenges along with the process of consumer understanding and acceptance. This webinar will discuss builder integration of LEDs including specification, costs, design approaches, energy-related benefits, and consumer reactions.

Presenters:

David Brignati - Architect (Newport Ventures)

Brooke Silber - Professional Lighting Designer (Jan & Brooke Luminae)

[Register Here](#)

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