

# ENERGY.GOV

Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy

## DOE Zero Energy Ready Home

### February 2015

**A note from Sam Rashkin:**

**"If you don't tell your story, you give it away."**

These are great words of wisdom I first heard about 15-years ago from renowned high-performance home builder Vern McKown of Ideal Homes in Norman Oklahoma. Translation: when you provide something of value, you will get nothing for it unless you effectively convey its value. This message made Vern a star on the high-performance home conference speaking circuit for a number of years. And that's because this wisdom is most relevant when you can't see the value, such as efficiency, comfort, health, durability, and safety... Does that sound familiar?

Vern has receded into the background in recent years, but the importance of his message has not. I'd like to say the housing industry has embraced more effective sales practices, but personal observations from way too much travel and mystery shopping suggest high-performance builders are still struggling to effectively tell their story.

The Zero Energy Ready Home team is committed to providing sales messaging and solutions that help builder partners effectively convey the compelling value of their certified homes. And that begins with our two-part Sales Training webinar presented on February 4 and [February 12](#), and permanently posted on our web site shortly thereafter.

The skills and tools provided in this training are critical to effective sales:

- how to be the expert about your product;
- how to use power words that more effectively resonate with buyers;
- how to uncover needs with probing questions;

- how to convey value with clarity by employing contrast; and lastly,
- how to put all of these other skills together in a five-step process that takes 45 seconds to translate a feature into a personally relevant benefit with a mini-close added for good measure.

Now it's up to you to ensure your sale representatives have invested in these sales skills. Zero Energy Ready Home performance is too important to give away.

## **Good windows are getting better! New ENERGY STAR Window specs take effect...**

Residential windows are advancing along with the rest of the building envelope, and in keeping with the industry's ongoing innovation the ENERGY STAR Windows program has updated its Eligibility Criteria. The revised specs, which were arrived at following a thorough vetting process with industry stakeholders, are found in Version 6.0 of the ENERGY STAR Product Specification for Residential Windows, Doors, and Skylights. These specs went into effect 1/1/2015 for all climate zones of the U.S., except for Northern Climate Zone (IECC Climate Zone 5 and higher) which goes into effect 1/1/2016.

For DOE Zero Energy Ready Home partners, here are the key takeaways:

- DOE Zero Energy Ready Home – which requires ENERGY STAR windows or an equivalent – has established an 8-month phase in, recognizing the time frame involved to move from design to project permitting. So, the new Version 6.0 ENERGY STAR Window specs will be in effect for DOE Zero Energy Ready Home projects permitted *after 8/31/2015*; (except for projects in IECC Climate Zone 5 and higher where the V6.0 Window specs will be required for projects permitted after 8/31/**2016**).
- Under the new specs, U-values for ENERGY STAR windows are lower in all climate zones, but stay within the double-pane technology category (see chart below).
- Keep in mind that DOE Zero Energy Ready Home allows alternatives like area-weighted averaging for U and SHGC and a passive solar design exemption. See the [DOE Zero Energy Ready Home National Program Requirements](#) (Exhibit 1 + footnotes) for more information.

Window Specs to Apply to DOE Zero Energy Ready Home Projects	Hot Climates IECC CZ 1-2		II
	U-Value	SHGC	
ENERGY STAR Window Specs v5.0 - for projects permitted up to 8/31/2015**	0.60	0.27	
ENERGY STAR Window Specs V6.0 - for projects permitted after 8/31/2015**	0.40	0.25	

\*For Cold Climate Zones, the revised specs are applicable to 8/31/2016

\*\* Note that DOE Zero Energy Ready Home offers multiple Requirements, Exhibit 1 with footnotes, for details.

