



For More Information Contact:
Jonathan Williams/Executive Director
Mid-Atlantic Propane Gas Association
(804) 643-4433

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Where Green Meets the Greenback

Sluggish economy spurs homeowners to invest in energy efficiency

Mid-Atlantic Region (February 24, 2009) – Times may be tough, but spending constraints have sharpened homeowners' interest in investing to make their homes more energy-efficient. This was one of the key findings of a recent survey sponsored by the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC) and conducted by the Opinion Research Corporation.

Energy efficiency was a top priority for homeowners surveyed, with 80 percent reporting they are "concerned" about the energy efficiency of their homes. Their concern is as pragmatic as it is altruistic, with 70 percent of those concerned citing equal consideration for saving money and helping or protecting the environment.

"The focus on homeowners becoming green and improving energy efficiency has captured the attention of builders seeking to provide innovative solutions to their customers," said Kate Caskin, Senior Vice President, Propane Education & Research Council (PERC). "Propane occupies a unique position in that it can provide many of the green lifestyle attributes homeowners demand, yet remains a practical and reliable choice"

According to a 2006 survey by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a majority of Americans polled say they're willing to consider new energy sources that are efficient, safe, and "green-conscious." But identifying the right energy source for those seeking low environmental impact *and* comfortable and high performance appliances can be overwhelming. The Mid-Atlantic Propane Gas Association (MAPGA) provides a quick list of questions homeowners can ask their builders to help them narrow their home energy options.

I am interested in being green, and I want to make sure I get the most value when I make an investment in my home. What are some practical and lower cost ways to "go green" when considering energy options?

Propane appliances provide practical, cost-effective solutions for homeowners who want to be energy efficient without breaking the bank. Installing a tankless water heater can lower household energy bills by up to 40 percent. And propane fireplaces are excellent secondary sources of heat. Wood-burning fireplaces can lose as much as 90 percent of the heat they generate, where as

propane fireplaces are up to 100 percent efficient—and cost 30 to 60 percent less per hour to operate than wood-burning fireplaces.

What easily accessible energy source can help reduce my home's carbon footprint?

A home that uses propane for heating, water heating, clothes drying and cooking contributes 60 percent less carbon dioxide to the atmosphere than an all-electric home whose power is generated at a coal-powered plant. Propane provides a practical solution for consumers looking to shrink their carbon footprint—without losing comfort.

What can I do to reduce my home's water usage?

For those consumers interested in water conservation, tankless water heaters provide an excellent solution. By heating water on demand, instead of storing it in a tank, the average American family can save 10-20 percent of its daily water use. Using a tankless water heater can make your wallet greener too; it costs less to operate than a standard electric unit, all while providing an endless flow of hot water.

How can I balance my concerns about the environmental impacts of my energy decisions with my desire for an aesthetically pleasing home?

While energy efficiency is top-of-mind for many homeowners, so is the aesthetics of their home. A durable underground tank provides a safe and discreet solution. Once a tank is buried, only a small dome is visible allowing for easy servicing and refilling, while inside, consumers enjoy the luxury and beauty of a gas lifestyle.

How can I make sure the energy decisions I make today provide lasting value?

The average lifespan of a propane furnace is about 20 years, which can be 10 years longer than an electric heat pump. Plus, propane appliances can have a shorter energy savings payback period (the time it takes for an appliance to pay for itself via energy savings). For example, a typical gas fired tankless water heater costs about 2-1/2 times as much as a standard tank water heater but it will pay for itself in just a few years or less, and will last twice as long as a tank.

I want a cleaner energy source; but how can I ensure it's reliable?

With many greener energy sources, reliability can be a big question, but propane has a proven record. And when storms, hot weather and rolling blackouts can wreak havoc with electrical services, propane is always on, always available. Propane generators ensure that even when the weather isn't predictable, your energy is.

I want my energy source to be efficient, but also low-maintenance. What works best for me?

Many consumers want the advantages of a green energy source, but without the extra maintenance often involved with less-mainstream options. Propane is sold and serviced by a well-established national network of retailers in virtually every community, making it a premium, worry-free energy source for your customers. In addition, propane works great in areas of the country that are inaccessible during heavy winter weather – with propane, homeowners have a dependable on site fuel source.

For additional information about making green energy decisions, please visit www.mapga.org or visit MAPGA at Builders Mart on March 25, 2009 at Maryland State Fairgrounds in Timonium, MD, Booth #530, 532.

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