



## **Rater News Fall 2021**

Welcome to the Fall 2021 issue of **Rater News**

Brought to you by the Washington State University Energy Program

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### **Program News**

#### **WSU Energy Program and Puget Sound Energy Partnership**

Consistent with our mission to encourage energy efficiency in residential new construction homes, the Washington State University (WSU) Energy Program is excited to announce our supporting partnership role with Puget Sound Energy (PSE) as part of their ongoing [High Performance Homes Incentives](#) (Performance Path) for builders.

Initially started in 2018, Puget Sound Energy provides up to \$2,000 in PSE Incentives for homes that are at least 10 percent more efficient than state codes for home within the PSE electric and/or natural gas service area and use a PSE fuel for space and water heating. The program uses independent third party Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET)-certified Home Energy Rating Software (HERS) Raters recognized by PSE. Our integral role as a partner will be to ensure the accuracy of work performed by HERS Raters through randomly selected Quality Assurance (QA) Services. The work will be consistent with the activities that the WSU Energy Program has been performing since 2005 as a recognized RESNET Service Provider. We are truly excited about supporting PSE and their selected raters. For additional details about the High Performance Homes Incentives, including contact information, visit: <https://www.pse.com/en/rebates/new-construction-grants/high-performance-homes>

#### **ENERGY STAR 2021 Partner of the Year Award Profiles in Leadership**

Each year, EPA honors a group of businesses and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to protecting the environment through superior energy efficiency achievements. Whether a first time Partner of the Year winner or a Sustained Excellence winner for many

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years, these ENERGY STAR award-winning partners from across the country demonstrate that delivering real climate solutions makes good business sense and strengthens our economy. Among this year's 206 winners are more than 150 organizations that ENERGY STAR is recognizing for their year-over-year commitment to energy efficiency through the program's highest honor: ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year – Sustained Excellence Award. Included in this year's list is *New Tradition Homes in Vancouver, WA* - one of the many builders you as raters work with to promote energy efficiency in new residential construction. "[New Tradition Homes](#)", a regional homebuilder, constructed over 200 ENERGY STAR certified homes in 2020, for a total of nearly 2,400 since joining the program in 2004. Key 2020 accomplishments include:

- *Increasing the energy efficiency of its homes by moving ductwork inside conditioned spaces for all new floorplans.*
- *Redesigning model home and sales centers to include new ENERGY STAR program informational wall displays and co-branded collateral, call-out cards, and a cut-out wall display with a "behind the scenes" look at energy-efficient building practices.*
- *Introducing "Simply Smarter Home," a package of smart home technology aimed at increasing energy efficiency in every home.*
- *Educating homebuyers about their ENERGY STAR certified home post-sale and surveying them about the importance of ENERGY STAR certification and energy efficiency in their purchasing decision.*
- *Training all new staff members about the benefits of ENERGY STAR certification and other green building requirements as part of their onboarding process."*

Read more about partners of the year at:

[https://www.energystar.gov/about/awards/2021\\_energy\\_star\\_award\\_winners](https://www.energystar.gov/about/awards/2021_energy_star_award_winners)

## News from Jonathan Jones

Good Day Northwest Raters!



AXIS is now accepting REM 16.1. Please make sure that the homes you are submitting are using the correct version based on permit date. REM/Rate™ has a list of versions that correspond to the [permit dates](#) that are acceptable. 16.1 is approved for tax credits; 16.2 is in the process. AXIS is currently working on 16.2 and 16.3 versions of REM ready for exporting to the database.

Modeler designations are now live, and we expect to have a virtual class available in January. We will try to have an in-person class as well. Reminder that all field inspections are required to have an RFI license and, by the beginning of next year, all modelers will be required to be licensed.

Common QA mistakes found:

- Adding R-10 insulation to the water heater tank. The question asks about additional insulation not installed by the manufacturer – not the insulation value of the tank as purchased.

- Wrong permit date (try to be as accurate as possible as this will influence which RESNET standard addendums you are required to meet).
- Hourly simulation is required as of any home permitted after January 1, 2021.

