

# Beard Home First Positive Energy Home in Marshall County

By Suzanne Chew  
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A year-and-a-half ago, Logan and Mary Lou Beard were ready to begin construction of their dream home.

After 35 years in a dental practice, the Beards were excited about retirement but they never envisioned their utility bills in the new home would be half of their old, with twice the square footage.

The Beards opted to build the first OG&E "Positive Energy" home in Marshall County, which in turn is saving them hundreds of dollars on their bills.

"When we first met with Michael Herndon, we thought this sort of thing was only for rich people," said Mary Lou Beard. But as the Beards soon learned, having a home which is energy efficient can also be very cost effective to build.

The construction of an energy-efficient home only increases construction costs by 2 to 4 percent, the builder said. However, the savings on utilities and HVAC sizing more than makes up for the slight increase in construction costs.

Throughout construction, OG&E follows rigid guidelines in inspecting the different phases and, in the end, certifies the percentage of air infiltration in the home. An Energy Star home must have less than 35 percent infiltration while a Positive Energy home must be less than 20 percent.

The Beard home came back with only 4.5 percent air infiltration according to final test results, Herndon said.

"With the increased energy costs, we are looking for ways to build a better house with a lot more efficiency," said builder Michael Herndon. And that is exactly what Herndon construction accomplished with the Beard's home.

The Beards are thrilled with their new home and can't imagine anyone who is building not considering a Positive Energy home.

"Now that we have moved in, I would think someone would be absolutely crazy not to go with a positive energy home. It is truly affordable to anyone building a house," said Mary Lou.

In addition to lower utility costs, there are many other benefits of a Positive Energy home: a quieter home, less dust, a very small differential in the attic temperature vs. the temperature in the house, and no drafts or temperature variations from room to room.

"Air infiltration is not something most builders even consider," said Herndon. However, Herndon believes that trend is about to change. "People are asking for "green" homes which are going to force builders to change drastically in the next few years."

The OG&E program underscores the benefit of contracting with builders who use energy-smart designs and whose construction techniques deliver long-term savings for homeowners.

These practices include extensive caulking to halt air infiltration, increased insulation levels, better sealing of duct work, energy-efficient windows and careful testing of the whole-house system.



**MARY LOU** Beard credits homebuilder Michael Herndon for giving her and husband Logan an energy-efficient kitchen in their new "Positive Energy" home. The home is a first for Marshall County and the Beards have seen a 50 percent cut in their utility bills with double the square footage.

The state Department of Commerce website is one of the best and equipped with informational videos on the Best of Building Science in energy efficient homebuilding: [www.bestofbuildingscience.com](http://www.bestofbuildingscience.com). To view a list of Certified Builders statewide, go to [www.oshba.org](http://www.oshba.org), the

website of the Oklahoma State Home Builders Association. Photographs of the home can be seen at [www.herndonconstruction.com](http://www.herndonconstruction.com).

This year, the state association endorsed stringent national guidelines by the National Association of Home Builders Green Building

program.

The national association is the only green building program certified by the American National Standards Institute, which makes for a true third-party certification, setting the gold standard for all programs for consistency.

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