

# Creating energy with efficiency

## EP Electric rolls out new, improved efficiency rebates

Ben Franklin shared with us "... a penny saved is a penny earned." When it comes to a utility company's generation of electrical power, the same concept applies. Every kilowatt of power not needed, due to efficiency measures implemented on the demand side of the grid, reduces the need for expensive power generating equipment.

El Paso Electric rolled out the 2010-11 EPESaver Efficiency Program to southern New Mexico efficiency product, equipment and service providers last week at the Building Industry Association of Southern New Mexico. In cooperation with the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission, the EPESavers rebate program provides a wide range of efficiency incentives to homeowners, businesses and homebuilders. Utility providers recognize the value of using efficiency first to increase generating capacity.

Homeowners can work with contractors or as do-it-yourselfers to claim rebates for key residential efficiency upgrades including: high efficiency evaporative and refrigerated air conditioning systems, extra insulation at walls, ceilings and floors, new Energy Star windows and solar screens for existing windows.

You can also get \$30 when you have your old energy hog refrigerator hauled away for recycling (no back strain required – they pick it up!).

Businesses get breaks, too. Installation of Premium Efficiency Motors, high-efficiency cooling systems, "cool roof" systems, window shades and tinting or energy efficient lighting all earn rebates. Special commercial

projects designed to reduce electrical use can receive rebates based on the percent improvement and the SCORE program helps schools and businesses with expert assistance to evaluate and implement proven power saving technologies.

Savings realized from reduced utility use over time on individual residential and business efficiency upgrades typically exceed the cost of the projects. Utility efficiency rebates are not designed to pay for an entire project but to provide a "kick start," which hopefully can push a business or homeowner to action.

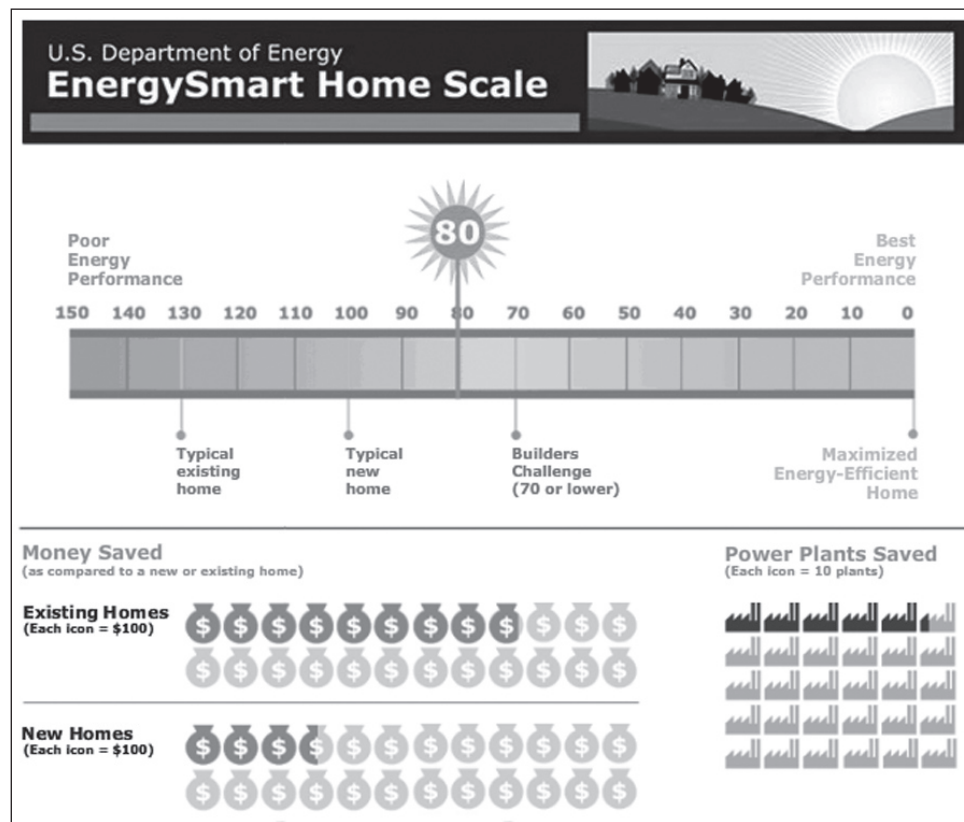
Most of these programs have been in place for more than a year. According to Paul Royalty, El Paso Electric's Energy Efficiency program manager, utilization of the available rebates has been weak up to now. Enhancements to the rebates offered, a new website and an intensified marketing effort are designed to persuade more utility customers to take advantage of the program.

A new addition to the EPESavers program will target new home builders in southern New Mexico. New homes certified to be EPA Energy Star qualified will receive rebates to the builder of up to \$1,000 for each home. This incentive has been available in most other areas of the state for several years and has been successful in decreasing utility use and improving efficiency for new homes.

Incentives are provided based on the Energy Star qualification and the projected energy use of the home as determined by the widely used Home Energy Rating (HER) Index. A home with a HER index from 85 to 71 will receive \$500, 70 to 51 gets \$750 and

“ Homeowners can work with contractors or as do-it-yourselfers to claim rebates for key residential efficiency upgrades ... ”

**Miles Dyson**  
Living Green



very efficient homes scoring 50 or lower earn \$1,000.

The U.S. Department of Energy provides illustrative information (left) on the impact of residential efficiency on the national level ([www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/challenge/escala.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/challenge/escala.html)). According to the DOE EnergySmart Home Scale, a new Energy Star qualified home with a HER index of 80 will save the average owners \$360 every year in utilities compared to a non-Energy Star new home. Notably, the same new 80 HER index home will save nearly \$900 compared to the average existing home in the U.S.

The DOE estimates that if every new home in the country is built to meet Energy Star

and the 80 HER index efficiency standard through the year 2030, the improvement would be enough to eliminate the need for 53 total 500-megawatt power plants. That's a lot of potential power – generated only by efficiency.

To learn more about El Paso Electric's EPESaver rebate program, go to the new website at [www.epesaverdev.com](http://www.epesaverdev.com) or call Billy Massie in Las Cruces at 523-3570.

*Miles Dyson is the owner of Inspection Connection LC - Professional Home Energy Rating and Home Inspection Services in Mesilla Park and can be reached at 202-2457. Dyson is a RESNET certified Home Energy Rater and ASHI certified Home Inspector.*