

Insulation—An Option for a New Home?



Standard Insulation

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By GARY TALBOTT

Every day you can read in the newspaper about the prices of natural gas being at a high level and not expected to drop in the near future in California... or the rest of the country for that matter (due in large part to repercussions from excessive energy use on the East Coast and in the Midwest to counteract the colder than usual weather). It has even been mentioned that Southern California might have to deal with blackouts again this summer. Locally, the Sacramento Municipal Utility District is considering an average 6% electric rate increase, and PG & E has proposed raising electric rates for home users by 4%.

With all of this information, few new home buyers have to be convinced of the important role good insulation plays in saving those hard earned



Cellulose Insulation

Soy-Based Foam Insulation





dollars from going down the energy drain! In fact, according to the PG & E website, "You can cut your heating costs up to 25 percent simply by installing proper ceiling insulation." And, you'll also want to insulate your walls, floors and heating ducts, as well. "This insulation will not only keep heat from escaping, but will also make your home more comfortable."

Unfortunately, with the demand for housing remaining at record levels, many homebuilders are reluctant to put in the extra time and cost to go beyond the minimum requirements (title 24) when it comes to insulation. While builders do put an enormous effort into attracting the potential home buyer by putting money and effort into those items that can be seen, such as granite counter tops, special door hardware, tile floors, etc., insulation is a hidden item that rarely gets the attention that it deserves.

But don't give up! There are some savvy builders that realize that offering an "Upgrade Insulation Option" makes good business sense. Standard application of fiberglass batts meets code but falls way short in energy efficiency compared to upgrade insulation options such as Sprayed Cellulose or Sprayed Foam in Place products.

So if you are one of the thousands looking for a new home to purchase, ask the builder if they offer an Upgrade Insulation Option. You won't be sorry you did! The initial cost will be far outweighed by the money you will save on future energy bills.

Gary Talbott is the owner of 5 Star Performance Insulation, which specializes in High Performance Environmentally Sensitive Recycled Spray Insulation Products. Gary has been an Insulation Contractor since 1970. Not only has he been an Insulation Contractor in three states, he has also appeared on "This Old House" and been featured in numerous magazines, including Builder. Gary can be reached at (916) 416-5170. ❖