

MARKETPLACE

THE MANY BENEFITS OF GOING GREEN



JOSH MORGAN, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jeff Peterson of Harding Construction & Sustainable Solutions sprays cellulose insulation in the attic of a Belmont Shore home this week. The alternative insulation material is made of recycled materials and also functions as an insect repellent. It's one of the least expensive ways to increase a home's energy efficiency.

In addition to helping the environment, making a home more energy-efficient is a solid financial investment.

BY DON JERGLER
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

There's a trend in forward-thinking communities like Long Beach to try to live in a more sustainable environment, and to some residents, making their home greener might range from recycling to reducing energy usage by turning off lights in unoccupied rooms and upgrading insulation for the cost of a few thousand dollars.

To others, having a greener home involves those things and more: buying high-

efficiency water heaters, adding solar panels, replacing windows, installing light-emitting diodes and tearing out water-demanding lawns.

The bottom line on making your home greener is that you don't need to plunk down a huge chunk of cash to make changes, but more and more homeowners are willing to put in a few dollars more.

Wes Harding, president of Harding Construction & Sustainable Solutions, a Long Beach-based general contractor, said even

minor changes to a home can make it more energy-efficient, less costly and more comfortable.

"These upgrades, they range from less than \$5,000 to around \$30,000," Harding said. "It's everything on the menu or an appetizer."

As the housing market and economy have recovered, people like Harding have been fielding calls from homeowners who are increasingly turning their attention toward the environment.

"For sure I've seen an increase in business on the energy retrofitting side of my company," he said, adding that his remodeling workload has been picking up as well,

though not as fast.

Besides helping out the environment, there are other upsides to having a green retrofit done.

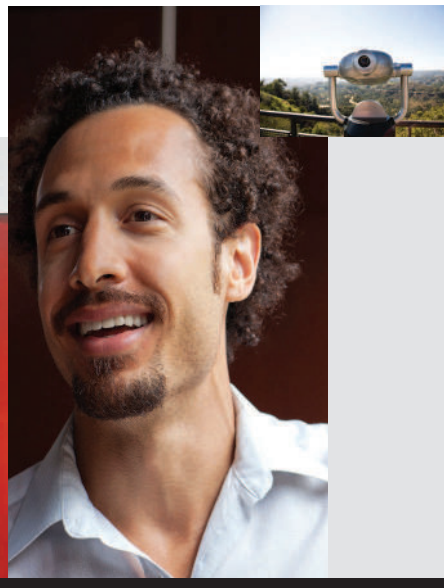
According to a 2012 study, homes with specific designations or official ratings sell for 9 percent more than comparable homes. In many cases, though, obtaining such labels require more extensive upgrades.

"Green home labels such as Energy Star, LEED for Homes and GreenPoint Rated have been established to verify and communicate to consumers that a home is de-

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ENERGY

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signed and built to use energy efficiently," states the study, "The Value of Green Labels in the California Housing Market," which was conducted by professors from UCLA and UC Berkeley.

"Green homes also provide benefits beyond energy savings, such as more comfortable and stable indoor temperatures and more healthful indoor air quality. LEED and GreenPoint Rated homes also feature efficient water use; sustainable, nontoxic building materials; and other features that reduce their impact on the environment, such as proximity to parks, shops and transit."

Myriad programs exist to assist homeowners in a green transformation, said Harding, who is an approved Energy Upgrade California contractor. Energy Upgrade California is part of the California Public Utilities Commission and helps homeowners with information, incentives and rebates. The entity's Home Upgrade program, for example, provides up to \$4,500 toward energy upgrades to a single-family home.

Though the upgrades required to qualify for rebates can be costly, long-term energy savings can add up and make a home more comfortable to live in, say those working to encourage the use of the underutilized program.

Roughly 50 Long Beach homeowners have taken advantage of the Energy Upgrade California rebate program since it began in 2011, according to Larry Rich, the city's sustainability coordinator.

"Not a lot of people have been taking advantage of it in Long Beach," Rich said, adding that the upgrades to qualify sometimes amount

to outlays of \$15,000 or more. "It definitely needs more PR."

Another noteworthy program to help homeowners become greener is the Long Beach Water Department's Lawn-to-Garden Turf Replacement Program, which gives homeowners incentives to tear out their lawns and replace them with "California-friendly landscaping" that requires less watering. The department offers rebates of up to \$3,000 for those who qualify.

Harding recently worked on a 1,800-square-foot house at 125 Santa Ana Ave. that needed mechanical work and upgrades to bring

it up to code, so its owners also commissioned Harding's company to make it greener by installing an energy-efficient heating and cooling system and by adding insulation.

