

Building your business
on energy efficiency



Building Up

August 2006

A recent *Newsweek* cover article explored “The New Greening of America,” a renewed interest in preserving the environment through lifestyle choices, such as sustainable design. We see it occurring in Northeast and Central Minnesota with a thriving market for homes built to heightened standards of resource and energy efficiency.

Minnesota Power’s Triple E New Construction program has advanced energy savings and quality home construction in our region for more than 16 years. Its system requirements and performance measures continually evolve with innovations in home-building technology, product availability and consumer interest.

New Triple E standards are going into effect this summer. These higher standards go beyond thermal integrity, moisture control and indoor air quality to embrace the concept of a “House as a System.” They heighten specifications and provide incentives for builders and consumers who integrate ENERGY STAR®-qualified lighting and appliances and high performance heating and cooling systems into new homes.

Building to Triple E’s advanced standards can bring you additional rebates, tax incentives and national recognition through the ENERGY STAR® program. It definitely will add value and help build your business on energy efficiency.

New Triple E Standards

Raise the Bar on Performance

How do the new Triple E standards differ from the old ones?

Historically, Minnesota Power’s Triple E program has offered rebates and technical assistance to residents and homebuilders who meet specific standards for thermal integrity, airtight construction, moisture control and heating performance in their new homes. Our new standards raise the performance measures in all of these areas, plus embrace the concept of a “House as a System.” Now in order to achieve the highest Triple E rating and qualify for the full program rebate of up to \$2,500, new homes must also integrate ENERGY STAR® lighting and appliances and high performance heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) systems.

What led to these changes?

Triple E advances building performance by continually raising the bar and rewarding those that *exceed* common practices and industry standards. We’ve modeled our program so any new home that meets the highest Triple E standards also earns prestigious, national recognition as an ENERGY STAR® home. Our new standards were actually developed in partnership with ENERGY STAR® and Great River Energy’s Energy Wise® program. The goal was to provide a consistent, prescribed set of construction specifications that covered a wide geographic area and crossed utility boundaries. These standards allow builders to maximize utility rebates, while qualifying their homes for the ENERGY STAR® label.

What are the benefits?

Rebates and tax credits of up to \$2,500 are strong incentives, but there are many other reasons to build a Triple E home. Consumers are looking for lower energy costs, greater comfort, improved durability, higher marketability and resale value, and reduced environmental impact. Many are willing to pay more for a home that offers these advantages. Establishing yourself as a Triple E (and ENERGY STAR®) builder is a great way to distinguish your company and build your business on energy efficiency.

continued on back

DEAN

Dean Talbott
Minnesota Power
Project Manager





New Triple E Standards: Thermal Integrity, Plus Lighting, Appliances and HVAC

How has Triple E impacted home construction in our region?

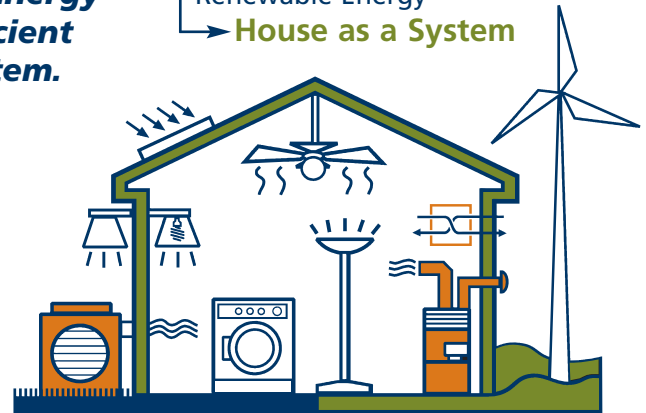
When Minnesota Power started its Triple E program in 1990, only about 8% of new homes featured whole-house mechanical ventilation systems, and the most common wall insulation was R19. Today, 100% of Triple E homes are equipped with air-to-air heat exchangers and feature R21 wall insulation. Triple E and participating builders were ahead of their time in promoting these energy-efficient technologies. To date, more than 600 homes in our region are Triple E rated, and hundreds more have been built to its rigorous thermal and indoor air quality standards but didn't qualify due to the electric heat requirement. Homebuilders, designers and suppliers in our area are key partners in the success of Triple E. Their enthusiasm is evident at the annual Energy Design Conference and Expo in Duluth. Developed through Minnesota Power's Triple E program, it draws more than 1,000 attendees each year to learn about the latest innovations in energy-efficient, high performance construction. *Mark your calendar for the 17th Annual Energy Design Conference and Expo, February 27-28, 2007.*

Why build a "House as a System?"

All components and materials interact to affect the overall energy usage, comfort and safety of a home. Homeowners enjoy additional cost savings and peace of mind when their tight, well-ventilated home features energy-saving central air conditioning, furnaces with electronically commutated motors, and ENERGY STAR®-rated appliances, fixtures and lighting all working together for maximum performance.

Think of Your Home as an Energy Efficient System.

- Triple E Home
- Energy-Efficient Construction
- ENERGY STAR® Lighting
- ENERGY STAR® Appliances
- High-performance HVAC
- Renewable Energy
- House as a System



Featured Incentives

Educate your customers about Minnesota Power conservation incentives and build your business on energy efficiency.

Triple E New Construction

If you are a licensed builder or homeowner constructing an all-electric home, you may qualify for up to \$2,500 in program rebates, based on specific Triple E standards for thermal integrity, airtight construction, moisture control, ventilation, heating, and inclusion of ENERGY STAR®-qualified lighting and appliances.

Home Heating and Cooling

"Found Money" HVAC Combo Special: Rebate of \$375 to residential customers who install a combination, energy-efficient HVAC system between August 1 and September 30, 2006. It must include a new energy-efficient central air conditioner and a high performance furnace with an ECM fan and be installed by a participating, program-trained contractor. Visit www.mnpower.com/combo.

High Efficiency Furnace with an Electronically Commutated Motor (ECM) Rebate: \$200 through Dec. 31, 2006

For more information about Minnesota Power's Triple E New Construction program and other residential rebates and savings you can offer your customers, please visit www.mnpower.com/foundmoney.

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"It's like finding money."