

Results of the Electronic Ballot of the RESNET Board of Directors on Adopting the February 9, 2007, Draft of the National Energy Audit Framework Recommended by the RESNET Task Force on National Standard for Energy Audits of Existing Homes

The following is the results of the electronic ballot on adopting the National Energy Audit Framework (Attachment A):

Shall the RESNET Board of Directors adopt the February 9, 2007 draft of the National Energy Audit Framework recommended by the RESNET National Standard for Energy Audits of Existing Homes?

Yes (12)

No (0)

Abstain (4)

Not Voting (5)

Steve Byers
Richard Faesy
Philip Fairey
Thomas Hamilton
Michael Holtz
Mark Jansen
Galo LeBron
Lee O'Neal
Kelly Parker
Daran Wastchak
Douglas Walter
Barb Yankie

Eric Borsting
Ken Fonorow
Bruce Harley
C.T. Loyd

Ben Adams
David Goldstein
Joseph Lstiburek
Greg Nahn
David Wilson

The RESNET Board adopted the February 9, 2007 Draft of the National Energy Audit Framework

Attachment A

To: RESNET Board of Directors

From: RESNET National Standards for Energy Audits of Existing Homes Task Force

Date: February 9, 2007

Re: White Paper on a National Energy Audit Framework

Introduction

The RESNET National Standards for Energy Audits of Existing Homes was created to develop recommendations to the RESNET Board of Directors on developing national standards for energy audits. The task force's goal is to recommend a set of rules and best practices for persons who want to label themselves as an energy auditor and to provide national guidance on how an energy auditor approaches a home and conducts the needed data collection and analysis. The end result is intended to properly inform a homeowner and lead them to invest in cost effective energy improvements to the home.

In July, 2006 RESNET conducted a survey of the RESNET National Standards for Home Energy Audits of Existing Homes Task Force about what skills and experience should be required to conduct energy audits of existing homes. The survey found a broad diversity among task force members on whether energy audits should be less, the same or more sophisticated than a home energy rating.

An analysis of the response and comments submitted on the survey has led the drafting committee to conclude that all points of view expressed have merit and that energy auditing should be defined as a process, and not an event. This is particularly important considering all the governmental and programmatic entities that have existing definitions of, or licensing requirements for, "audits."

RESNET National Standards for Energy Audits of Existing Homes Task Force recommends that the national energy audit process should be a series of steps that could lead a homeowner to invest in cost-effective measures that would improve their home's energy performance while also looking at any major health and safety issues.

The knowledge of building science and building performance has advanced to such a degree that the main barrier is not technology, information base, nor procedures, but rather an economic issue of convincing a homeowner to invest in the process, combined with a history of free or low cost, but ineffective, "audit" products. Unless provided with a compelling cause or subsidies, a large majority of American homeowners are not willing to invest several hundred dollars to

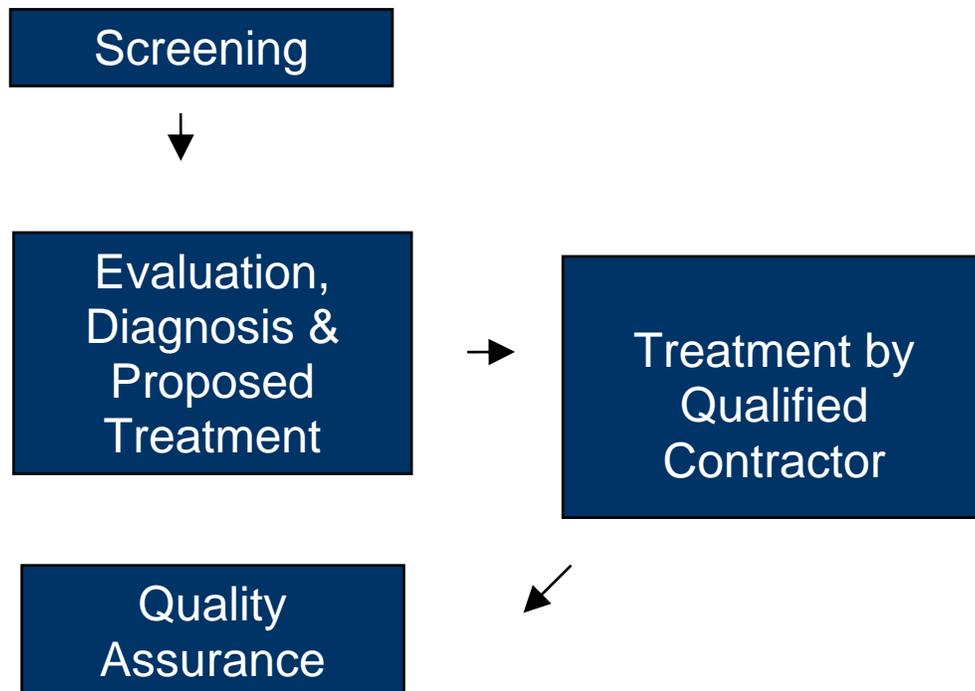
determine the performance of their homes and learn how to improve the performance.

