

# THE ICYNENE® ADVANTAGE

*A Closer Look at Air Superiority in Action*



Vol. 12, Issue 02

## APPLICATION CASE STUDY: ENERGY EFFICIENT REMODEL OF A HERITAGE HOME

### Synopsis:

- ✓ **Achieved more than a 50% reduction in the size and cost of the HVAC system by installing Icynene® rather than fiberglass insulation**
- ✓ **Improved Indoor Air Quality**
- ✓ **Maintained low moisture/humidity levels, despite extreme outdoor levels**
- ✓ **Reduced energy consumption**

### The Challenge

Built in 1908 and situated within the federally designated historic district of Wilmington, North Carolina, an abandoned home was acquired for rehabilitation by homeowner, Martyn St. David. Deemed to be in a general state of disrepair, the building was to be gutted and restored in order to serve as Martyn's residence as well as her office. This was to be achieved while remaining sensitive to environmental concerns when choosing building materials.

Moreover, Martyn's allergic reactions to mold and mildew demanded a high-performance insulation and air barrier that is dedicated to moisture control. By eliminating air leakage, The Icynene Insulation System® minimizes condensation caused by infiltrating moist/humid air which would otherwise be transported through the building envelope, invading cool, air-conditioned surfaces. Minimizing the opportunity for condensation helps prevent mold growth within the walls and ceilings.

The challenge was to convert this previously abandoned house into an Energy Star™-rated home. To earn the Energy Star™ designation, the home must receive a minimum Home Energy Rating (HERS) of 86, which translates to at least a 30% increase in energy efficiency versus the Model Energy Code.



*This abandoned home in Wilmington's historic district was gutted and restored to meet Energy Star™ standards.*



*Icynene®, a high-performance insulation, was selected to address the homeowner's strong allergic sensitivity and reaction to mold and mildew.*

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The one-story, five-room, 1,104 square foot home was to be converted to 2 bedrooms with a home office. This made the reduction of airborne sounds a key factor when evaluating insulation alternatives.

The original clapboard structure was designed long before air conditioning was a standard household feature, so it was built to circulate air throughout the wall system. In balloon frame tradition, all interior wall stud cavities were open from the crawlspace to the attic, which had vents installed into the gable ends. These gable vents would provide an avenue of escape for the hot air. By incorporating lots of windows for primary ventilation, this design provided for a fairly comfortable home in the days of unlocked doors and no security alarms. However, high humidity levels experienced in North Carolina during the summer months affected the humidity levels inside the home. During these months, interior humidity levels were equivalent to the extreme levels that were present outside.

## The Solution – Insulate with Icynene®

The need for a Healthier, Quieter, More Energy Efficient® living environment inevitably resulted in the decision to install The Icynene Insulation System® in this heritage home. This high-performance, soft-expanding foam insulation was required to tighten the building envelope in order to decrease interior humidity levels, improve indoor air quality, regulate the attic temperature and incorporate a properly-sized heating and cooling system to optimize performance and energy efficiency.

The installation included:

- R-20 (5.5 inches) of The Icynene Insulation System® in the roof deck, which allows the attic temperature to adjust within 10°F of the ambient interior temperature of the house.
- R-13 (3.5 inches) of The Icynene Insulation System® in the walls
- R-20 (5.5 inches) of The Icynene Insulation System® under the floor
- The HVAC system installed was a 10 SEER, one-ton, ductless unit



Icynene® is sprayed directly into the wall cavity. The foam softly expands to fill all of the cracks and crevices around the studs and window casings. Any excess foam is easily trimmed in preparation for drywall.



Icynene® is water-blown and does not emit harmful gases or formaldehyde. An Icynene®-insulated environment is highly recommended for those suffering from allergies, respiratory problems and chemical sensitivities.

