

## **National Survey: Consumers Willing to Pay More for a Green Home – Even If They’re Not Sure What That Means**

*Lower Energy Costs Key to Breaking Perception of Green Homes as a Luxury*

**June 29, 2009, Knoxville, TN** – New results released today from a national survey show most Americans think having a green home is important enough to pay a premium for green features.

The survey, one of four annual surveys conducted by Shelton Group, found nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of consumers said they would be willing to pay a 10 percent or higher premium for a home with a number of green features. Nine percent were willing to pay 30 percent more.

“While consumers might not always be clear on what features should be included in a green home, what is clear is that consumers are increasingly aware, but not 100 percent convinced, that green can be associated with saving money,” said Suzanne Shelton, whose firm conducted the survey. “In today’s economic climate, home builders can really benefit from marketing the money-saving aspects of their homes, as commercial builders have done for years.”

While 53 percent of respondents were able to name at least one green home feature, unaided, the feature they named most often (33 percent) was the most expensive (solar). “This contributes to the consumer perception that green homes cost more and are a luxury,” added Shelton.

While there is no established industry benchmark for the number of features required to categorize a home as green, consumers have high standards. When asked to pick the three required features from a list of 17 possible features, 33 percent said ALL of them would be required. The green home features chosen most often were:

- Renewable electric power generation systems such as solar, geothermal or wind – 25 percent
- Higher efficiency (ENERGY STAR®) appliances – 25 percent
- Water-conserving features (e.g. low-flow showerheads, rain water collection systems) – 21 percent

“This all-or-nothing mentality also contributes to the luxury price perception,” Shelton noted. “We need to do more to explain how green features can actually save homeowners money. Green homes have lower operational costs due to their energy efficiency, water conservation and longer-life components. Builders could even claim long-term healthcare savings, linking the improved indoor air quality of green homes to better health.”

You can learn more about the survey at [www.sheltongroupinc.com/ecopulse](http://www.sheltongroupinc.com/ecopulse).

### **ABOUT THE ECO PULSE SURVEY**

The survey, called Eco Pulse, was geographically stratified to mirror the geographic distribution of the population (111,617,402 households in the contiguous United States). Survey sample data was also weighted slightly to closely match U.S. age ethnicity. The survey, conducted in April and May 2009, yielded 1,006 complete responses, for a 3.09 percent margin of error.

## **ABOUT SHELTON GROUP**

Founded in 1991 by Suzanne Shelton, Shelton Group is an advertising agency located in Knoxville, Tennessee, focused exclusively on motivating mainstream consumers to make sustainable choices. To continuously track shifting consumer perceptions on energy efficiency and sustainability, the agency conducts four proprietary consumer opinion studies annually—Eco Pulse, Energy Pulse®, Utility Pulse and Green Living Pulse. Shelton Group uses those insights to create targeted consumer advertising campaigns for clients ranging from investor-owned utilities and energy-efficient building product manufacturers to consumer products and services companies with a viable green story to tell. Shelton Group has focused in this niche since 1997. Clients include the American Institute of Architects, Black Hills Energy, BP Solar, Cree LED Lighting, e3bank, Fiskars, Johnson & Johnson, Knauf Insulation, South Carolina Electric and Gas, and Vectren Energy.

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