



Summer 2010

House Notes

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- Visit our website at www.amipdx.com for maintenance tips and service provider recommendations
- Call Lisa in our office at 503.236.1812 to schedule an inspection

Past Experience Opens Doors to the Future

In the late 1970s I started the company Wind Power Systems, and for approximately eight years I sold, installed and serviced wind powered electric generators, micro hydro systems and photovoltaic arrays. It was a fun and exciting time for alternative energy. State and federal tax credits were available, and people were ready and willing to invest in this kind of equipment. Well, the tax incentives stopped and much of the equipment we installed proved unreliable. Sadly, I closed my doors in the late 1980s.

The experience I gained during those years is now invaluable. We once again have federal and state tax credits for green alternative energy installations. A portion of our utility bills each month goes to a trust fund for monetary incentives to be paid out to people installing alternative energy. Energy Trust of Oregon is the organization that is responsible for disbursing these funds. Recently, they were looking for inspectors to analyze proposals, perform site surveys and inspect installations of wind-powered electric generators. For this kind of work, they needed people who had experience in wind power, but who were not in the business of selling wind-power equipment. That's where AMI fits in. Because we don't sell equipment, but have the necessary expertise, we're able to help the Energy Trust of Oregon disperse their funds wisely.

We review applications for funding, survey the proposed installation areas, consult with the contractors to get the jobs done properly and safely, and then perform final inspections to make sure the installations pass all of the Energy Trust of Oregon requirements. As with home inspections, this sometimes entails reinspections of problems that have been identified and corrected. It's a fun and exciting time again for alternative energy, especially because the equipment is much more reliable and sophisticated.

- Mark Lindgren

Experience isn't expensive, it's priceless.

Reminder: Have your clients visit our website at www.amipdx.com to look for a coupon and save money on their AMI home inspection.

Did you know?

AMI has an infrared camera to help locate leaks and other moisture problems. This is an additional service that can be arranged separate from the home inspection.



Long Term Radon Kits

In addition to the 2-day radon screening that we offer at each home inspection, we also sell one-year radon kits for \$30. These provide homeowners with a broader picture of radon exposure over a full year.





Why Hire an Architect?

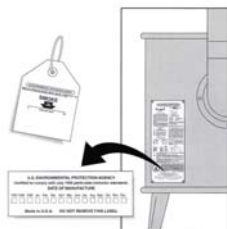
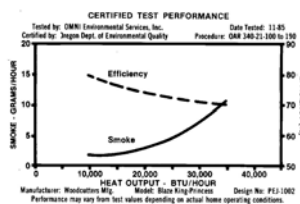
In the course of a home inspection, we often hear clients muse about future plans for their new home - remodeling the kitchen, adding a family room or knocking out some walls to turn two bedrooms into a master suite.

The remodeling process involves design, permitting and building issues. Contractors generally want to focus on building rather than the design and permitting process. For that reason, AMI recommends consulting an architect when considering a major remodeling project.

AMI recently spoke with Rafe Goodblatt of Goodblatt Consulting Services. Rafe is a licensed architect and previously worked at the Portland Bureau of Planning, the city department responsible for issuing building permits. This makes him uniquely qualified to advise on all aspects of the remodeling process. He describes himself as a "home counselor" who can provide practical solutions for building projects and help you avoid headaches at the city building department. We asked Rafe what he considers the three things most likely to hold up receipt of approved permits. His response? "Bad drawings, bad drawings and bad drawings. Pay the money for a professional to get the drawings done correctly."

You may wonder why you should hire someone like Rafe, who charges a fee for his services, when you can usually get a contractor to provide a "free estimate." Well, unlike the contractors, who are trying to get your business, Rafe has no vested interest in whether or not you proceed with a project. A contractor may talk you into a project, and just deal with the problems as they arise - possibly drastically affecting your projected costs. Rafe can anticipate any issues you may run into with design and permitting before you've signed on with a contractor and you can make a more educated decision on whether or not your project is really do-able. Just like a good home inspection, it is probably worth the extra cost now to save yourself money and hassles later.

For more information, Rafe can be reached at (503)734-8210 or ragarchitecture@gmail.com.



Now Woodstoves!!

First it was asbestos, then oil tanks, radon, damaged sewer lines, party line sewers, and now woodstoves! We now have to start watching out for older woodstoves and wood burning inserts. According to the DEQ: all uncertified wood stoves and inserts must be removed and destroyed with the sale of a home that closes after August 1, 2010. Being under contract is not enough. That sale must be final, money in the bank, before August 1st.

How can you tell if the stove or insert is certified? The woodstoves are easier because the different labels someone needs to find are usually visible without taking anything apart. The inserts however, will require a woodstove installer to remove the front surround to expose the back portions of the stove. The DEQ does have a good website for you to view these labels:

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/aq/burning/woodstoves/label.htm>

The DEQ also has some good information for you and any of your clients who have a woodstove in the house they are selling or buying.

We also think it would be a good idea to start warning your clients of this law in case they are not aware of it or a transaction that has a non-conforming stove might not close before the August 1st date. The new owner may feel slighted and want someone to give them a new stove!

If you are interested in reading the Senate Bill please see the attached:
<http://www.leg.state.or.us/09reg/measpdf/sb0100.dir/sb0102.en.pdf>