

WATER CONSERVATION

## RESNET Develops Residential Water Efficiency Rating System

The Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) is set to launch the Water Efficiency Rating Index (WER), a first-of-its-kind metric that will show consumers, at a glance, how efficiently a home uses water.

The index assigns a numeric score to a house based on its water usage performance. It was developed by RESNET, which joined forces with the Natural Resources Defense Council and a coalition of water efficiency experts, home builders, environmental organizations, and home energy professionals. Leading RESNET's efforts to establish the WER Index is a committee that includes Jacob Atalla of KB Home, Ed Osann of the Natural Resources Defense Council, and Jonah Schein of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency WaterSense Program.



According to RESNET, the WER Index will work in the same way as the Home Energy Rating System (HERS). The baseline score of the WER Index will also be 100, with a lower score indicating a more water-efficient home.

"A numeric water score will help homebuyers understand the water efficiency of a house the same way car shoppers use fuel economy labels to inform their purchases," Osann said in a statement by RESNET. "The score will help expand green building programs and encourage new rebates and tax incentives for water-efficient products in new and existing homes. Consumers who 'know the score' will save water and money when they buy a house or renovate their existing home."

"In many parts of the nation, water is fast becoming an ever increasingly expensive commodity," said Steve Baden, executive director of RESNET, in the statement. "At least one county in every state in this country experiences a drought each year. There is clearly a need for a system to rate a home's efficiency in water use. The WER Index Score will allow homebuyers to know how efficiently water is being used in the homes they are considering buying. It will also provide an opportunity for home builders to monetize the efficiency of their homes in the same fashion that the HERS Index does for energy efficiency."

An American National Standards Institute consensus standard development process will be used in developing the new rating system. RESNET hopes to have the WER Index ready for use across the U.S. by the end of 2015. **PB**