## **Professional Development**

### ***Reminder from Gary Kaufman to all RESNET Conference 2021 Attendees — Earn 18 Professional Development Credits through the 2021 RESNET Virtual Conference Platform***

To earn 18 Professional Development Credits, raters must view the three days of “live sessions” as well as nine video-on-demand sessions available at <https://resnet.virtualbyvario.com/>. Once registered, you will have access and the ability to earn the credits until December 31, 2021. For verification of units after submission of the [PD/CEU Form](#), visit the “Resources” section [here](#). If you have any questions, contact Gary at: [NWRater@energy.wsu.edu](mailto:NWRater@energy.wsu.edu)

### **2021 ENERGY STAR Partner Meeting Webinar Series**

The virtual 2021 ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction Partner Meeting will kick-off on Tuesday, September 21 and will run through Thursday, October 7. Join the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction team to get all the latest updates about the program and what to expect in the future.

#### **[ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction Programs: The Year in Review/The Year Ahead](#)**

EPA's ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction Team: Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Join us as we kick off the 2021 ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction Partner Meeting Webinar Series. This session will provide updates on the program’s key initiatives and successes over the past year and look ahead to what is on the horizon for the remainder of 2021, 2022 and beyond.

#### **[ENERGY STAR Marketing & Communications](#)**

Marta Montoro, EPA: Thursday, September 23, 2021

Earlier this year, the ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction program launched a new look and feel for our marketing and outreach materials, along with a paid media campaign. This webinar will provide an overview of what EPA has seen as a result of the new materials and campaign and provide an overview of what is coming next. You will also get a sneak peek of the video that we have created to celebrate the program’s two million+ home milestone. You will not want to miss the celebration.

#### **[Raising the Bar: Advancing the Versions of ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction](#)**

Dean Gamble and Rebecca Hudson, EPA: Monday, September 27, 2021

Over the last 10 years, national model energy codes have advanced significantly. Though not adopted in all states, these codes have shown that higher levels of performance are achievable and cost-effective. Even in states where code adoption has lagged, builders’ construction practices have continued to advance. With this context, attend this session to learn how we intend to raise the bar for our Single-Family New Home and Multifamily New Construction program requirements, moving the industry forward in states with both lagging and leading codes.

### [ENERGY STAR: The Decade Ahead Starts Now](#)

EPA's ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction Team: Wednesday, September 29, 2021

Meeting the challenges of climate change will require extensive and systematic improvements across the economy. EPA believes that in the residential sector, this will require moving newly constructed homes rapidly towards higher levels of efficiency, demand responsive heat pumps for space and water heating, and EV charging capability. Attend this session to learn about the proposed new certification and recognition opportunity from the ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction program that will help EPA and our partners prove that it is possible to build the home of tomorrow, today.

### [A New Day for Building ENERGY STAR](#)

Dean Gamble, Elliot Seibert, and Rebecca Hudson, EPA: Thursday, September 30, 2021

With the advent of HVAC grading, ENERGY STAR offers unprecedented value for builders and owners alike. Attend this session to get a fresh perspective on the seven essential features that certification adds above and beyond a good energy rating and learn about new resources for convincing builders to join or rejoin the program.

### [Office Hours](#)

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE): Tuesday, October 5, 2021

Reflect on the program updates and future plans presented in the first five sessions of the ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction Partner Meeting (ESRPM). Come prepared with any questions or discussion items that you have for the ENERGY STAR Residential New Construction team.

### [DOE Zero Energy Ready Homes and the Year Ahead](#)

U.S. DOE : Thursday, October 7, 2021

“Zero Energy Ready Homes” have grown from a niche product unfamiliar to many, to a standard offering in the marketplace found in stretch codes, utility programs, and affordable housing programs. However, we are still in the early stages of the journey to zero. The U.S. DOE Zero Energy Ready Homes program is moving to Version 2 in 2022, which will incorporate more proven innovations and establish ZERH as the stepping off point for future zero emissions homes. At the same time, Zero Energy Ready Homes have truly reached a tipping point with major commitments from large production builders, affordable housing developers, and military housing projects. Finally, the program is launching the ZERH-Multifamily spec to serve as the next step for Energy Star Multifamily New Construction builders. During this session, you are invited to learn more about these exciting program advancements and share your input and questions.

## **Codes and Residential Code Training**

### **2021 Oregon Residential Energy Code Summary**

On April 1, 2021, the Oregon Division of Codes and Standards adopted the 2021 Oregon Residential Specialty Code (ORSC) that will become mandatory October 1, 2021. This document provides an

overview of the significant changes to the energy code. It also provides resource links to the new code and available training — Created by Earth Advantage in cooperation with the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, 2021:

[https://d1o0i0v5q5lp8h.cloudfront.net/earadv/live/assets/documents/Publications/2021%20OR%20Residential%20Energy%20Code%20Summary\\_NEEA%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf](https://d1o0i0v5q5lp8h.cloudfront.net/earadv/live/assets/documents/Publications/2021%20OR%20Residential%20Energy%20Code%20Summary_NEEA%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf)

### **Oregon Residential Energy Code**

Learn about available options and best practices to meet and exceed the energy code that becomes mandatory October 1, 2021. These online courses provide helpful code compliance and above-code information and are available anytime on the BetterBuiltNW online training portal. For more information, see BetterBuilt NW's [Training Page](#).

