

Slim Down Utility Bills With Green Remodeling

It doesn't cost much to put your house on an energy diet. In fact, remodeling to improve energy efficiency may pay for itself with immediate savings on energy and water bills.

"Home owners save big on green remodels," said NAHB Remodelers Chairman Lonny Rutherford, CGR, CAPS, a professional remodeler from Farmington, N. M. "Not only is green remodeling good for the environment, it is great for the check book."

Remodelers are more knowledgeable than ever about green options, and with energy-efficiency tax credits and new technology, home owners can maximize the efficiency of their home while minimizing their utility bills. As energy costs rise, consumers can save money by making sure their homes use less energy through increased efficiency.

"Smart green remodeling solutions really make a difference in lightening energy bills," added Rutherford. "Just replacing faucets greatly reduces water bills. And installing new windows or sealing air gaps decreases wasted money on heating and air conditioning."

Home owners can reduce their utility bills with these simple solutions:

- Toilets, showers and faucets account for 60 percent of water usage in the home, according to the EPA. Replacing these items with more efficient models can save 11,000 gallons of water per year.

- When buying or replacing appliances, choose energy-efficient models. Federal ENERGY STAR-rated appliances are designed to use 10-50 percent less energy and water than standard appliances and save an average of 30 percent over standard models.

- Install a programmable thermostat to set your heating and cooling equipment to automatically turn on or off to match your schedule and create a comfortable and energy-efficient living environment. These units typically offer savings of 10 to 15 percent and cost \$40 - \$100.

- Old windows are often the weak link in energy efficiency. New window technology yields windows that are three times as efficient, or more.

For more information about remodeling, visit www.nahb.org/remodel.