## The Results

As a complete air barrier, The Icynene Insulation System® helps prevent the infiltration of warm, moist air that can condense and lead to the growth of mold and mildew. By sealing out dust, allergens, odors and pollutants, Martyn does not have to worry about the detrimental effects caused by poor indoor air quality, which would otherwise irritate her allergies. She also notices much less dust around the house, which causes even less disruption to her respiratory condition.



After the Icynene® application, blower door test data confirmed that this home met and exceeded the energy efficient requirements for designation as an EPA Energy Star™ Home.



Icynene® was key in restoring this heritage home, which was once considered irreparable. Now, the home provides the owner with a Healthier, Quieter, More Energy Efficient® environment.

Icynene's philosophy of building tight and ventilating right proved to be a successful technique, according to the data supplied by the homeowner:

- The house was designated as an Energy Star™ home, exceeding the EPA requirements of HERS 86.
- Total HVAC energy costs for a 52-week period from May 2002 to May 2003 were \$343.04, for an average of \$0.94 per day.<sup>1</sup>
- The installation cost of the HVAC system amounted to \$1,367. Had the house been insulated with fiberglass, the HVAC contractor estimated that a 2½-ton unit would have been required, with the installed unit costing approximately \$3,500. Icynene® saved the homeowner \$2,133.
- Humidity readings for the period between May 2002 and October 2002 ran between 44-50% inside, even when the humidity levels exceeded 90% outside.<sup>2</sup>
- The attic temperature never exceeded 7°F above the ambient temperature of the conditioned living space.<sup>3</sup> The temperature was monitored during the months of August and September 2002, when the exterior temperatures ran above 92°F for extended periods of time.

With regard to the performance of Icynene® as a method of minimizing the intrusion of airborne sounds, Martyn attests that the office is not invaded by unwanted noises. As the sidewalk was being replaced near the home during the summer months of 2002, Martyn's work space was not affected; "Even with the back hoe operating only 25 feet from where I sit in my office, there was no need to raise my voice in conversation with staff to compensate for the sounds or vibrations, as they were minimal".

## The Icynene®-insulated Heritage Home:

- ✓ Created an airtight building envelope to minimize moisture and condensation, thus helping to prevent mold growth
- ✓ Optimized energy efficiency with HVAC rightsizing and lower energy costs
- ✓ Decreased and maintained interior humidity levels
- ✓ Minimized the intrusion of airborne sounds to create a quieter work and living environment

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## The Icynene Insulation System®

Icynene® is a low-density soft foam insulation, which is sprayed into/onto walls, crawlspaces, underside of roofs, attics and ceilings by Icynene Licensed Dealers. Sprayed as a liquid, it expands to 100 times its volume in seconds to create a superior insulation and air barrier. Every crevice, crack, electrical box, duct and exterior penetration is effortlessly sealed to reduce energy-robbing random air leakage. The Icynene Insulation System® adheres to the construction material and remains flexible so that the integrity of the building envelope seal remains intact over time.

Icynene® is ideal for residential, commercial, industrial and institutional indoor applications. The product is:

- Healthier:** Water is the only blowing agent. Icynene® contains no CFCs, HCFCs, HFAs, HFCs, formaldehyde or volatile organic chemicals. It seals out dust, pollen and other allergens from entering the structure. As an air barrier, Icynene® minimizes the potential for condensation and the subsequent mold and mildew.
- Quieter:** By sealing the building envelope, Icynene® effectively minimizes airborne sounds. Icynene® is perfect for reducing unwanted noises from home theaters, plumbing runs, roads and playrooms.
- More Energy Efficient:** Icynene® delivers up to 50% energy savings versus traditional insulation.

Information about The Icynene Insulation System® can be obtained by calling Icynene Inc. (800-758-7325), visiting the website [www.icynene.com](http://www.icynene.com), or contacting your local Icynene Licensed Dealer.

Endnotes:

1. Progress Energy
2. Weems & Plath Weather Station
3. Oregon Scientific digital/dual thermometer located on the floor of the sealed attic

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