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ENERGY COSTS FORECAST MAKES
ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES BETTER BUY

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For Immediate Release

ATLANTA, GA.....Imagine, if you can, your monthly utility bill equaling your monthly mortgage payment.

This is exactly what will happen to the average home owner if trends in current energy costs continue, says Tom McGowan of Georgia Tech's Engineering Experiment Station.

Based on the utility companies' estimates that, for the foreseeable future, energy costs will increase by ten percent per year, the Tech engineer predicts that in 13 years the owner of a standard-size all electric home can expect to pay, on the average, \$374 per month for utility bills--the amount of the average monthly mortgage payment for a home this size. The owner of the gas heated standard home has 19 years to wait until the utility bill equals the mortgage payment. These figures are for a standard, 1600 square foot home in Atlanta built without energy conserving features.

Of course, as McGowan points out, there are many energy conserving features now on the market that can be added to older homes. These products guarantee to reduce utility bills and McGowan agrees that most of them do the job--many for a prohibitive cost.

To avoid getting into the high utility bill bind in the first place, McGowan says the thing to do is to purchase a home that has been constructed with energy conservation in mind--what McGowan calls a total energy package.

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The engineer explains that a home built with energy conservation in mind is one that has been tightly constructed. The home is tightened up in all the common weak spots in order to produce energy savings and provide comfort to the owner.

"A home built with a total energy package can save the owner more than 50 percent on monthly utility bills for a cost of less than three percent of the home's selling price," says McGowan.

For an Atlanta area homebuyer, McGowan calculates that the initial installation of energy conservation features in a standard-size house can save about \$56 per month for an all electric home and \$43 per month for a gas heated home. This is a cost of less than \$1.00 per square foot or approximately \$13.00 per month on the mortgage bill.

Included among the energy conserving features McGowan says make up an energy package are: more insulation; less air leakage; better glazing and doors; more efficient heating and cooling equipment; and proper orientation and shading of the house.

In an effort to educate local home builders on constructing and marketing homes with energy conserving features, McGowan, in cooperation with the Home Builders Association of Georgia, is conducting a series of statewide builders workshops.

Funded through the Georgia Office of Energy Resources, these workshops will give home builders and their lenders, appraisers, sales people and subcontractors a chance to study new energy saving devices, new construction techniques and the effect of energy costs on the home buyer.

For further information on building or buying homes with energy conservation in mind, contact the local office of the Home Builders Association.