## RESNET 2015: Deep dive with the experts

Our team of experts will be sharing insights on how to market DOE Zero Energy Ready Homes, along with several sessions featuring “deep dives” into technical issues like efficient hot water distribution and high performance wall at the annual RESNET Conference February 16-18, in San Diego. These sessions are part of an integrated federal programs track also featuring sessions on ENERGY STAR Homes, Indoor airPLUS, and WaterSense. Please join us to get your questions answered and put a face behind the

program. A listing of the conference sessions is available here: <http://conference.resnet.us/sessions>

## 2015 Net-Zero North American Leadership Summit: collaborate with leaders



Join us for the zero energy event of the year, the [2015 Net-Zero North American Leadership Summit](#) will be held March 3-5, 2015. As a 2-for-1 with the North East Sustainable Energy Association's BuildingEnergy 15 conference, the 2015 Summit builds on the highly successful inaugural 2013 Summit. We are holding this year's Summit in Boston, MA, as the state is a prime example of how public, private, and non-profit organizations joined efforts to implement an unprecedented, statewide commitment to NZE. Many of these activities were directly influenced by the 2013 Summit.

The goal of the 2015 Summit is to continue this momentum, providing a forum for innovative builders and stakeholders to collaborate and combine efforts across North America, accelerating the market adoption of net-zero residential and commercial buildings and communities.

Our curated list of [speakers](#) includes Sam Rashkin, Marc Rosenbaum, Steven Strong, Bill Maclay and others. Unlike typical conferences, attendees will participate in a highly interactive and immersive format that is designed for discussion and information exchange.

[Register now](#). [Sponsorship](#) and exhibiting opportunities are still available. See you there!

## Power Words Have Arrived

The Zero Energy Ready Home team has spent over a year-and-a-half working with a broad array of industry experts to develop an alternative language for the hundreds of measures used in high-performance homes. We call the new tool the Building Science Translator. It is based on a glossary that translates over 200 technical jargon terms into power words based on the improved consumer experience. More importantly, this glossary provides alternative power words for each measure based on six different value positions: comfort, health, energy efficiency, advanced technology, quality, and durability. The result is added sales flexibility by allowing messaging to target one or more values most relevant to each buyer. This is in fact, revolutionary. And, the glossary will be available on the Zero Energy Ready Home web site in the next few weeks. But the even bigger news is that by June this year, the Building Science Translator will be fully integrated in the [Building America Solution Center](#). This will enable users to most effectively use the glossary. That includes the ability to prepare customizable fact sheets listing the impressive innovations in specific homes for each of the six key values. And because these fact sheets only use power words, they are designed to most effectively resonate with homebuyers. Watch the Zero Energy Ready Home Sales Training webinar, Part II, to learn more.

## Power of Zero Fact Sheet

Clarity matters. If your value proposition isn't crystal clear, why should consumers change behavior and buy your product or service. And one of the most effective strategies for ensuring clarity is contrast. The Zero Energy Ready Home program exploits this concept in customizable marketing resources including the newly released [Power of Zero Fact Sheet](#). This new tool provides a simple set of comparison bars for six different value propositions: Healthful Environment, Comfort Plus, Advanced Technology, Ultra Efficient, Quality Built, and Durability. These bars contrast the performance difference between homes built to guidelines for Zero Energy Ready Home and ENERGY STAR Certified Home, as well as existing homes using 1993 MEC requirements as a reference point. These bars can be used to effectively convey a powerful difference in value that is quickly and easily understood. For instance, the Healthful Environment comparison bars allow sales agents to convey this message:

*"The nation's leading authority on health, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, has established recommendations for protecting you and your family's health in new home construction. This comparison from the U.S. Department of Energy shows that Zero Energy Ready Homes include all of these recommendations,*

*ENERGY STAR for Homes about half of them, and a recent vintage existing home only a small amount. Wouldn't you agree maximum protection from indoor contaminants is an important value in your next new home?"*

All of the other value comparison bars enable similarly compelling messages. Learn more how to use these bars with the Sales Training webinar series featured on the Zero Energy Ready Home web site. And remember as a partner that these point-of-sale fact sheets are customizable with your company's name, logo and contact information.

## Support the future of housing through Race to Zero Student Design Competition

The DOE Race to Zero Student Design Competition is an annual event that brings together university teams to develop winning, market-ready zero energy ready home designs. The competition culminates in a 3-day onsite juried event at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) each spring. This year's event is April 18-20, 2015, in Golden, Col. We need your support to make this event memorable. To learn more about this opportunity, please contact [racetozero@ee.doe.gov](mailto:racetozero@ee.doe.gov) or (206) 498-1308.

## You deserve credit

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