

Proposed 2006 RESNET Priorities

- I. **Develop and Implement Accreditation Process for Federal Tax Credit for Energy Efficient Homes Verification** – In 2005 Congress passed and President Bush signed the 2005 Energy Policy Act that provides for a federal tax credit for builders who build energy efficient homes. The U.S. Department of Treasury rules recognize RESNET for accrediting software programs that are used to verify a home's energy performance for the tax credit. In 2006 RESNET will need to develop an application form and a process for reviewing applications and posting software programs that are accredited.
- II. **Conduct Rating Provider Quality Assurance Monitoring** – Beginning on April 1, 2005 accredited rating providers were required to implement the new rating quality assurance procedures. In 2005 RESNET staff initiated a pilot effort to monitor rating provider's implementation of the new procedures. In 2005 six providers were monitored in the states of Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Minnesota, and Nevada. This effort will be expanded in 2006.
- III. **Provide national outreach in support of federal tax credits** – Revise and update the Builder Resources and Consumer Resources pages of the RESNET web site to provide detailed information to builders and consumers on qualifying for the federal tax credits. Provide a service that will link interested builders and consumers with certified rater members and "registered" builders in their region who are willing to provide detailed assistance. Require certified raters and interested builders to "sign up" for this list and provide opportunities for training in tax credit qualification.
- IV. **Revise RESNET National Energy Rater Test** – In 2005 RESNET began administering on-line tests for raters, rater trainers, and rating provider quality assurance designees. The tests were developed from questions that accredited rater training providers had been using in their individual training programs. In 2006 the test will be revised including modifying questions to be ANSI compliant.
- V. **Advocate for Extension of New Homes and Commercial Buildings Energy Efficiency Tax Incentives and for a Performance Based**

Existing Homes Credit – The tax incentives for new homes and commercial buildings passed by Congress in 2005 are set to expire on December 31, 2007. This is simply not enough time for large builders to change their production schedules and commercial building owners to prepare to take advantage of the tax incentives. Since the purpose of the tax incentives is transform the market RESNET must advocate that the two incentives be extended.

The tax credit for homeowners to improve the energy performance has several serious flaws: (1) it is a cost based credit and (2) the amount is simply too small to motivate a homeowner to do something. There are several bills being drawn up to address these issues. RESNET must advocate for an effective and responsible tax credit for existing homes.

- VI. Develop National Standards for Energy Audits of Existing Homes** – With spiraling energy costs media and consumer interest in energy audits of homes is increasing. Currently there are no national standards that define what a home energy audit includes and the skills and knowledge the individual who conducts the inspection and testing for an energy audit. In 2006 RESNET will develop a national standard.
- VII. Advocate with the U.S. DOE that they adopt a specific, nationwide qualification for a “Zero Energy Home” labeling program.** As a means of expanding on the Energy Star initiative of EPA, advocate with DOE that they adopt a similar labeling program that goes a large step beyond the Energy Star program by establishing a specific HERS Index that will qualify a home as a DOE “Zero Energy Home.”
- VIII. Implement Sampling Provider Accreditation Application Process** – In 2005 the RESNET Board of Directors adopted a sampling provider accreditation standard. The Environmental Protection Agency has adopted the RESNET standard for the ENERGY STAR for Homes Program. In 2006 RESNET staff will develop an application and application review process to accredit rating providers to conduct sampling.
- IX. Develop and Implement Information Campaign to Inform the Rating Industry of the Technical Changes that will go into Effect on July 1, 2006** – A number of technical enhancements to the national home energy rating standards will go into effect on July 1, 2006. The most significant are the change from a rating score to a rating index, the aligning of the reference home with the 2006 International Energy Conservation Code, the expansion of the rating method to rate lighting, appliances, and on-site energy production, and insulation quality installation inspection. RESNET will undertake a concerted effort to educate the rating industry on these changes.

