The Energy Conservatory Update Spring 2009

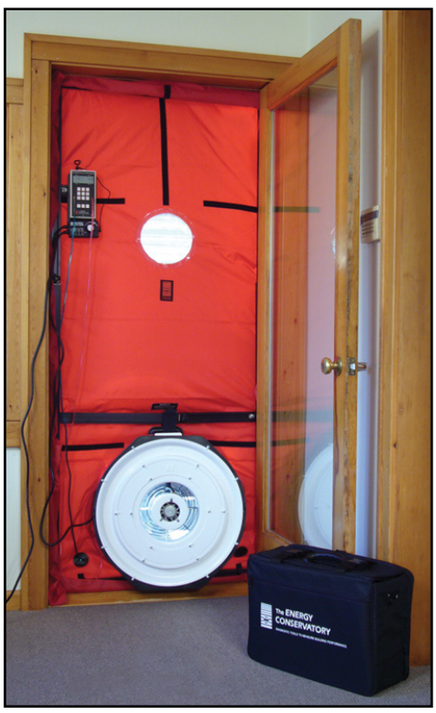
Energy Efficiency Ramp Up

Over the last several months, increased attention has been drawn to energy efficiency in buildings. In February, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, or more commonly called the Stimulus Package. Part of that package was $5 billion for the Low Income Weatherization Program. This $5 billion represents a dramatic increase in funding to local community action agencies. These agencies help low income homeowners by testing, airsealing and insulating their homes to reduce the amount of money spent on energy. President Obama has set a national program goal of weatherizing 1 million homes in 2009. This represents a 6 fold increase in program production compared to 2008. The goal for 2010 is 2 million homes. Along with the increase in funds, program rules have been modified to make more families eligible for weatherization work and to allow more money to go into each house.

These goals, with money to support the effort, are designed to stimulate the economy and get more people back to work. As the money has started to flow from the federal government to the states and then to the local agencies, the local agencies have been ordering equipment to test, airseal and insulate homes. They are also hiring more people to perform tests as well as to perform the remediation work.

Another portion of the Stimulus Package includes $3.1 billion for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grants. This program includes residential and commercial building energy audits as well as financial incentive programs and mechanisms for energy efficiency improvements such as energy savings performance contracting, on-bill financing, and revolving loan funds. This is for non-weatherization programs and can be utilized by homeowners and businesses. These programs are being administered by each individual state. Most states are just starting to determine programs and budgets.

To help navigate the maze of programs, funding levels, requirements, and links to more government resources, a good web source is the Alliance to Save Energy at http://ase.org/.



Expansion at The Energy Conservatory

Over the last several months, TEC has been adding manufacturing and storage space, increased inventory of parts, and hired additional people for manufacturing, sales and technical support staff. Our production department added Brad Canfield and Sam Englund. We have also added Brian Lund in our calibration area. Along with their experience at building all sorts of electro-mechanical devices, they have received extensive training by our highly skilled production staff. Their goal, as with all of us at The Energy Conservatory, is to provide you with the highest quality product. Our production staff is hard at work preparing and finishing Blower Door Systems as quickly as possible.

We have also added Annette Odren, Paul Morin and Peter Burns to our sales and technical support staff. Each has extensive experience in construction as well as working with Minneapolis Blower Doors performing energy audits, training auditors and serving on various industry committees. When you have a question about a Blower Door or Duct Blaster® or any of our equipment, or you are stumped about a building airtightness problem, we will have an answer for you.

The Stimulus Package has created an unprecedented demand for Minneapolis Blower Door™ Systems. Even with our extensive expansion and a dramatic increase in our daily production, we have experienced a significant backlog of product delivery. As of the writing of this newsletter, we have a 7 to 8 week leadtime for the Minneapolis Blower Door, 1 to 2 weeks for the Minneapolis Duct Blaster® System and 1 to 2 weeks for a DG-700 Pressure and Flow Gauge.

To those that have ordered, thank you for your patience as we work to increase our production even further without sacrificing on the quality and support that you have come to expect from The Energy Conservatory. If you have not ordered yet, please be assured that when you order, we are doing everything possible to ship you your product as quickly as possible. If you need an update on your order, please feel free to contact us. It has always been our goal to manufacture the highest quality equipment, backed by the highest quality technical support of any manufacturer in the industry.

Infrared Cameras at The Energy Conservatory

We began selling Flir Infrared Cameras in March of 2007. In the fall of 2008, Flir introduced the new b40, b50 and b60 cameras. These three cameras provide new features such as picture in picture (an infrared picture surrounded by a visible light picture to help identify locations of problems) as well as increased pixel count and increased sensitivity. The cost of the b40 is $4,995, the b50 is $5,995 and the b60 is $7,995.

We carry all 3 models in stock. Our website contains a brochure that describes the b-series cameras with a comparison table of their features. You can find the brochure by visiting our website at http://www.energyconservatory.com/products/products5.htm.

You might see low end infrared cameras on the market that sell for less than $5,000. Be careful and evaluate the specifications. RESNET is developing a standard for using IR cameras for energy auditing. It calls for a minimum number of pixels of 120 x 120. The proposed standard also states that the minimum NETD or thermal sensitivity must be a maximum of 100 mK or 0.10° C. (With NETD or thermal sensitivity the smaller the number the better. You do not want an IR camera for building diagnostics that has a sensitivity of more than 100 mK or 0.10° C.) Cameras that are less sensitive and have fewer pixels make "seeing" building problems more difficult or impossible to detect.

The Infrared Training Center, ITC, part of Flir, has recently updated one of their free webinars on infrared cameras. The webinar is on the i40, i50, i60 as well as the b40, b50 and b60 cameras. It provides a great deal of information about what infrared cameras can and can not do and why. You can learn more by visiting the following website http://www.infraredtraining.com/news_article/29/. In addition to these resources, the Infrared Training Center has added a new course combining infrared and weatherization. It is a 2 day course. It takes place at the Training Center in Massachusetts but is also available for onsite training at your location. Contact ITC for more information.

Electronic Mailing List for future TEC Newsletters

This issue of the TEC Update will be the last one on paper. We are starting up an opt-in list for receiving future TEC Update Newsletters. You can visit The Energy Conservatory website to sign-up for the newsletters. You will see a special link on the website that you can click and will take you to the email sign-up system.

The addition of an electronic mailing list will provide you with worthwhile articles as well as more product and technical updates.

Upcoming Shows

The following is a list of industry tradeshows where TEC will be exhibiting. If you are in the area, stop by the booth and see some of the new products first hand.

ACI Home Performance Conference, Kansas City, MO, April 26 -30, 2009 www.affordablecomfort.org

Illinois Weatherization Conference, Springfield, IL, May 5, www.iacaanet.org

Northeast DOE Weatherization Conference, Lake Placid, NY, May 18 -21, www.09newapconference.org

Iowa Weatherization Conference, Okoboji, IA, June 10 & 11.

National Weatherization Conference, Indianapolis, July 20-23 http://www1.eere.energy.gov/weatherization/conference/index.html

The Energy Conservatory
2801 21st Avenue South, Suite 160
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 4170
St. Paul, MN