



# LEVERAGING EPS AS A SALES TOOL

## SAY HELLO TO EPS

*EPS is an energy performance scoring system created by Energy Trust that helps buyers assess a home's energy consumption, utility costs and carbon footprint. The score can be applied to verified homes and can accompany other home energy certifications such as LEED® for Homes, Earth Advantage® and ENERGY STAR®.*



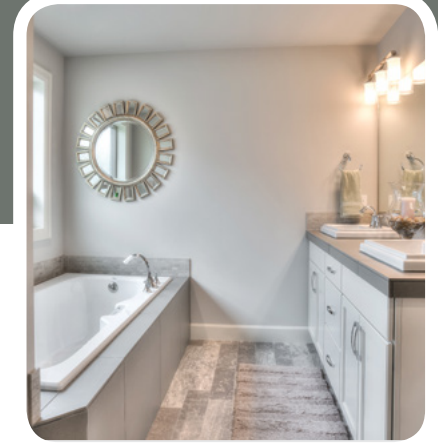
## FRAME THE VALUE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Your customers are looking for value when choosing a newly built home. Beyond wanting quality at an affordable price, today's savvy shopper is asking, "How much will this house cost me to operate over time?" Home energy costs are the largest operating expense after property taxes, according to the National Association of Home Builders.

To answer the call for low operating costs and long-term value, many builders are constructing new homes with a range of energy-efficient features. Energy Trust of Oregon's EPS™ helps trade ally builders frame the value of the energy-efficient features they include in their homes. EPS—which estimates a home's energy consumption, utility costs and carbon

footprint—is based on many factors, such as the home's size, insulation level, air leakage, heating and cooling systems, major appliances, lighting and water heating. To determine the score, a third-party verifier analyzes a home's features and construction techniques, including testing air leakage. The lower the score, the more efficient the home.

Today, builders across Oregon increasingly use EPS as a marketing tool to distinguish their high-efficiency homes from other homes on the market. Real estate professionals rely on it as a simple way to show buyers a home's estimated operating costs. And buyers appreciate the peace of mind that comes with a home that is tested and verified for quality and performance.



## LEGEND HOMES

### Dare to compare

Legend Homes, founded in 1965, has built energy-efficient homes in the Portland metro area since 2003, continuously improving its building practices. In 2010, the company introduced its EarthSmart series of homes, each of which earn an EPS and are built for energy efficiency, durability, sustainability and occupant health. Using energy performance as a marketing hook, Legend positions itself as a leader in building high-quality homes that offer affordable sustainability.

### Showing how savings stack up

Legend, an Energy Trust trade ally, features top-rated EPS homes on its website and displays EPS information in each of its move-in ready EarthSmart homes. To further leverage the value of energy savings, Legend developed an Energy Bill Guarantee for each home to assure buyers that combined gas and electricity bills will not exceed a stated monthly average during the first year. The guarantee varies depending on the home's EPS, square footage and amenities. For most homes in Legend communities, the average is \$99 or less in gas and electricity costs per month.

Along with the guarantee, Legend provides a detailed "Dare to Compare" reference sheet of EarthSmart features for each home it builds. The features, ranging from 95 percent efficient gas furnaces to whole-home ventilation systems, are compared to features typical in other homes available nearby.

"The comparison makes buyers aware that not all new homes are the same," said Krista Boyd, marketing director, Legend Homes. "EPS helps us show them the difference. While price, location and features are still what draw buyers to our homes, the energy bill guarantee is a closing tool."

Legend's sales and marketing strategy centers on EarthSmart messaging across all channels, from web and advertising to social media, events and model home signage.

### Delivering performance

For Legend homebuyer Jean D'arc Campbell, energy performance was a priority. When Campbell, director of international programs at Portland Community College's Rock Creek campus, began looking for a new home near his job in Washington County, he asked a colleague for advice about green builders. The recommendation: talk to Legend Homes.

Legend's reputation for quality construction and energy-efficient building practices attracted Campbell to the builder's Village at Orenco development in Hillsboro. Impressed by Legend's transparent approach to building and the Energy Bill Guarantee, Campbell chose the company to build a new home for his family. In November 2010, they moved in.