- X. Adopt Test Suite for Approving Software to Calculate Compliance to the International Energy Conservation Code** – The U.S. Department of Energy has provided funding to RESNET through the National Renewable Energy Laboratory to develop a test suite for approving software programs to be recognized by code officials for calculating compliance to the International Conservation Code. The RESNET Software Verification Testing Task Force has almost completed its recommendations on the test suite. In 2006 the RESNET Board of Directors will need to adopt the test suite and staff work with the Department of Energy in having the test suite endorsed by the Department of Energy. The goal is to make it easier for code officials to recognize software programs to calculate a home's energy performance for meeting code.
- XI. Continue Dialogue with the European Union on an International Protocol for Energy Ratings** - The European Union (EU) has targeted building energy performance as a major component of meeting its obligations under the Kyoto Climate Accord. The EU has enacted legislation, "The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive" that member states must enact requirements for rating buildings at time of sale or change of occupancy. This action has a dramatic potential impact on setting up a protocol for carbon reduction trading and building energy savings. Clearly there are advantages to developing a dialogue between the US and Europe on building performance and energy ratings. The RESNET Board adopted the development of such a dialogue as one of the top priorities for RESNET for 2005.

To set up such a dialogue, Steve Baden and Philip Fairey were invited to present the experience of the U.S. rating effort to the European Union's Energy Performance of Buildings Directive Conference in Brussels, Belgium in September. Through RESNET's participation in the conference a dialogue has been established between RESNET and its European counterparts. This needs to be followed up on in 2006.

In addition RESNET's representatives met with the International Energy Agency (IEA). It was agreed that there needs to be more cooperation between the U.S. and Europe on improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings. As the first step, it was agreed that RESNET and the IEA would co-host a side meeting on improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings at the 2006 ACEEE Summer Study on Energy Efficiency in Buildings in August 2006. In addition, it was agreed that RESNET and the IEA would write a paper on Monetizing Energy Efficiency that would be submitted to the ACEEE for publishing and be posted on the RESNET web site.

XII. Implement New Categories of Certification for Raters - In 2005 the task force developed and the RESNET Board adopted a set of specifications and definitions of knowledge base, skill sets and experience for the following categories of rater certification:

- ◇ Rating Field Assessor
- ◇ Certified Rater
- ◇ Senior Certified Rater

A formal recognition of rater's certification in related fields was also adopted. In 2006 RESNET will create the application and implement the new categories of certification.

XIII. Host the 2006 RESNET Building Performance Conference – The RESNET Building Performance Conference is the premier national forum on energy ratings and building performance. The 2006 conference will take place on February 27 – March 1, 2006 in San Antonio, Texas. The theme of the 2006 RESNET Building Performance Conference is "Embracing the Future". The energy rating and building performance industries are at a critical crossroads. There are a number of changes that will take place over the next year that will impact the rating industry. While these events will change the way the ENERGY STAR Homes are labeled and how ratings are conducted, they also present new opportunities. The 2006 RESNET Building Performance Conference will review the changes in the rating industry, discuss their implications, and explore how to position a rating business to profit from the new opportunities.

XIV. Implement the North Carolina ENERGY STAR Homes Program – RESNET has received funding from the North Carolina Energy Office to form a dynamic partnership with the energy office, the North Carolina Fannie Mae Partnership Office, the state's rating industry and the state's housing industry to jump start the demand for ENERGY STAR homes, home energy ratings and energy mortgages in the state. The project will be completed in 2006.

XV. Implement Building America Project – With funding from the U.S. Department of Energy's Building America Program the Florida Solar Energy Center will subcontract with RESNET to complete the following in 2006:

- Work with Fannie Mae to extend the energy efficient mortgage to manufactured homes that are built to the Building America systems engineering specifications.
- Recruit certified home energy raters to participate in the Habitat for Humanity's Building America effort.

- Work with Building America team members in setting up an infrastructure of energy raters that provide on-going support after the teams complete the project.

