

PRESS RELEASE

Energy Star Moving Towards ERVs in 2011

Tighter homes and increasingly stringent residential energy-use standards put whole-house heat-and energy-recovery ventilators in the spotlight.

Athens, OH December 16, 2009--Starting in 2011, all new homes built to comply with the federal Energy Star Qualified Homes standard—perhaps 200,000 units if the NAHB’s forecast for that year holds true—will be required to provide an adequate amount of controlled, fresh-air ventilation as part of a comprehensive energy conservation and indoor air quality goal.

Already, the ANSI National Green Building Standard (NGBS) and LEED for Homes require builders to meet the airflow (cfm) per square foot ventilation standards established in ASHRAE 62.2-2007 for residential applications, the same thresholds that Energy Star will apply.

All three programs allow multiple options for compliance and, in the case of the ANSI and LEED for Homes rating systems, award additional points toward certification for upgraded solutions.

Of those options and upgrades, an increasingly likely choice for builders is mechanical ventilation: whole-house energy-recovery ventilators (ERVs) integrated into forced-air HVAC setups.

According to the “2008 NAHB Construction Technology Survey” of 2,700 builders nationwide, 56% already report using mechanical means to bring a controlled amount of fresh air into the home (and about half of those extensively), while another 12% are considering it. Meanwhile, the most recent “Annual Builder Practices Survey” by the NAHB Research Center found that ERV use among builders increased from 2.7% of all new single-family units in 2002 to 3.6%—or about 23,000 homes—in 2008.

Those aren’t earth-shattering numbers—yet. But the combination of tougher (and greener) building standards and codes that will require whole-house ventilation in new homes; concern and market demand for healthier indoor

air; and the improved performance, reliability, and ease-of-maintenance of ventilation equipment positions ERVs to work into the spec sheets of an increasing number of homes.

As for the energy efficiency of ERVs, Energy Star is working to create standards to qualify the heat recovery performance and label the equipment within a new product category for the federal program; the 2011 Qualified Homes ventilation thresholds will require Energy Star-labeled ERVs to comply (if that ventilation option is chosen by the builder), just as the current standard does for exhaust-only (spot) ventilation units.

Already, the Home Ventilating Institute (HVI) independently certifies the performance of ERVs to provide builders with a gauge to compare products and assess their value in terms of heat recovery and airflow rates, if not their impact on air quality.

HVI considers the health benefits of controlled ventilation, including ERVs, to be a critical factor in their use. "Even with construction materials ... with low-VOC off-gassing, normal activities such as cooking and bathing overwhelm the home," with potential pollutants that ERVs can and do address, says Peter Grinbergs, the trade association's chairman.

"As homes are built tighter and tighter, the building industry is finding that ERVs are the most effective way to control Indoor Air Quality", says Catherine Chagnot, president of UltimateAir. Says Chagnot, "We're extremely optimistic about the future of ERVs and especially excited to manufacture the highest-rated ERV in the industry".

Headquartered in Athens, Ohio UltimateAir is the nation's leading manufacturer of Energy Recovery Ventilators, specializing in improving Indoor Air Quality since 1989. To learn more about UltimateAir please visit our web site www.ultimateair.com.

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