### **2018 WA State Residential Energy Code**

It is not too late to get up to speed on the 2018 WSEC-R code changes that took effect February 1, 2021. Keep pace with code changes via the following newly released, no-cost trainings and videos that are available online anytime. To access these and see a complete list of 2018 WSEC-R trainings and videos, visit the WSU Energy Program [Training Page](#).

### **Consumer Education and Marketing Materials**

#### **RESNET's Portal to Locate a HERS® Rated Home**

Have you questioned whether a home has been HERS Rated and its HERS Index Score?

To answer this question, RESNET has posted a portal on its website that will allow anyone to search whether a home has been HERS® rated by a certified HERS Rater, and its confirmed HERS Rating Score in the RESNET National Registry. To access the RESNET portal go to:

<https://www.hersindex.com/hers-rated-home-search/>

### **Home Energy Rating Software and Equipment**

**Reminder:** Manometers, blower doors, and Duct Blasters® MUST be recalibrated at least every two years – with supporting documentation submitted to the WSU Energy Program via AXIS. Blower doors and Duct Blasters® can be recalibrated in the field. Jonathan Jones can instruct you, or provide service for your equipment for \$100 during a field inspection. Manometers must be recalibrated by a qualified lab. Both [Retrotec](#) and [The Energy Conservatory \(TEC\)](#) provide these services.

*Pro Tip:* TEC currently offers raters the chance to send in their old DG-700 manometers and get a \$300.00 discount on a new DG-1000. The DG-1000 uses both Blue Tooth and Wi-Fi.



Axis tracks your equipment recalibrations and will inform you when it is necessary to recalibrate. Failure to recalibrate can lead to suspension from the program.

### **Five Questions to Ask Yourself When Choosing a Duct Tester**

Duct leakage is a large contributor to comfort issues, indoor air quality and energy consumption in a home. Typical duct systems lose 25 to 40 percent of the heating or cooling energy generated by the central furnace, heat pump, or air conditioner. Because of this, more states are adopting and enforcing duct tightness requirements for new construction and new system installations. Duct testers are the tools used to measure and expose air leaks in a duct system. It is a calibrated fan with a high-precision manometer that attaches to the duct system, usually at a return grille or at the air handler—Jack Duffy, *Retrotec*, August 27, 2021: <https://retrotec.com/blog/post/5-questions-to-ask-yourself-when-choosing-a-duct-tester/>

## **Newsbriefs**

### **From EPA Indoor airPLUS:**

The Indoor airPLUS program continues to see growth through the second quarter of 2021, with the most labeled homes reported in a single quarter to date. With recent commitments from production builders across the country, the total Indoor airPLUS labeled homes for the second quarter represents a more than 60 percent increase over the first quarter of 2021 and is more than double the total for the second quarter of 2020.

Indoor airPLUS welcomed 88 new builder partners and six new Rater partners in the second quarter of 2021. See where these new partners are located on the map to the right.



To all our new builders and raters — the Indoor airPLUS team is interested in connecting with you. Feel free to reach out at [indoor\\_airplus@epa.gov](mailto:indoor_airplus@epa.gov) to schedule some time to talk as you work on your first Indoor airPLUS homes. For more information: <https://mailchi.mp/icf.com/q3-2020-brag-1835286?e=0f7ee34864>

### **A HERS Rating for Water Use**

RESNET's Ryan Meres offers insight into a program that rates homes on water usage efficiency and explains why it can be a factor even for builders where water is plentiful. Home builders already wrestle with the waning supply of land and skilled labor; now fresh water availability is becoming another constraint. As headlines about drought and aging infrastructure grab the public's attention, RESNET is several months into launching HERS H2O, a system that grades a home's water-use efficiency. The program is rolling out in tandem with the second version of the Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense program, which certifies water-saving products and services—Mike Beirne, *ProBuilder*, August 3, 2021: <https://www.probuilder.com/interview-meres>