- XVI. Incorporate Energy Raters Into Building Performance Institute's Certification** – RESNET has entered into a partnership with the Building Performance Institute (BPI) to incorporate certified raters into BPI's building performance contractor certification. It is already been agreed that certified home energy raters who have passed the RESNET National Rater Test will not have to take the BPI CORE test. In 2006 RESNET and BPI will come to agreement on how certified raters can be certified as BPI Professional Analysts and incorporate home energy raters into BPI's building performance contractor quality assurance process.
- XVII. Establish Linkage Between Certified Home Energy Raters and Green Building Programs** - The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) realizes that engaging the RESNET community is crucial to the success of LEED for Homes. For this reason they have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with RESNET. The USGBC has used RESNET accredited rating providers for the pilot LEED for Homes projects. In 2006 RESNET will work with the USGBC on incorporating certified home energy raters in the on-going LEED for Homes effort. RESNET will also work with the National Association of Home Builders on how to link certified raters into their green homes program.
- XVIII. Deliver Business and Marketing Plan Development Training for RESNET Rater Members** – RESNET has two visions for success of the rating industry. The first is setting standards for quality of rating services thereby enhancing the credibility of the entire industry. The second is to help raters succeed in being profitable businesses. RESNET believes that the raters' success is everyone's success. For the past three years RESNET's emphasis has been setting the standards for quality. Beginning in 2006 the emphasis will be expanded to include rating services business development. In 2005 RESNET staff developed a plan of action that, if implemented, will provide raters with a myriad of tools and resources to increase their business opportunities. RESNET staff began with the premise that raters who use the resources available to them through RESNET will significantly increase their chances of success in our industry. In 2006 RESNET will post a web site with resources to develop marketing strategy for rating services and pilot a series of regional workshops for raters on developing an effective marketing plan.
- XIX. Develop Prioritized List of Potential New Services for Home Energy Raters** – A key goal of the RESNET Strategic Planning Framework is expanding the services that certified raters provides other than the rating of homes. RESNET has already taken the first step in developing new

opportunities through verification for the new federal tax credit, rating of homes for the USGBC LEED for Homes Program, and providing analysis and quality assurance services for BPI. In 2006 RESNET staff will develop a listing of potential new services that certified raters can move into.

- XX. Continue and Enhance RESNET's Strategic Planning Framework** – In 2005 RESNET staff completed a comprehensive strategic planning effort for the organization. As a result of this effort the RESNET Board of Directors was presented a RESNET Strategic Planning Framework. Since strategic planning is not an event but rather is an on-going process, in 2006 staff will continue to update and enhance the strategic planning framework.
- XXI. Advocate to the U.S. Department of Energy that the Building America Benchmark Align with the RESNET Home Energy Rating Reference Home** – At the 2001 RESNET Conference participants adopted a set of policy priorities for the organization. This included having home energy ratings serve as the base for verification of a home's energy performance for federal programs. Currently the U.S. Department of Energy has adopted a research benchmark that is still based upon the Model Energy Code. The Building America Program has changed its emphasis to being the path that leads to zero energy homes. With the whole energy use rating method that RESNET has adopted it just makes sense that the Building America Program adopt the RESNET reference home as its research bench mark. In 2006 RESNET will advocate to the U.S. Department of Energy that its Building America research bench mark be based upon the RESNET reference home.
- XXII. Develop Plan to RESNET Board on Value Based Pricing Policy for Charging for RESNET's Services** – A key goal of RESNET is to be financially self-sustaining. The organization can not achieve this by being solely reliant on accreditation fees. It must develop a definition of services it can charge for, define the value of these services to the rating industry, and develop a pricing structure to reflect this value. RESNET staff will work with RESNET's treasurer and present a plan of action to the RESNET Board.
- XXIII. Co-Write Paper on Monetizing Energy Efficiency with the International Energy Agency** – The greatest long term sustaining incentive for improving the energy performance of buildings is to monetize the savings in the market place. In the European Union this is done by a number of member states. A first step has been made in the U.S. with the fledgling carbon reduction trading market. In 2006 RESNET and the International Energy Agency will co-author a paper on this opportunity. It will be presented to the American Council for an Energy Efficient

Economy's Summer Study on Buildings and posted on the RESNET web site.

XXIV. Coordinate 2006 RESNET Rating Industry Leadership Awards

Program - To recognize leadership in the rating industry the RESNET Board of Directors established Rating Industry Leadership Awards. There are three categories of the award:

- ◇ Market Transformation Leadership Award
- ◇ Innovation Leadership Award
- ◇ Program Leadership Award

In 2005 applications were solicited. Applications have been submitted for every category of the award. The winners will be announced at the 2006 RESNET Building Performance Conference.