

News

Zero Energy Challenge charges builders to improve efficiency

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The Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund is sponsoring the 2010-2011 Zero Energy Challenge competition for designers and builders of new homes in Connecticut.

While the 2009-2010 Challenge is still going strong, the 2010-2011 Challenge will allow another group of builders and homeowners to showcase their projects.

“The response to the current Challenge has been very exciting,” said Rich Steeves, Energy Efficiency Fund chairman. “Several of the homes are complete or nearly so and a number of them are operating at near or below zero energy.”

Steeves said he is confident that the next group of participating new homes will also rise to the challenge and be a model for home builders across the state.

Applications for the challenge are due by July 31. Participants will then be announced and their building progress will be documented on the Zero Energy Challenge web site and through media announcements until their completion, no later than Dec. 1, 2011.

The new residential building projects selected to participate will be competing to achieve the lowest possible energy use.

Each participating home will be ranked in order based on how it performs in four categories.

The overall winner of the challenge will possess the lowest aggregate score, and will receive \$10,000.

In deciding the overall winners, and in the case of a tie, additional consideration will be given to those homes that also use non-energy-related green building features, including those related to water efficiency, materials use, advanced framing, and waste and site management.

Individual category winners will also be recognized and awarded \$5,000 cash prizes for lowest overall HERS (home energy rating system) Index; Lowest HERS Index without renewable technologies; most affordable project (cost/square foot); and lowest projected annual operating cost.

Participating utilities are The Connecticut Light and Power Co., The United Illuminating Co., Connecticut Natural Gas Corp., Southern Connecticut Gas Co. and Yankee Gas Services Co.

The homes being entered in the Zero Energy Challenge must be built in the service territory of one of the participating utilities and must be a customer of that utility.

Eligible homes include any home or unit about to be, or in the process of development in Connecticut.

Complete details on eligibility, the rating system, how to enter and required documentation can be found on the Connecticut Zero Energy

Challenge web site, www.CTZeroEnergyChallenge.com.

Purpose of the Challenge is to showcase and promote builders and developers of highly energy-efficient homes (near zero energy).

The Energy Efficiency Fund promotes efficient energy use, helps residents and businesses save on their electric and natural gas bills, advances economic development, reduces electric demand and helps reduce air pollution.

Connecticut's energy efficiency programs are funded by a charge on customers' utility bills and administered by the state's electric and gas utilities including Connecticut Light and Power, United Illuminating, Yankee Gas, Connecticut Natural Gas and Southern Connecticut Gas.

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