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NEVADA ENERGY STAR PARTNERS LAUNCH 2008 CAMPAIGN

Nevada ENERGY STAR® partners, a voluntary coalition of Southern Nevada homebuilders, developers, retailers, mortgage providers, energy consultants and local utilities promoting energy conservation, has launched its 2008 ENERGY STAR campaign. "ENERGY STAR – Your Green Foundation."

The three-month awareness-building campaign, funded by contributions from partners, is designed to promote ENERGY 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 pro-environmental initiatives that also include water conservation, air quality and resource conservation.

According to Annette Bubak, chairperson of the 2008 Nevada ENERGY STAR campaign, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides guidelines that energy conservation, because of the demand it places on our resources, should constitute approximately 40 percent of any multi-resources conservation initiative. Hence, the campaign's 2008 theme promoting energy conservation as the foundation for going green.

According to Bubak, ENERGY STAR builders are helping to minimize the impact of new development on the environment while helping homeowners to save money on utility bills. "The campaign also educates consumers on the latest technology in energy efficiency homebuilding and encourages homebuyers to make knowledgeable and wise buying decisions when shopping for homes and other products," Bubak said.

ENERGY STAR, the national U.S. government symbol for energy efficiency, was created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) originally for energy-conserving computers in 1992 and is now jointly implemented with the U.S. Department of ENERGY. Since its origin, the program has been expanded to include over 40 product categories that conserve energy and protect the environment – from appliances, electronics, lighting, windows and office products - to homes and even mortgages. ENERGY STAR products use less energy which reduces consumption of fossil fuels and resulting air pollution.

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 37,00 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.

"Thanks to the commitment of many companies, builders and public utilities in southern Nevada, ENERGY STAR has become a household word over the last decade.

Consumer awareness of ENERGY STAR is more than 90 percent and more than 67 percent of all new homes are built to meet or exceed ENERGY STAR standards," she said.

As a result of the program's success here, the Nevada ENERGY STAR partners are one of only three markets in the country to launch a national pilot program for high rise residential condominiums. According to Bubak, extending the ENERGY STAR program to the high rise market is a natural evolution, particularly in Las Vegas where high rise living has growing appeal.

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.

"Builders of new homes across the country, including southern Nevada, are significantly increasing the energy efficiency of their homes to meet ENERGY STAR requirements and consumers' growing demand for products and services that are kinder and gentler to the environment," said Rashkin.

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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, lighting and appliances. According to the EPA, homes built to ENERGY STAR specifications use 15 percent less energy than homes built to standard codes.

Now in its eighth year, Nevada ENERGY STAR includes partners representing utility companies, builders and developers, and manufacturers of energy-saving products. The partnership was recently recognized in April 2008 by the EPA at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. with its most distinguished award, Sustained Excellence. This is the sixth consecutive year Nevada ENERGY STAR Partners has received this award – a feat accomplished by no other ENERGY STAR partnership in the country. According to Rashkin, the Nevada ENERGY STAR Partners have become a model of success for ENERGY STAR partner alliances throughout the country.

For more information, visit the Nevada ENERGY STAR web site, www.thinkenergystar.com. Nevada ENERGY STAR Partners encourages consumers and businesses to share how they are making a difference. Please submit your story or tip on our website at www.thinkenergystar.com