

FOAM SWEET FOAM



Luis Sanchez of Fairfield Insulation sprays foam insulation into the walls of a home under construction in New Milford. David W. Harple/Staff photographer

Newtown builder focuses on energy-efficient homes

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NEW MILFORD — Want to reduce your fuel bill without lowering the thermostat to sub-zero levels?

Builder Kim Danziger, president of Danziger Homes Inc., is constructing a four-bedroom, energy-efficient home that he says will cut the house's fuel bill in half by better holding in the heat.

"Let's make a building that doesn't require as much energy," Danziger said.

A major part of that efficiency is the use of insulation that is sprayed — in layers two inches

Saving energy

Danziger Homes is building energy-efficient houses.

SAVE ENERGY BY USING

- Foam insulation plus fiberglass
- An insulated attic hatch
- Fireplace doors

COST: \$10,000

BENEFIT: Cut fuel bills in half, according to the building

RECOUP COST: In about four years

thick — on the inside of the outer walls.

Danziger, a Newtown builder

who has been in the home construction business for 25 years, is using technology that is not new. Because the technology is more expensive than traditional building methods, he said people didn't want to spend extra money on energy efficiency.

Even if they had the money, Danziger said, they preferred to put it into higher-end kitchens and bathrooms.

"But oil bills have jumped," Danziger said about skyrocketing fuel prices.

He believes customers will be willing to pay extra for energy-efficient homes because they want



David W. Harple/Staff photographer
Foam insulation is sprayed onto the interior walls of a new house in New Milford on Tuesday.

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Energy-efficient homes built

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want to save money and help save the planet by cutting down on fossil fuels.

Danziger is developing a 51-lot subdivision — Farmstead Acres — on 165 acres off Route 109 in northern New Milford. Thirty-five homes are already built and sold.

All the houses have Energy Star ratings from Connecticut Light & Power Co., because they use such energy-efficient devices as compact fluorescent light bulbs, he said.

But the house Danziger is building now — the 36th in the subdivision — takes a big energy leap.

"This will take us way beyond Energy Star," Danziger said of the 3,800-square-foot house that should be finished by March.

On Tuesday, two men from Fairfield Insulation, owned by Masco Contracting, were filling in the exposed wall spaces with a foamy substance that provides airtight insulation, said one of the sprayers, Chris Roche.

"It makes sense with the energy costs to spend a little bit more now and start making money" by saving on fuel, he said.

The seafoam-green insulation — expanded polyurethane — is made of isocyanate and resin, Roche said. A 200-foot hose delivers the substances from containers in a Masco truck.

"The two chemicals meet just before they're ready to come out of the hose," Roche said.

Once the foam comes out — it looks like whipped cream — hardening starts immediately and Roche said the insulation is solid within 20 minutes.

Foam insulation, Roche said, makes for a tight seal before fiberglass — the traditional means of insulation — is installed on top of it.

Fiberglass alone "normally doesn't air seal the house," Roche said.

Outside wind, he said, can get into the house or suck heat out when only fiberglass is used.

Danziger agrees. The foamy insulation will cover



David W. Harple/Staff photographer

This Farmstead Acres home in New Milford has an extra layer of insulation for additional energy efficiency.

any air leaks and "holes are typically the big problem with heat loss."

But is such an airtight house safe? Isn't fresh air needed for a healthy environment?

"It would not be healthy," Danziger said. "We have to bring in fresh air."

Oil-forced air will heat the house. That system, Danziger said, has an efficiency rating of 85 percent. A 300-gallon tank will fuel the system.

To conserve additional energy, window edges will be sealed with foam insulation and blown-in fiberglass will be used in the attic.

Also an insulated attic hatch will be installed at the pull-down staircase at the attic's entrance.

Fireplace doors will be added "so the cold air doesn't come in and out of the big hole going through the roof."

The cost of all this extra energy efficiency: \$10,000, Danziger said.

"We're absorbing the cost," Danziger said of the \$650,000 home.

He admits part of his motive is good publicity for the house but the other part is to encourage this type of building.

In the subdivision's remaining 15 house, Danziger plans to install the energy-efficient technology and charge owners half of the \$10,000 cost.

"We're going to continue to learn," Danziger said about energy conservation. "But this is the direction we're heading and we're not turning back anymore."



Kim Danziger