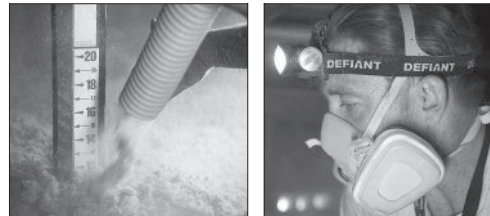
The price tag on such projects can add up, but one of the best ways for homeowners to reduce their carbon footprint is one of the cheapest.

To better insulate the house, Harding's workers used a hose to "blow in" loose-fill cellulose insulation. Made from recycled newspapers, the insulation "really fills in all the nooks and crannies," Harding said.



PHOTOS: JOSH MORGAN, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ricardo Camp of Harding Construction & Sustainable Solutions stacks packets of cellulose insulation before feeding them into a tube that leads to a home's attic.



Jeff Peterson of Harding Construction & Sustainable Solutions climbs into the attic (top, left) of a Belmont Shore home, where he then sprays cellulose insulation (from left). Refurbishing insulation is among the first steps toward energy efficiency, company owner Wes Harding says. This system costs \$1.50 per square foot for attic insulation and air sealing, adding up to \$2,700 for this house, far cheaper than other upgrades.

At \$1.50 per square foot for attic insulation and air sealing throughout the home, the upgrade cost \$2,700, making it cheaper than other upgrades. It's one of the best first steps toward energy efficiency, Harding said.

"That's really one of the most cost-effective ways to mitigate heat transfer from your attic to your house," he said.

Harding, who conducts energy audits for homeowners for an average of \$500, said typical costs of other upgrades to make a home greener are a great deal higher and range from a new high-efficiency water

heater at \$3,200 or a complete vinyl window retrofit at around \$7,000.

After his projects are complete, Harding conducts a follow-up energy audit, and he said he has found that savings average out to about \$50 per month. "And that doesn't account for rebates, or making people more comfortable in their own homes," he said.

The uptick in interest in services like Harding's is a positive trend for greenophiles, to be sure, but Harding believes there's another driver in some of the energy-efficient upgrade work he has been getting lately:

Now that people have a little money to invest, they are using it to make their homes less costly to live in and more comfortable.

"Some people do want to lower their carbon footprint and use fewer resources, and sometimes they want to reduce their energy usage or stay cooler, and sometimes it's their allergies and asthma and they're trying to control the indoor air quality," Harding said. "The solution to all of those problems is energy efficiency."

CONTACT THE WRITER:
relongbeach@gmail.com.

LONG BEACH OPEN HOUSES

SATURDAY

CYPRESS 12-5PM
9053 South Brownstone Cir #68 \$395,900
2 bedrooms, 2 full, 1 partial Bathroom

GARDEN GROVE 1-4PM
11122 Bixler Circle \$660,000
4 bedrooms, 1 full, 2 partial Bathroom
MICHAEL HUYNH AGT. 714-657-4986
NORTH HILLS REALTY

GARDEN GROVE 1-5PM
11852 Carlotta Street \$549,900
3 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
JEFF DANIEL AGT. 714-863-9424
SEACLIFF REALTY INC.

GARDEN GROVE 12-30PM
11402 Tacoma Street \$539,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom

GARDEN GROVE 11:30-3PM
11722 John Avenue \$465,000
3 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom

GARDEN GROVE 1-5PM
12321 Granite Place \$419,900
3 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom

GARDEN GROVE 12-4PM
12848 Palm Street #1 \$410,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full, 1 partial Bathroom

HERMOSA BEACH 11-4PM
1934 Ardmore Avenue \$1,955,000
4 bedrooms, 4 full Bathroom
CANDICE SOMMER-MILLER AGT. 714-229-3513
GOODMAN DEAN, INC.

HERMOSA BEACH 1-4PM
1253 21st Street \$1,899,000
5 bedrooms, 4 full, 1 partial Bathroom
GARY KOORA AGT. 310-612-0334
PRUDENTIAL CALIFORNIA REALTY

LA HABRA 12-5PM
1560 Via Los Bonitos \$679,900
3 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom

LA HABRA 11-5PM
1401 Marica Drive \$470,000
3 bedrooms, 1 full, 1 partial Bathroom

LONG BEACH 1-4PM
354 Obispo Avenue \$699,900
3 bedrooms, 1 full, 1 partial Bathroom
JAMIE LINDBERG AGT. 562-881-3811
RE/MAX R. E. SPECIALISTS

LONG BEACH 12-3PM
282 Redondo Avenue #200 \$359,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
CHRISTIAN WALSH AGT. 949-677-3466
COLDWELL BANKER RESIDENTIAL B

LONG BEACH 11-2:30PM
4735 Gundry Avenue \$355,000
2 bedrooms, 1 full Bathroom
KAREN PEREZ AGT. 562-818-5273
COLDWELL BANKER BEACHSIDE

LONG BEACH 12-4PM
743 Euclid Avenue #3 \$349,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
DARYL OWEN AGT. 714-348-1774
NATIONWIDE REAL ESTATE EXEC

LONG BEACH 12-3PM
6205 Seabreeze #3 \$137,250
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
LISA MCKIM CAR NAR AGT. 562-314-9349
MAIN STREET REALTORS

REDONDO BEACH 1-4PM
200 North Catalina Avenue #8 \$969,000
3 bedrooms, 2 full, 1 partial Bathroom
RICK THOMAS AGT. 310-291-1900
R REAL ESTATE CORP.

