Bill Stimulates Interest In More Efficient Windows

(NAPS)—A new tax credit may help homeowners invest in home improvements and pay dividends when it comes to saving energy.

Between 25 and 50 percent of energy used in a home can go right out the window—literally. Much depends on the workmanship and quality of the window systems. In most homes, windows provide the biggest openings between ambient indoor air and the elements outside—and the biggest opportunity for valuable energy to escape.

The economic stimulus bill signed by President Obama includes a 30 percent tax credit for qualified energy-related home improvements, including energy-efficient windows.

According to the bill, windows must achieve at least a .30 U-Value to qualify for the credit. U-Value is an industry measurement used to determine the rate of heat transmission through a window system. Lower U-Value numbers mean better insulating properties in a window.

"A .30 or better U-Value is very strict; so strict that many available window systems do not currently meet that standard," said Erin Johnson, window expert and spokesperson for Edgetech I.G.

According to Johnson, "Many window manufacturers are redesigning their products to include energy-efficient components to meet the new ENERGY STAR standards."

For example, creating triple-pane, rather than double-pane, window systems is gaining in popularity as a means for meeting ENERGY STAR and tax credit guidelines. Triple-pane windows

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are most effective when constructed with high-performance materials, such as nonconductive, dual seal foam spacer systems, low-emissivity (low-e) coatings and argon or krypton gas filling.

The spacer system is a key element to promoting energy efficiency and sustainability in window systems because it provides the seal between the indoor and outdoor air.

Also, these super-efficient windows often contain other nonconductive components, such as framing and sashes. Wood, composite and fiberglass frames are time tested and proven to be the most sustainable and energy efficient, standing up to a wide range of temperatures, UV light and the deteriorating effects of condensation.

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