

Seal it up

The new benchmark: guaranteed bills

How would you like to have your monthly heating and cooling bill cut by two thirds, then guaranteed to boot? Here's more proof that area builders are stepping up their sustainability game: Local green builder Lithic Construction (540-718-3990) is offering guaranteed energy bills on new houses built according to specs from Texas-based engineering firm Energy-Wise, which will recommend **insulation and HVAC systems guaranteed to heat and cool a 3,400-square-foot home for no more than \$74 a month.** The initial agreement is for two years and can be renewed with maintenance requirements such as changing heat pump filters every two months.

One major key to structural energy efficiency is the insulation. Fiberglass products are cheap

at the outset, but those loosely packed fibers let a lot of bucks filter through. Newer foam insulation costs more up front but with a consistency more like angel food cake than angel hair, it's much more efficient at trapping heated and cooled air inside where you want it.

You can go one step further and cut out polluting petroleum products by using soy-based foam that does not come from imported oil. Anchor Insulation (295-9675) installs BioBased insulation and has partnered with Lithic in the production of two recently completed EnergyWise certified homes. One, at 604 Monticello Ave., is currently under construction and boasts a number of green features, from salvaged materials to Marmoleum floors.—Cathy Clary



Lithic Construction's Ned Ormsby shows off soy-based insulation that'll help this new home stay energy-efficient.