## **BTO Announces its Buildings Energy Efficiency Frontiers & Innovation Technologies (BENEFIT) Selections**

U.S. DOE announced nearly \$83 million in funding to 44 projects that will lower Americans' energy bills by investing in new energy-efficient building technologies, construction practices, and the U.S. buildings-sector workforce. U.S. DOE's Building Technologies Office competitively selected these projects from its Buildings Energy Efficiency Frontiers & Innovation Technologies (BENEFIT) funding opportunity announcement. Projects were selected under two topic areas: Building Technology Research, Development, and Field Validation; and topic area 2, Advanced Building Construction... Under Topic 2, Subtopic Advanced Workforce for Advanced Technology, WSU was selected to develop a curriculum on the design and construction of high-performing, energy-efficient residential buildings. The curriculum will provide students with an interdisciplinary grounding in building science, and address skill gaps in efficient building construction identified by U.S. DOE. For more information see:



<https://www.energy.gov/eere/buildings/articles/bto-announces-its-buildings-energy-efficiency-frontiers-innovation>

## **ICC and RESNET to Develop Standard on Remote Virtual Inspections for Energy and Water Performance in Buildings**

The International Code Council, the leading global source of model codes and standards and building safety solutions, and RESNET, a national standards-making body for energy efficiency ratings and certification systems will continue their long history of collaboration by developing a new American National Standards Institute (ANSI) candidate standard on remote virtual inspections (RVI) for the energy and water use performance of buildings. The standard would be co-sponsored by the Code Council and RESNET and developed using RESNET's ANSI accredited procedures as an American National Standard by ANSI. For more information on RVI, the Code Council Inspections (RVI), which will be the foundation for the development of the new consensus standard—Read more and download [Recommended Practices for Remote Virtual Inspections \(RVI\)—ICC News Release, August 18, 2021: https://www.iccsafe.org/about/periodicals-and-newsroom/international-code-council-and-resnet-to-develop-standard-on-remote-virtual-inspections-for-energy-and-water-performance-in-buildings/](https://www.iccsafe.org/about/periodicals-and-newsroom/international-code-council-and-resnet-to-develop-standard-on-remote-virtual-inspections-for-energy-and-water-performance-in-buildings/)

## **House Democrats Group Urge Leadership for Clean Energy Tax Credits in Bill**

A group of 186 House Democrats sent a letter to House leadership urging the inclusion of extension of clean energy tax credits in the forthcoming reconciliation bill, stating, “As we advance legislation to rebuild and renew America’s infrastructure, we encourage you to continue your commitment to combating the climate crisis by including critical clean energy, energy efficiency, and clean transportation tax incentives in the upcoming infrastructure package.”—Read more and download letter at RESNET, August 30, 2021: <https://www.resnet.us/articles/house-dems-group-urge-leadership-for-clean-energy-tax-credits-in-bill/>

## **International Code Council steps up efforts for more widespread adoption of 2021 IECC**

The International Code Council (ICC) is aiming to convince more government officials to adopt the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC)—the latest version of the code. The ICC has developed a toolkit describing the benefits of the 2021 IECC, including energy savings of 9.4 percent and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of 8.7 percent. ICC will step up outreach efforts to promote the newest code version—Peter Fabris, *Building Design+Construction*, September 8, 2021: <http://www.bdcnetwork.com/intl-code-council-steps-efforts-more-widespread-adoption-2021-iecc>

## **Upcoming Events & Training Opportunities**

[Greenbuild International Conference + Expo](#): September 21-23, 2021: San Diego, CA

Greenbuild is the world's largest conference and expo for green building professionals worldwide to learn cutting-edge solutions to improve resilience, sustainability and quality of life in our buildings, cities and communities.

[RESNET 2022 Conference](#) February 21-23, 2022: Austin, TX

RESNET is dedicated to providing learning and networking experience where everyone can feel safe and comfortable. The #RESNET2022 Conference will be a two-part event: An in person gathering that will be re-imagined, exclusive, and exciting at the Hilton in Austin, TX February 19-21, 2022, and an online event built upon the success of the 2021 Virtual Conference for two days, March 10-11, 2022. To learn more, visit the RESNET home page and check under the conference dropdown. Room blocks are now open.



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Your WSU Energy Program Provider Team

Jonathan Jones, Gary Kaufman and Anne Whitney can all be reached via email at:

[NWrater@energy.wsu.edu](mailto:NWrater@energy.wsu.edu)

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**Rater News**

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We welcome rater's questions, comments or ideas for articles. Please send to: [NWrater@energy.wsu.edu](mailto:NWrater@energy.wsu.edu)