



Cash in on roof rebates, energy savings

By Lawrence Hollyfield, Special to the Times

Reprinted: tampabay.com

Will a rebate make you rethink your choice of materials for a new roof?

The federal government hopes so, and Progress Energy does, too.

In an attempt to encourage homeowners to make energy-efficient purchases, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 included a tax credit of 30 percent of the cost of materials, up to \$1,500, for homeowners who opted to install Energy Star fixtures, including "qualified metal and reflective asphalt shingles" this year and next.

Progress Energy also has a rebate of 15 cents per square foot for approved reflective roofing materials, up to \$150, but customers need to have a free home energy check ahead of time to be eligible, spokeswoman Suzanne Grant said.

Tampa Electric Co. does not have an energy program specific to roofs, spokesman Rick Morera said.

Available rebates offer cash upfront, but an energy-efficient roof should help every month when the electric bill arrives. The savings will vary, according to the Energy Star Web site, offering the most benefit to homes that are neither well-shaded nor well-insulated. "If . . . the roof is not exposed to much sun, then a reflective roof may not provide a significant benefit."

Frank McKinney is president of SolarShield Metal Roofing, which has moved to Ocala after years in Tampa. He said metal roofs can drop a power bill significantly.

"I guarantee a 25 percent savings in writing to my homeowners who put on a SolarShield *insulated* metal roof," McKinney said. "It's not going to do as much for the homeowners unless they put on an insulated system, but it does make a difference."

Another avenue for offsetting the costs of a new roof may come from insurance companies. David Replogle of South Tampa said his State Farm homeowners premium went down when he had the metal roof installed.

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John Kuczanski, public information manager of Citizens Property Insurance Corp., said no discounts were available specific to metal roofs, but that there were discounts available for roofs in general that met the 2001 Florida Building Code.