

## Buyer Beware: Your Home Inspector May Not Check for Energy Efficiency

Recently I asked Dennis Brachfield of [AboutSavingHeat.com](http://AboutSavingHeat.com) to analyze my home's energy efficiency, as he has done for many of my previous homes.

Dennis is truly an expert in this field, and is regularly hired by Xcel Energy to speak on this topic to various audiences. (He was a featured speaker, for example, at last week's Colorado Garden and Home Show.)

Our current home was built in 2006, and we are its first owner, although Rita and I only moved into it last summer. When we purchased the house, I hired a home inspector (of course) to look for problems, and, indeed, we made several demands of the builder to fix this or that problem.

So you can imagine my chagrin when Dennis pointed out several obvious energy wasting issues which had completely eluded me

and my inspector three years ago. Among the things which my inspector had missed was that my home had no cold air returns for my heating system.

Homes with forced air heating should have air returns that are just above the floor for heating and (optional in Colorado) just below the ceiling for air conditioning. All the air returns in my home are just below the ceiling — bad for heating.

Since my home has central air conditioning, we'll keep the warm air returns and install additional cold air returns near the floor. In the winter I'll use magnets to cover the warm air returns, and in the summer I'll move the magnets to cover the cold air returns.

Another issue pointed out by Dennis was that my home has 41 can lights in the ceiling which function as 41 chimneys drawing warm

air out of my living space and into my attic! This, too, went unnoticed by my home inspector.

Most home inspectors are certified by the **American Society of Home Inspectors**, or ASHI. One of the ASHI-certified inspectors I use a lot, **Jim Camp**, told me that ASHI's own standards state that inspectors are **NOT** required to determine the heating or cooling supply adequacy or distribution balance, although he himself does check for many energy related issues such as those I described.

As a result of this learning, I will make it part of my job now as a buyer's agent to look for energy related issues like these and tell my clients what I notice.

Also because of this learning, I have decided to arrange for a free energy analysis of my clients' new homes by Dennis, either at time of purchase or after they've had time to observe issues which they would like analyzed.

### This Week's Featured New Listing:

#### Updated Ranch-Style Home Really Shines

Situated east of North Table Mountain on a 0.7-acre parcel that's zoned for horses is this exquisitely updated home with some of the nicest upgrades I can remember seeing in all my years as a Realtor. Walls have

been removed to create a magnificent kitchen with the very finest cabinetry, granite countertops, and Energy Star appliances (stainless steel, of course), open to a spacious living area with maple hardwood flooring throughout. I was really impressed, and you will be too. From the time you enter the circular gravel driveway to the time you leave, you will love what this home delivers. Being a guy, I loved the 1,092-square-foot garage with workshop and hot & cold water. To learn more, visit the website above.



#### REAL ESTATE TODAY



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