The medical industry has faced a similar problem. Many Americans are not willing to get a regular check up despite its obvious benefits. All too often symptoms are ignored until they become so bad that an emergency room visit is warranted. To address this dilemma the medical community created a process to catch illnesses early. The base is a low cost/no cost screening at a mall, health fair, workplace, or other easily accessible venue where individuals receive services such as blood pressure and cholesterol testing along with information on exercise and healthy lifestyles. If the tests are outside of the normal range, the person is urged to see a doctor for a more thorough checkup. If the doctor's checkup reveals a serious concern, the patient is recommended to a specialist who will diagnose the causes and prescribe treatment.

Framework for National Home Energy Audits of Existing Homes

RESNET National Standards for Energy Audits of Existing Homes Task Force recommends that a national framework for energy audits of existing homes have the following elements:

Proposed National Energy Audit Framework



This proposed framework does not presuppose that a homeowner must enter the process at the beginning, or can not immediately jump to the evaluation or diagnosis level of analysis. The process does not restrict a person/company from providing any or all of the services defined in the process, or from bundling features into a single home visit.

It should also be recognized that there is a clear difference between an energy audit and a Building Performance Institute (BPI) Comprehensive Home Assessment. The BPI Comprehensive Home Assessments entails a wider view of a home's performance outside of the energy features that is the focus of this energy audit framework.

Features of a Framework for National Home Energy Audits of Existing Homes

The following are the features of the national home energy audit framework. These features should not be considered as separate steps that a homeowner must go through but rather a definition of features involved within a national framework. The framework does not require that there are separate steps between the evaluation and diagnosis of a home. It simply recognizes there are different skills and expertise needed to complete the two features. A single person could have the skills for both features and complete the activities in a single step.

The process will also need to ensure that data collected through the screening or evaluation features are readily available to the homeowner so that the person will not be required the additional time and expense for the qualified contractor to collect on its own.

Screening

This would be the first step in the national energy audit process. This step would serve as a filter in which the level of the commitment by the homeowner, and the overall energy performance of the home, is determined. This initial step could also collect some of the data further analysis will require, and generally identify symptoms of home performance problems. Information could be provided on low cost/no cost measures that could be installed (generally by the homeowner) to save energy. The screening process would be referred to the next level if it is determined that the home needs further analysis, and the homeowner is motivated enough to invest in further analysis and making recommended improvements. The screener would educate the homeowner on the benefits of a whole house approach to improving the home's energy performance. There needs to be a defined set of recommendations the person who is conducting the screening can make. Many home performance improvements can only be recommended after a detailed analysis of the home by a qualified person.

Evaluation

Evaluation would involve a review of the data collected from the screening, discussion of further measurement and/or performance testing, pre-work safety testing, and an analysis of the home's performance.

Diagnosis and Proposed Treatment

Diagnosis is the more sophisticated analysis that determines the final scope of work. In this step, the professional would pinpoint the cause of the problems and propose specific actions to remedy the problem. The homeowner would then be provided with a referral to a qualified contractor to carry out the required treatment.

Qualified Contactor

Armed with the analysis conducted through the audit process a qualified contractor would make the needed upgrades. This process would also involve post-testing the home after the improvements are made, and any required post-work safety checks.

The contractor is actually out of the energy audit process. This feature is only included to make the point in which the framework goal is intended to create an awareness by the customer to help move them through the analysis required to make an informed decision and lead them to a qualified contractor. Contractors should be able to continue to create their own markets for their services without requiring an energy audit.

Building Performance Institute (BPI) has developed the national training and accreditation process for defining a properly trained and qualified building performance contractor. BPI's standards and accreditation process provides the national third-party endorsement for homeowners looking for qualified contractors.

Quality Assurance

Improvements are inspected for quality and the house is tested out.

Definitions

Besides an agreement to the framework and features of energy audits, a national energy audit process would entail a set of definitions to be adopted by the task force. This set of definitions is required so that in future discussions there is clarity to what is being proposed and adopted.

Next Steps

Once an agreement is reached on the national framework and features of the process and common terminology, the task force can begin the process of addressing the following issues:

- What actually is involved in each of the steps in the process?
- Who can conduct the analysis required in each of the steps?
- What is the experience/knowledge base is required for each of the steps?
- How do health and safety concerns fit in with each of the steps?
- What are the quality assurance and ethics considerations?
- How will each of the steps relate to current RESNET and BPI processes?
- What disclosures of financial interests are required?
- Should a label be given to homes that undergo improvements?

The goal of the effort is to not duplicate nor disrupt current BPI and RESNET procedures or standards. This proposal does not prejudge who will accredit/certify the individuals in each of the steps in the process, other than the contractors that will make the improvements. There could be dual paths as long as there is compatibility between the standards. This issue will be addressed in a later phase of the effort and discussions among RESNET, BPI, sponsors of the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program, and other stakeholders.