REDONDO BEACH 1-5PM
610 The Village #116 \$699,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
DENISE NICHOLS AGT. 310-717-7438
NWRE BROKERS

REDONDO BEACH 2-5PM
904 Camino Real #206 \$419,000
2 bedrooms, 1 full, 1 partial Bathroom

ROSSMOOR 11-4PM
2791 Copa De Oro Drive \$1,675,000
5 bedrooms, 2 1/2 full Bathroom
RICHARD GLASS AGT. 714-290-0713
MRP PROPERTIES, INC.

SAN PEDRO 1-4PM
195 West 19th Street #2 \$269,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
DENISE NICHOLS AGT. 310-717-7438
NWRE BROKERS

SEAL BEACH 1-4PM
12200 Montecito Road #D116 \$318,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
GRIFITH NAGATA AGT. 714-964-2121
CENTURY 21 BEACHSIDE REALTORS

SIGNAL HILL 10-4PM
2150 Ohio Avenue #G \$419,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom

SUNDAY

CYPRESS 12-5PM
9053 South Brownstone Cir #68 \$395,900
2 bedrooms, 2 full, 1 partial Bathroom

CYPRESS 1-4PM
9668 Walker Street #42 \$480,000
3 bedrooms, 2 full, 1 partial Bathroom
YOUNG KIM AGT. 323-351-5528
COLDWELL BANKER BEST REALTY

LONG BEACH 1-4PM
6237 Beachcomer Drive #109 \$147,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
LISA MCKIM CAR NAR AGT. 562-314-9349
MAIN STREET REALTORS

MANHATTAN BEACH 2-4pm
1144 Walnut Avenue \$2,149,000
5 bedrooms, 4 full Bathroom

NORWALK 12-3PM
3102 Collier Avenue \$346,900
3 bedrooms, 1 full Bathroom

REDONDO BEACH 1-4PM
1214 South Irena Avenue \$1,069,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom

REDONDO BEACH 1-4PM
200 North Catalina Avenue #8 \$969,000
3 bedrooms, 2 full, 1 partial Bathroom
RICK THOMAS AGT. 310-291-1900
R REAL ESTATE CORP.

REDONDO BEACH 1-4PM
2604 Manhattan Beach Blvd \$749,000
5 bedrooms, 1 full Bathroom
GABRIELLE HERENDEEN AGT. 310-433-7313
SHOREWOOD REALTORS

REDONDO BEACH 2-4PM
1925 Mathews Avenue #A \$699,000
3 bedrooms, 3 full Bathroom
DARREN PUJALEY AGT. 310-613-1690
RE/MAX ESTATE PROPERTIES

REDONDO BEACH 1-5PM
16592 Mendocino Circle #16 \$1,275,000
4 bedrooms, 2 full, 5 partial Bathroom
DENISE NICHOLS AGT. 310-717-7438
NWRE BROKERS

HERMOSA BEACH 1-4PM
1720 Ardmore Avenue #222 \$415,000
1 bedroom, 1 full Bathroom
ROB MCGARRY AGT. 310-463-8488
SOUTH BAY BROKERS, INC.

LA HABRA 1-4PM
940 Brighton Street \$350,000
3 bedrooms, 1 full, 1 partial Bathroom

LAKEWOOD 1-4PM
6350 Dashiwood Street \$555,000
3 bedrooms, 3 full Bathroom

LONG BEACH 1-4PM
6711 East Ocean Boulevard \$2,395,000
4 bedrooms, 1 full, 4 partial Bathroom
CRYSTAL GLENNING AGT. 562-754-4104
HOM SOTHENY'S INTERNATIONAL

LONG BEACH 12-4PM
624 Terrino Avenue \$714,900
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
ALDO ZANIER AGT. 562-508-7303
SANDPIPER PROPERTIES

LONG BEACH 1-4PM
6237 Beachcomer Drive #109 \$147,000
2 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
LISA MCKIM CAR NAR AGT. 562-314-9349
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3 bedrooms, 2 full Bathroom
DANNY HART AGT. 310-722-9034
KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY

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