

Hints *For* Homeowners

Smart Projects To Lower Home Energy Bills

(NAPSA)—The right home-improvement project could help cut soaring energy bills—an expense that's only expected to continue climbing from what's now about \$2,000 a year for the average household, according to the U.S. government's ENERGY STAR program.

So which projects can save you the most? While many homeowners might guess it's replacing windows or doors, experts say that the smart money is on insulated siding. The ENERGY STAR-qualified product can cut energy consumption by up to 20 percent, saving thousands over the long term. It has contoured insulation that fills the gap between the siding and home, preventing air from escaping. Plus, its average R-value of nearly 4.0 is triple that of competitive products.

"People know about common ways to insulate their homes—by upgrading doors and windows and sealing the roof and foundation," says Pat Culpepper, president of Progressive Foam Technologies, Inc., makers of the insulated foam used in the siding. "But up to 40 percent of energy is actually lost through a home's wood studs.

"They make up about a quarter of a home's wall surface area and release so much energy that it's as if one wall of your home isn't insulated. Insulated siding prevents that energy loss."

Boosting Resale Value

Culpepper, who compares using the siding to wrapping your home in a "total energy blanket," notes that it has the added advantage of being eco-friendly. By reducing the need for hazardous and ozone-depleting materials like paint,



Rigid foam-backed siding helps insulate a home, cutting energy use up to 20 percent year-round.

stains and caulks, landfills and their surrounding communities get a much-needed break through-out the siding's approximately 50-year life span.

Those green attributes could be a major draw to future buyers. Indeed, by the year 2010, as much as 5 to 10 percent of houses are expected to feature some kind of "green" construction.

Add that to the siding's inherent "curb appeal"—it has the look and feel of wood—and potential homebuyers' interest could be especially piqued.

A final benefit, whether you're looking to stay in your house or sell: The siding could help improve indoor air quality. It's designed to be "breathable," meaning it can help reduce the presence of mold, mildew, bacteria and other contaminants that can collect in a home's walls.

For more information, visit www.ChooseInsulatedSiding.com.