



Setting the Standards for
Home Energy Efficiency

RESNET 2014 Priorities

Adopted by the RESNET Board of Directors on October 22, 2013

- **Ensure the National Consistency of HERS Index Scores**

The RESNET HERS Index Score is fast becoming a mainstream in the national housing market. Builders rely upon it to market the energy performance of their homes; code jurisdictions are adopting a HERS Index Score as a compliance option to their building energy codes; and consumers are using the scores in comparing the energy efficiency of homes they are considering purchasing. With this trend there is a need to ensure the national consistency in the ways homes are rated and scored. In 2014 RESNET activities to ensure this consistency will focus on:

- More effective quality assurance oversight
- An empirical based practical test for home energy raters
- Greater consistency within the home energy rating software tools.

- **Work with the Building Industry, Code Advocates, Rating Industry and Local Code Jurisdictions to Incorporate the HERS Index Score as an Option in Building Energy Code Compliance**

A number of state and local code jurisdictions from Idaho to Massachusetts have incorporated the RESNET HERS Index as a compliance option in their building energy codes. The State of Arkansas is proposing that all new homes built in the state be issued a label based on the home's HERS Index Score. In 2014 RESNET will continue to work with builders, raters, code advocates and local jurisdictions to incorporate the HERS Index, conducted by certified RESNET Home Energy Raters, into their codes.

The International Code Council adopted a home energy rating score option for the 2015 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). The new option will result in increased energy performance of homes while giving greater flexibility to builders.

Most code jurisdictions have balked at adopting the 2012 IECC due to opposition from home builders. With the greater flexibility in the 2015

code, there is an opportunity for states to “leapfrog” from the 2009 version of the code to 2015. It is proposed that an alliance of RESNET, the housing industry and energy advocacy groups would undertake advocacy programs to have states adopt the 2015 IECC.

The RESNET Strategic Plan’s Goal #2 is “By 2018 the RESNET standards for the performance testing of homes and the HERS Index as a compliance option will be incorporated into the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)”.

The 2012 version of the IECC requires that air tightness and duct leakage testing be undertaken on all new homes. The IECC does not specify, however, the protocols to be used in conducting these tests. RESNET is in the process of developing an ANSI standard on the protocols for air and duct leakage testing. When the standard is adopted, RESNET will work with builders and code advocates to be incorporated into the IECC.

- **Continue to Mainstream the RESNET HERS Index in the Housing Market**

An emerging trend in the new homes market is homebuilders differentiating their homes by having their homes energy rated and marketing their homes’ HERS Index Score. The RESNET national home energy rating standards have become the industry’s national standard for measuring and marketing a home’s energy performance. America’s largest builders and over two hundred local builders have entered into agreements with RESNET to have their homes energy rated. In the RESNET Strategic Plan, Goal #1 is “by 2018 a majority of new homes sold in the U.S. will have been issued a HERS Index Score”. In 2014 RESNET will continue to recruit builders to make the HERS Index commitment and undertake a marketing effort to educate consumers about the HERS Index so they will ask for the HERS Index Score of the home they are considering to buy. It is expected that this momentum will create a market pressure for more builders to have their homes energy rated and that consumers will ask for the HERS Index of homes. It is expected that this will affect the existing homes market also with the HERS Index becoming the “MPG” equivalent for homes for sale.

In states from Washington to Maine local Multiple Listing Services (MLS) are including the HERS Index Score in the listing of a home for sale. Including the HERS Index Score in the MLS is a significant push to the mainstreaming of the HERS Index Score in the housing market. REALTORS® rely on the MLS to guide potential homebuyers and appraisers use the service to locate comparable properties. Having this information will make it easier for builders to market their HERS Index Scores and appraisers to calculate the market value of rated homes.

- **Consumer Awareness Campaign on the HERS Index Score**

The RESNET Strategic Plan's Goal #6 is, "By 2015 consumers awareness of the HERS Index Score will increase through builders marketing their homes' score and through increased social media exposure". In 2014 RESNET will continue to work with builders to educate consumers of their homes' HERS Index Score. RESNET will support this effort through an aggressive social media campaign urging homebuyers to ask for the HERS Index Score of the homes they are considering.

- **Advocate for Policy and Legislation to Foster the Financing of the Improved Energy Performance of Homes**

Until sustainable and affordable financing is secured, increased home energy performance will never realize its potential. This is particularly true with the existing homes market. The most effective tool to improve existing home energy performance is to have sustainable and affordable financing. With the pressures on the federal budget, this financing will not be provided through appropriations. A number of initiatives were introduced in Congress including the SAVE Act, extension of the residential energy efficiency tax credits, electric cooperative on-bill financing, and a performance based tax credit for improving the energy performance of existing homes. In 2014 RESNET will continue to be effective in working with its strategic allies in advocating the introduction and passage of these initiatives. The RESNET Strategic Plan's Goal #3 is to have the "SAVE Act Enacted and Implemented by 2018". RESNET will continue to advocate for the enactment of this critical piece of legislation.

In addition, RESNET, in partnership with its strategic allies will continue to advocate for effective performance federal tax credits for both new and existing homes.

- **Maintain RESNET's Financial Sustainability**

RESNET Strategic Plan's Goal #4 is, "Continue to maintain RESNET's Financial Sustainability through 2018". The economy is still slowly recovering from the great 2008 recession which is affecting the nation's housing industry. In addition, the federal government is facing a critical deficit. This means there is little hope for appropriations to foster home energy performance. These conditions present a challenge for RESNET to maintain its current services and position itself to meet the new opportunities.

RESNET's 2014 budget has a balance of revenue enhancements through wise investments of its reserve account reductions to maintain its financial sustainability while growing the rating industry in these challenging times.

The 2014 budget request also includes funding to develop a plan for the monetizing of the asset of the RESNET National Building Registry.