

Nevada Energy Star increases number of certified homes, consumer awareness

Eight years ago, only about 15 percent of homes sold in Las Vegas were built to Energy Star specifications. Today, due to the concerted efforts of Nevada Energy Star partners, consumer awareness of Energy Star in Southern Nevada is more than 90 percent and new homes are built to meet or exceed Energy Star standards.

"We've come a long way in a relatively short period of time," said Annette Bubak, chairperson of the 2008 Nevada Energy Star campaign. Bubak credits Energy Star's success in Southern Nevada with strong participation from home builders, developers, utility companies, manufacturers and associated business partners. In fact, the Energy Star effort in Southern Nevada has been so successful, Nevada

Energy Star Partners received the Environmental Protection Agency's most distinguished award, Sustained Excellence, for six consecutive years—a feat accomplished by no other Energy Star partnership in the country.

According to Bubak, the number of Energy Star homes in Southern Nevada has grown exponentially from fewer than 100 in 1998 to more than 76,600 in 2007. "The environmental benefits of these 76,600-plus homes is the equivalent of eliminating emissions from more than 37,000 vehicles, saving more than 227 million pounds of coal, planting more than 62,000 trees or saving more than 445 million pounds of carbon monoxide each year," Bubak said. The national U.S. government symbol for energy efficiency, Energy Star was

created by the Environmental Protection Agency originally for energy-conserving computers in 1992. Since then, the program has been expanded to include all products that conserve energy and protect the environment—from appliances, electronics, lighting, windows and office products—to homes and even mortgages.

Now in its eighth year, Nevada Energy Star boasts more than two dozen partners, including many of the valley's leading home builders, developers, manufacturers, utilities and even mortgage providers. Partner contributions funded the 2008 three-month campaign, Energy Star—Your Green Foundation. The three-month awareness-building campaign, funded by contributions from partners, is designed to promote En-

ergy Star brand awareness and energy conservation as an important first step for individuals and corporations committed to "going green." The partnership encourages member developers to incorporate Energy Star standards into their building practices as the foundation for environmental initiatives that also include water conservation, air quality and resource conservation.

According to Sam Rashkin, national director of Energy Star for Homes, 2008 continues to be a pivotal year for Energy Star as guidelines were revised last year to raise the bar in response to changing technology and the ever-increasing need to conserve energy. Current Energy Star specifications call for higher levels of insulation, complete

framing and air barrier assemblies that enable insulation to perform at its full rated R-value; windows that meet or exceed Energy Star requirements; high-efficiency and properly sized cooling equipment; and more energy-efficient water heating, light-

ing and appliances. According to the EPA, homes built to Energy Star specifications use 15 percent less energy than homes built to standard codes. For more information or to submit your story or tip, visit thinkenergystar.com.