



Home Builders Association of Georgia

RAC UPDATE

May 17, 2017

Jim Brown, Chairman

Doug McMonigle, Vice-Chair

Progress Report: New Edition of Energy Code Under Review at DCA:

- An 18 member Task Force is reviewing the 2015 IECC (International Energy Conservation Code)
- Neal Davis, Past President of HBAG and Greater Atlanta HBA, is the HBAG representative to the 2015 IECC Task Force
- Tentative adoption date effective January 1, 2018 (after completion of review, approval by SCAC (State Codes Advisory Committee), GEFA Review and approval by DCA Board. HBAG Past President Tim Williams serves on SCAC

Neal reported to RAC and HBAG Board that he has identified the following as areas of major change and concern. HBAG is looking for opportunities for possible amendments:

- Code as written calls for much tighter ducts (4%) and building envelope (<5 ACH50 Climate Zone 2:<3 ACH50 for CZ: 3&4) (Down from <7 ACH50)
- Whole House mechanical ventilation is mandatory at those levels. Neal is researching and will be trying to insure that Georgia remains at levels that can be achieved without extremely costly ventilation systems.
- The 2015 IECC Wall Impacts: R20 (cavity) insulation or R13 + 5 foam thermal sheathing in Climate Zone 3 and 4 (large portions of Georgia, may require 2 x 6 wall construction (not 2 X 4) in the prescriptive path
- Suggestions have been made to make DET verifiers and HERS raters totally independent third-party inspectors – no connection to builder or HVAC. While there may be some issues, HBAG can point to the overall success in compliance. HBAG will oppose any move to cut down on the number of qualified inspectors.
- Numerous other smaller items like programmable thermostats, more lighting efficiency. But Georgia is ahead with the DET program and testing and also with the upgrades to windows we have made over the past 2 cycles.

At the Energy Code Task Force meeting on May 9, Neal along with James Martin, BOAG, were successful in securing agreement on the following items:

- **Continue to allow R13 insulation in the walls with R38 in the ceiling for all climate zones in Georgia**
- **Requirements for building envelope tightness going to <6ACH50 for all climate zones in Georgia for the first year is in effective. Goes to <5ACH50 the following year for the duration of the code of the cycle.**

- **Solar Heat Gain Coefficient for windows going from .30 to .27 statewide. Many windows being used today already meet this SHGC.**

Other agreement by the Task Force

- **A new voluntary Energy Rating Index (ERI) compliance path**, a 4th option, was added to the 2015 IECC.
- Continued improvements have been made to the ERI path for the 2018 IECC. Brian Shanks, Beazer Homes, Atlanta HBA and member of Leading Builders of America code committee, worked with Neal to get these changes approved by the Task Force for Georgia. This method is primarily being used by large production builders but it is a growing trend around the country.

The Energy Code Task Force is meeting again on June 9. There are some other residential issues still to be decided. There are numerous proposed amendments for the commercial section still to be decided.

The State Codes Advisory Committee is scheduled to meet on June 22 at DCA in Atlanta. A final report of the Energy Code Task Force was scheduled to be discussed at the SCAC. At this time, it appears doubtful that a final report will be ready. Exactly what will be up for discussion on the new Energy Code at the SCAC is still in question. **There will be an update and an RAC meeting to discuss this issue and any proposed action prior to the SCAC.**

Action Needed Now:

- Do not be complacent just because there has been some progress and possible delay.
- Alert members and others that a new Energy Code is on the horizon
 - HBAG is making every effort to minimize impact where possible but there will changes and some cost increases

Please be aware and comply with current code requirements regarding outside air and mechanical ventilation

- Current IRC and Mechanical codes state that “where air infiltration rate is less than 5 air changes per hour, the dwelling unit shall be provided with whole-house ventilation.....”
- Do not falsify your blower door tests.
 - Opening yourself to liability
 - Causing problems for the industry – may not be able to keep DET verifier program – movement to go to independent third party testing

RAC will need your data to determine what are the best and most cost effective methods of managing whole house ventilation with tighter houses in hot humid climates zones like Georgia.

If you have questions or need more information, contact bsleeth@hbag.org.