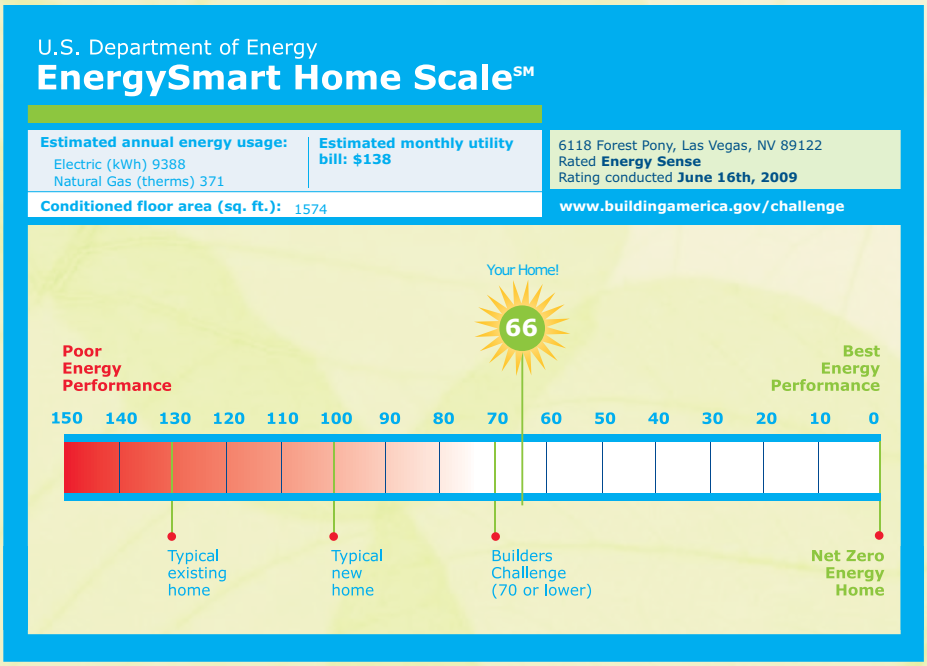
You design your homes to exceed energy and environmental performance standards. How do you know they'll actually perform the way you intended?

Home energy ratings provide standardized verification to ensure the performance of the homes you build.



In the automotive industry, there's no guessing at fuel efficiency. Each vehicle model is tested by the manufacturer and verified by the EPA under controlled laboratory conditions, using standardized test procedures that follow federal law. This provides consumers with a simple method to ensure the performance of the cars they buy.

Shouldn't the same hold true for homes? In fact, it can. MASCO'S *Environments For Living®* offers a measurable way to prove the performance of the homes you build. This has been true for years with homes being qualified for *Environments For Living* through MASCO-qualified contractors, but a new partnership with the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) provides a third-party system for verifying the energy performance of individual homes (or models).

"Energy ratings are becoming increasingly more critical in green building," says Steve Baden, executive director of RESNET, "because energy is one of the few quantifiable attributes of green."

Home energy ratings (HERS®) provide a method to ensure energy and quality performance and communicate the value of energy efficiency to home buyers. RESNET raters are trained and accredited through RESNET, and must complete an extensive curriculum, field experience, testing, and continuing education to maintain certification.

In addition to being RESNET accredited, raters wishing to participate in the *Environments For Living* program must also complete training specific to the program, conducted online through professional programs such as Green Builder College's five-course curriculum. This is a critical piece in the puzzle, as a rating is only as good as the knowledge of the person who performs it. "Additional training for the *Environments For Living* program is critical," says Baden, "as the program offers a significant guarantee that is unlike any other program in the market."

Home energy ratings involve an evaluation of energy characteristics, such as insulation levels, space conditioning, and water heating system specifications, window efficiency, and solar orientation. Performance testing, such as a blower door test for air leakage and duct leakage, is usually part of the rating. This data is used to generate a score between 0 and 100—the closer to zero, the less energy the home will use.

Unlike other methods for estimating energy use, a home energy rating is a recognized tool in the mortgage industry, as well as for qualifying homes for high performance building programs such as the *Environments For Living* program, tax incentives, and programs through the U.S. Department of Energy.

The bottom line—you go to great lengths to build great homes—prove it to your customers.

Created by GREEN BUILDER MEDIA

[redacted] ENVIRONMENTS FOR Living® [redacted]