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The CT Zero Energy Challenge is hosted by the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund www.ctenergyinfo.com

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In school, you shot for that coveted 100 score on your tests. This year, however, there are a number of people shooting for a score of 0, and working very hard at it too.

Starting last year in May, 2009 and going until December 1, 2010, [The Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund](#) is hosting the [CT Zero Energy Challenge](#). The Zero Energy Challenge is a design and build competition for single and multi-family homes built in Connecticut. Participants will be competing for cash prizes, while gaining exposure to media and various forms of technical assistance provided by the Challenge sponsors. The challenge will demonstrate that building a super high efficiency (near zero energy) home is achievable today, while informing on the technology and techniques it takes to get there.

Completed homes will be assigned a performance score based on the presence of energy-efficient features that curb overall energy use. Specifically, the

Challenge will use [RESNET Rating Standards](#) to determine each completed home's [HERS Index](#). The home(s) with the lowest HERS Index will determine the winner(s) of the competition.

Competition winners will be announced on Dec. 8, 2010, and an awards ceremony will take place soon thereafter, where the winners will receive their prizes and their well earned recognition.

RESNET

Residential Energy Services Network, or [RESNET](#), is an organization that was established to develop a national market for home energy rating systems and energy efficient mortgages. RESNET's standards are officially recognized by the federal government for verification of building energy performance for programs including federal tax incentives, the Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR program and the U.S. Department of Energy's Building America Program. These standards are the basis for performing home energy audits to determine energy efficiency, and certifying audit professionals.

Similar to a checkup by your physician, a home energy audit can identify problems with your home by determining where a house is losing energy, identify inefficient appliances, and what

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improvements can be made to improve performance for improved occupant comfort and lower energy bills. The audit can consist of something as simple as a walk-through to identify obvious issues, to a complex evaluation and testing process to determine a home energy rating system (HERS) score.

The HERS Index

The HERS Index

The HERS Index is a scoring system established by the Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) in which a home built to the specifications of the HERS Reference Home (based on the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code) scores a HERS Index of 100, while a net zero energy home scores a HERS Index of 0. The lower a home's HERS Index, the more energy efficient it is in comparison to the HERS Reference Home.



Each 1-point decrease in the HERS Index corresponds to a 1% reduction in energy consumption compared to the HERS Reference Home. Thus a home with a HERS Index of 85 is 15% more energy efficient than the HERS Reference Home and a home with a HERS Index of 80 is 20% more energy efficient.

The CT Zero Energy Challenge

The Goal of the CT Energy Challenge, is to showcase homes that achieve the lowest possible HERS score with cutting edge technology, and best building practices. These will be homes that consume almost no energy, produce energy on-site, provide cleaner air, and use resources as efficiently as possible. The ultimate goal is to make a home that achieves a zero, or even a negative HERS score. A "typical" zero net energy home is designed to exceed minimum code standards. Zero net energy simply means that a home uses no more energy from the electrical grid over a given period than it produces on site. A negative HERS home would actually produce more energy than it consumes, with the possibility of returning that energy to the ecosystem, or the electrical grid.

Competition winners will be announced on Dec. 8, 2010, and an awards ceremony will take place soon thereafter, where the winners will receive their prizes and their well earned recognition.

For more information on the challenge or performing an energy audit on your home, visit www.ctzeroenergychallenge.com. Additional information on performing an energy audit on your home, and how you can improve the efficiency of your own home can be found at the RESNET site at www.resnet.us.

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