



ERIETM

OCT/NOV 2015

ERIE EDUCATES

DOES YOUR HOME MAKE THE GRADE?

A New Generation of Builders Educate
Homebuyers on Energy Efficiency

Erie Vital Signs Special Report: EDUCATION

A Special Report on Education in Our City

Improving Erie's Health Literacy and Primary Care Quality

A Toolkit to Manage Diabetes



ERIE MAGAZINE **OCT/NOV** 2015

WHAT'S INSIDE

New Investors 4

FEATURE ARTICLE

Does Your Home Make the Grade? 8

A New Generation of Builders Educate Homebuyers on Energy Efficiency
by Ben Block

REGIONAL INITIATIVE UPDATES

Career Street Update 7

Erie Vital Signs Special Report:
EDUCATION 22

Improving Erie's Health Literacy
and Primary Care Quality 26

SPECIAL EDITION

Beer on the Bay 18

IN EACH ISSUE

Organizational Updates 12

Ribbon Cuttings 28

Business After Hours 30

Follow, Fan, Tag, Connect...





Builder Dominic Maleno and his sister Natalie Maleno Washburn, a broker realtor for Maleno Development, review the building plan of a new housing development.

DOES YOUR HOME MAKE THE GRADE?

A New Generation of Builders Educate Homebuyers on Energy Efficiency



Ben Block

John Maleno first started building homes amid the oil crisis of the late 1970s at a time of widespread concern over energy efficiency.

As homeowners again express concern about how to limit their energy use, the next generation of the Maleno family is looking to continue their father's work by capturing the attention of energy-conscious buyers.

With the help of a Penelec program, Maleno Development is educating customers about home energy-efficiency features through the use of an energy-rating system. Once customers are armed with greater information, the Maleno family is confident that buyers will opt for homes across Erie County to be more efficient than ever before.

DEMAND FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOUSING ON THE RISE

A 2015 National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) survey reported that, as Millennials enter the housing market, more energy-efficient construction practices are becoming a greater priority.

NAHB found that 84 percent of buyers ages 20-35 are willing to pay 2-3 percent higher prices so long as they can see a return through lower energy bills.

Builder Dominic Maleno, who joined the family business in 1991 at the age of 20, said many of his newer customers are indeed willing to pay extra to save energy.



"We believe that energy efficiency is valued by consumers today," said Maleno, who grew up working for his father's earlier homes. "If we can show them true savings from a more energy-efficient home, usually nine out of ten will be on board."

WHAT MAKES A HOME ENERGY EFFICIENT?

Maleno homes incorporate a variety of energy-efficiency measures. Among the most important factors are ensuring that the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system is properly installed as well as keeping the home airtight.

When installing the HVAC system, special attention is given to insulate and air seal the ductwork. Rather than relying on tape to seal the duct system, a waterproof joint sealer is used instead.

Maleno has found that he can increase the overall comfort of a home by laying a foundation with continuous foam board behind the concrete, providing an extra layer of insulation. Depending on the season, hot or cool air is retained by applying spray foam into the walls, sealing air penetrations and using high-efficiency windows and doors.

"What we offer is a package. It's not just insulation; it's a system of many different quality products working together," Maleno said. "We can build a house that will pass code, or we can offer our energy-efficiency package that will save money on a monthly basis."

FIRSTENERGY INCENTIVIZES ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOME CONSTRUCTION

Maleno began incorporating more energy-efficient techniques through the help of the Pennsylvania Energy Efficient New Homes Program, a financial incentive program offered by FirstEnergy's Pennsylvania utilities: Met-Ed,

Penelec, Penn Power and West Penn Power. To date, 125 builders are participating in the program.

The program offers builders who achieve 30 percent energy savings over code a rebate of \$350 plus 10¢ for each kWh saved annually over a reference home built to the standard 2009 International Energy Conservation Code.

Additional incentives are available for homes built to standards of the ENERGY STAR® program, the same U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program that promotes efficiency for home appliances.

"Across Pennsylvania we are seeing more and more homebuyers benefit from builders choosing to embrace energy-efficient construction practices," said Program Coordinator Mike Arblaster. "Customers who want greater comfort in their home and lower utility bills are wise to encourage their homebuilders to participate."

HERS INDEX ADDS TRANSPARENCY TO HOME ENERGY USE

To participate, homes must undergo an independent evaluation and receive a Home Energy Rating

System (HERS) Index, a performance score of the home's energy efficiency that provides transparency to homebuyers looking to understand future energy use. The HERS Index scores homes on a scale from 0 to 150, with a lower score indicating a more energy-efficient home.

The U.S. Department of Energy reports that a typical resale home scores 130 on the HERS Index, while a standard newly constructed home falls around 100. Maleno homes have received average HERS Index scores in the low 40s, according to Steve Lipchik, owner of The Energy

"Energy efficiency is valued by consumers today. If we can show them true savings from a more energy-efficient way of building a home, usually nine out of ten will be on board."
— Dominic Maleno



Maleno Development has built more than 1,000 houses and 600 apartment units across Erie County. Their latest homes evaluate energy performance using the Home Energy Rating System (HERS) index

Center, an Edinboro-based Home Energy Rater who has inspected homes built by Maleno over the past decade.

"To my knowledge, no other builders in Erie are using a HERS Index for a rating," Lipchik said. "That doesn't mean other builders aren't doing a high-quality job. But their work hasn't been tested and evaluated using the HERS Index, so there's no way to prove that they have a better house."

EDUCATING HOMEBUYERS ON SAVING ENERGY

As the Erie housing market slowly gains momentum, Maleno considers energy efficiency an important marketing tool. The HERS Index provides homebuyers with confidence that their

home should save them energy and money over time.

Incorporating the HERS Index into the home-selling process also creates an opportunity to educate homebuyers about advanced energy-efficiency measures that were not available years ago.

"Before, building a house was simply about sticks and bricks," Maleno said. "Now there is a whole new science of building. It's about creating a complete system that performs to meet the energy needs and comfort of the customer."

For more information about the Pennsylvania Energy Efficient New Homes Program, visit EnergySavePa.com.