

BRINKMAN

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are popular because of their energy efficiency. He said some of these products are rather new while others have been around for a while.

One example is an insulation Brinkman said has been around for almost 40 years. This insulation is composed of recycled newspapers. Brinkman said this Weather Blanket insulation, which can be found in his store, helps people have more energy-efficient homes.

Brinkman Building Center also offers Andersen windows and doors and Tempco vinyl windows. These products have an energy star rating, which Brinkman said is the benchmark for energy efficiency.

Another energy efficient product offered by Brinkman Building is Solatube. This product is said, on its handout, to be

an "innovation in daylighting." The Solatube Daylighting System uses a patented daylight-capturing dome lens and in-dome reflector to redirect low-angle sunlight and low-angle winter sunlight. The tubing then sends the sunlight through the optical lens in the room's ceiling and into the home.

The Solatube system is used for a variety of rooms including bathrooms, hallways, closets, laundry rooms, kitchens, dens and home offices, family rooms and dining rooms. According to the Solatube pamphlet, this system can transform difficult to light and forgotten rooms by filling them with pure, natural daylight.

"We try to offer the products to help our customers conserve their energy," said Brinkman. Brinkman said many people come in for "green" products to become more energy efficient. However, not only energy-efficient products are "green" prod-

ucts.

One example Brinkman offered of a "green" product the store sells which is not based on energy efficiency, is a special kind of floor joints and I-beams comprised of wood chips. He said this product is "straighter and stronger," as well as being

"green."

"As far as green goes, it's made of smaller trees instead of full-grown trees," said Brinkman. He said that while some people "go green" for energy efficiency, others do it to help out the earth.

"I think the people who do

push for that type of things are concerned for the environment," said Brinkman. He said that the demand for "green" products is increasing as people become more aware of them.

"I just think green is a big catch right now," said Brinkman.

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Shower heads easy to install

By Adrian Sainz
AP Real Estate Writer

Tired of that leaky, single stream shower head left over from the Nixon administration?

If so, there's no need to call Joe the Plumber. Just pick up a wrench and change the shower head yourself, because replacing it is one of the easiest things for a homeowner to do. It's as elementary as just twisting off the aging shower head and screwing the new one to the existing shower arm.

On both ends of the price spectrum, from around \$20 to more than \$150, consumers can find a wide variety of shower heads, from water massagers to hand-held versions.

With a wrench and some thread tape, most shower heads on the market can be changed in a few simple steps.

"The most common thing among consumers is that people don't know that this is easy," said Mark Knurek, senior product manager for Moen Inc. "They think there is something they have to do behind the wall, that they have to install a new arm in."

Shower heads can experience lime buildup that affects water flow, and older shower heads may not be up to current low-flow guidelines, said Amy Matthews, host of two shows on the DIY Network.

Matthews says you should turn off the water supply to the house, or just to the shower, before working on the shower head.

"You also would want to turn on the shower handles and let whatever is sitting in the pipes drain out so you don't have any extra leakage while you're working," Matthews said.

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