Prior to moving into their new home, Campbell and his family lived in a two-bedroom apartment where monthly energy bills averaged \$170 per month. Today, the family of four has cut its energy bills nearly in half in their much larger, more efficient home which boasts an EPS of 80. Campbell is thrilled that his new home is performing exactly as Legend promised.

"EPS and the bill guarantee were very helpful," said Campbell. "Then the final testing and assessment confirmed the energy performance. The energy bills really are less than \$100 a month. Long term, it's a house that will serve my family well."



## DAVID SMITH

### Building for boomers

Eugene builder and Energy Trust trade ally David Smith is busier than ever. Smith has been building homes for more than 20 years, but shifted his focus from building spec homes to building smaller footprint custom homes several years ago. His clients are primarily baby boomers downsizing into smaller homes.

"I personally experienced wanting to get out of a big home into something that costs less," said Smith. "I've been building progressively more efficient homes—homes that I would want to move into."

While Smith's EPS homes have earned some of the best ratings in the state, he only recently started including EPS in his marketing efforts. At a home he built for the Lane County Home Builders Association 2011 Tour of Homes, Smith featured a large poster detailing how his home's energy costs and EPS compared to a code-built home.

"I'm happy to have the EPS. I think it's a good tool to show people that there is an independent test of energy performance," said Smith. "As people learn more about it, it will be an effective marketing tool for me. You wouldn't buy a car without knowing the miles per gallon. You shouldn't buy a house without knowing its energy efficiency."

Smith's homes typically include dual-stage heat pumps, aggressive air sealing, solar electric and solar water heating systems that deliver low energy bills. Estimated energy costs for the home he built for the 2011 Tour of Homes, which boasts an EPS of 21, are just \$437 per year.

"My clients call me up when they get their first energy bill and say, 'I got my electric bill and it just makes me smile!'" he said.

## HILARY BOURASSA

### Helping buyers choose

Real estate broker Hilary Bourassa considers EPS a valuable resource in her home sales tool kit. As an Energy Trust real estate ally and certified Earth Advantage Broker, she is well versed in the features that make homes greener, healthier for occupants and more energy efficient. But EPS gives her a simple way to make efficiency tangible for clients.

"What I appreciate about EPS is that it gives clients a benchmark to compare new homes, apples to apples," she said. "People who are shopping for houses think it's a useful tool to help them compare a home beyond finishes and location."

She sees the value particularly for first-time buyers who may have been used to relatively low utility costs. "People are concerned about monthly expenditures, especially when going from renting to buying," she said. "They're thinking, 'How can I make it feel like less of a hit?' While a home with a low EPS can cost more up front, in the long run it saves buyers money because of lower energy costs."



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Eugene builder



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Real estate broker





## HELP BUYERS SHOP SMART

### CHECKLIST



Give buyers a resource to compare the energy efficiency of each newly built home they view in their search. The Smart Homebuyer Checklist, created by Energy Trust, is designed to help buyers look for high-efficiency features and ask the right questions about energy performance.

Download the checklist at [www.energytrust.org/smarthomebuyer](http://www.energytrust.org/smarthomebuyer).

## BENEFITS FOR BUILDERS AND BUYERS

Since EPS was introduced in 2009, more than 13,000 newly built homes have received a score in communities throughout Oregon. As more and more builders feature the score in marketing their homes, smart buyers, and the real estate professionals who advise them, can rely on EPS to compare options and find the right energy-efficient home.

### EPS helps builders:

- Document and highlight the energy performance you've built into a home
- Demonstrate how your home compares to Oregon homes built to code
- Distinguish your home with features beyond location, amenities and price
- Enhance your reputation as a builder of quality homes with low operating costs
- Gain credibility by offering third-party verified homes
- Improve customer satisfaction by delivering performance-tested homes

### EPS helps real estate professionals better serve buyers by offering:

- A convenient way to compare newly built homes
- Information about estimated energy costs and carbon footprint
- Confidence that a home will perform well over time
- Assurance that a home is built for comfort, energy savings and environmental responsibility



### BOOST YOUR BUSINESS WITH EPS

Visit [www.energytrust.org/EPForallies](http://www.energytrust.org/EPForallies) or call the trade ally coordinator at **1.877.283.0698** for details.