



February 2012

New Fence Going Up March 16, 2012

Residents- please note StoneCourt will be installing a new fence that borders those on **Oak Leaf Lane and Burr Oak Ct.** Installation date is **March 16** so any residents with **pets, shrubs, sheds** etc. will need to mark their calendars and **make necessary arrangements.** In the words of the representative of our neighbors to the South,

"I do not want the fence contractor to be accosted by any of the homeowners when they do their work."

So VOP, let's keep the accosting down to a bare minimum ☺.

Housing Goes "Green"

Wherever you turn these days, it seems that someone is talking about "Green", or "Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)" certified buildings, and "Zero Energy Homes." Each of these share a commitment to reduced energy consumption and the "re-use, repurposing and recycling of materials," "improved indoor air quality" and use of "environmentally friendly" and "renewable products." Green or LEED buildings generally **generate 20 to 70 percent in energy savings**, while a Zero Energy Home (ZEH) by definition must generate enough energy to meet or exceed its own heating, cooling and electrical needs in any given year.

With all of the recent attention being given to energy conservation, you might not realize that a handful of individuals began vigorously exploring ways to significantly reduce energy consumption in the early 1970's. Since then, energy saving practices have been refined and expanded and have been incorporated into projects ranging from small homes to large commercial buildings, schools and fire stations to government buildings. Recent projects have successfully demonstrated the economic viability and sustainability of incorporating rigorous energy and conservation standards into new construction without increasing budgets or extending schedules.

Many conservation efforts are most easily incorporated at the time of initial construction, however some are easily adapted either as a stand-alone project or as part of routine equipment replacement.

Heating, Cooling and Electricity

High efficiency furnaces and/or heat pumps - replacing old furnaces with higher efficiency models or possibly converting from an older type of heating and/or cooling device to one utilizing newer

technology can lead to significant energy savings. Many furnaces built just 15 years ago are quite inefficient when compared to models available today.

Insulation - adding additional insulation in attics, crawl spaces and exterior walls are all potential areas for reducing energy costs. Also, by sealing cracks in the attic around areas where ceiling lights and fans are installed or wires are strung can also cut energy costs substantially. When all these small openings are added together, they can have the same effect as having a window left open.

Windows - installation of wood or vinyl encased triple pane windows significantly reduces heat loss and eliminates drafts.

Light bulbs - the days of the incandescent light bulbs may be numbered as legislators across the nation discuss legislation to ban their use in favor of the more efficient LED and CFL lighting technology as a measure to reduce energy usage.



Higher efficiency appliances - installation of high efficiency appliances will significantly reduce energy consumption, particularly for appliances that run all the time, are energy consumers or are used with high frequency.

Water Consumption

Water heaters - there are several energy saving strategies available when it comes to water heaters. When opting to use a traditional storage tank, the location of the tank can have a significant impact on the amount of water consumed and the cost of heating the water. The most economical placement is to have the tank as close as possible to where the water is used most so there is less water wasted waiting for the hot water to arrive. Adding insulation to the first foot of the pipe coming out of the hot water tank will reduce heat leakage. An alternative to the traditional hot water heater is the tankless water heater that only heats the water as needed by running the water through heated coils. This method eliminates the need to keep water hot all the time and the energy required to do so.

Landscaping -by designing and implementing a landscape centered on plants native to your locale that are also drought tolerant will reduce landscape watering requirements.

Rainwater cisterns with filtration systems - also gaining popularity are rainwater cisterns that store water from rooftop collection systems to be later used for irrigation. Sizes vary and can be selected based up on rainfall averages, collection area size, and available storage locations.

Indoor Air Quality

Flooring - several options exist when making flooring selections that will increase air quality. For those willing to either reduce the quantity of carpeting or forego it all together, selecting sustainably harvested wood or bamboo is a good alternative. However, for those set on having carpeting, selecting carpets made using natural fibers with a low-pile can reduce the collection of allergens. Also, air quality will remain stable when carpeting is installed using tacks rather than fume emitting glue.

Paint - better air quality is achieved by using low-VOC (volatile organic compounds) and low-toxic interior paints and finishes instead of other paints and finishes that release higher levels of chemicals and toxins.

Additional Energy Sources



Solar - once thought of as an "alternative" source of energy, solar panels are gaining popularity. Solar panels remain an expensive option; however, their cost has dropped significantly over the last number of years, making them less cost prohibitive. Although solar panels will work in any climate, sunnier locations will result in higher productivity. To encourage the installation of solar panels, governmental agencies as well as some utilities have created different incentive and rebate programs to lower the cost.

On behalf of the board...We appreciate you!

Jeff Allred

President VOPHOA

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