

# Top 3 innovations to improve efficiency Contractors can build new or remodel

Our homes are a great measuring stick of how far we've progressed in the past 20 years, especially when it comes to their efficiency in terms of saving us energy and money.

Here are the top three innovative technologies that can improve the efficiency of our homes:

## HOME AUTOMATION

\* It wasn't that long ago that an automated home was a focus of science fiction.

Today, adding the convenience and control of our indoor climate, lighting, electronic media and home security is increasingly affordable and accessible through home PCs, smart phone and tablet applications.



With home monitoring systems, you can track energy and water usage in real time, spot key sources of energy loss and make immediate adjustments.

## INSULATION

\* If your home is more than 10 years old, there's a good chance it has fiberglass or cellulose insulation behind its walls. While these were once the insulations of choice, there are many holes in these technologies. Since they are difficult to install perfectly and can sag or settle over time, they can leave gaps and seams. It's like leaving a window open 24 hours a day in the freezing cold.

\* Experts remind us that insulation advancements (like those from leading innovator Icynene) have brought us spray foam insulation options that won't settle, sag or leave any gaps. Spray foam acts as an air barrier and can deliver up to 50 percent energy savings over older insulation options, while making our homes healthier, quieter and more comfortable. You can compare insulation options at [www.icynene.com](http://www.icynene.com).

## APPLIANCES AND HVAC

\* Appliances and heating/cooling systems are essential in American homes -- and not surprisingly, they are constantly undergoing improvements. New energy-efficient refrigerators use less than half the energy of models that are 12 years old and use 75 percent less energy than those produced in the late 1970s (Source: National Resources Defense Council).

\* If you have a conventional natural-draft furnace made before 1992, it might only operate between 55 to 78 percent efficiency. Upgrading to a new induced-draft condensing furnace can increase efficiency to above 90 percent as a result of more efficient heat exchangers and electronic ignition

(Source: Mother Earth News)

Editorial provided by MetroCreative Connections

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