

## City of Austin Utility Department

### Energy Star Rating System

The Austin Energy Star program is a home energy rating system that has been implemented by the Environmental and Conservation Services Department in the City of Austin Electric Utility service area since the 1984-85 fiscal year. The program was one of many DSM programs conceived in response to a mandate by the Austin City Council that alternatives to purely supply-side options be developed.

The Energy Star program has been extremely successful in encouraging builders in the Austin area to incorporate energy efficiency into their new residential construction. Since its inception, about 75% of all new homes have been rated by Energy Star, and each year more builders sign up. Homes are rated on an open point scale that is representative of energy-cost savings that would be realized by the home as compared to a standard home built to the city's already strict energy code. Factors such as insulation type, glazings, solar screens, HVAC efficiencies, heat pump types, and fuel types are all considered in the generation of a rating for each new home.

Energy Star has been well-received by both volume and custom builders. Many prospective homebuyers now request an Energy Star rating, and builders advertise the ratings as an attractive and marketable aspect of their product. The program is designed so that volume builders can receive good ratings by making small cost-effective changes in their building plans, such as reducing window size. At the same time, custom builders can receive top ratings for incorporating efficiency into the total home design.

Much of the program's success can be attributed to the effective marketing strategies employed by the Environmental and Conservation Services Department. Frequent newspaper advertising, featuring lists of participating builders and architects, have been a mainstay of the marketing plan. This year, a home efficiency label designed to be placed near the main fuse box was introduced. The label is similar to the yellow home appliance efficiency labels with which consumers are familiar.

The program as a whole, however, has been successful due to the excellent partnership between the community and the Environmental and Conservation Services Department. The department, which is highly receptive to the needs of the community, also has the benefit of working in a city with a population that is especially conscious of environmental issues and is enthusiastic about opportunities to improve energy efficiency.

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### CITY OF AUSTIN UTILITY DEPARTMENT Energy Star Rating System

**Sector:** Residential

**Measures:** New home rating system based on building envelope, appliance efficiency, and other features

**Mechanism:** Builders cooperate with the utility to have new homes rated for energy efficiency

**History:** Started in 1985, will be incorporated into Green Builder program in 1993

#### October, 1991 - April, 1992 Program Data

Energy savings: 589 MWh  
 Lifecycle energy savings: 23,565 MWh  
 Peak capacity savings: 0.57 MW  
 Cost: \$95,000

#### Cumulative Data (1985 - 1992)

Cumulative energy savings: 11.77 GWh  
 Lifecycle energy savings: 120.4 GWh  
 Capacity savings: 2.93 MW  
 Cost: \$1,046,500  
 Participation rate: ~75%

The Results Center produced 126 profiles of the most successful energy efficiency and renewable energy programs in the United States and around the world in the early and mid 1990s. With the support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Ted Flanigan directed a research team at Colorado-based IRT Environment to produce and distribute these exceptional examples. Thanks to strong demand for solid case studies, The Results Center was supported by dozens of major utilities and energy associations worldwide. Today, The Results Center is managed again by Ted Flanigan, now at California-based EcoMotion Incorporated, a firm focused on strategic consulting, information dissemination, program design, outreach services, and aggressive implementation. To nominate highly successful programs, contact: The Results Center, c/o EcoMotion, 15375 Barranca Parkway, F-104, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 450-7155, or [TFlanigan@EcoMotion.us](mailto:TFlanigan@EcoMotion.us)