

Christine Estes



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**"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors;  
we borrow it from our children."**

—Native American Proverb

Dear Friend,

*April 2008*

One of the hottest trends in housing is creating a "green" home. In fact, in two places where Mother Nature has wiped the slate clean, green homes are all the rage. In the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans, actor Brad Pitt has headed the creation and donation of 150 new environmentally-friendly houses that will be 75% more energy efficient. In Kansas, after being completely destroyed by a tornado, the ironically named town of Greensburg will be rebuilt as the nation's first green town.

Green homes save money by lowering energy bills and reducing a home's impact on the environment. They can also make us feel better – both physically and emotionally. That's why this month's flyer is a guide to turning your home into a green machine. Low-flow plumbing fixtures and compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) are great examples of easy changes that will benefit your pocketbook and the environment. And you'll find many more interesting tips like this as you read on.

Did you know that swapping out one traditional light bulb for a CFL will reduce carbon emissions by 150 pounds a year? Doing your part for the environment is now as easy as changing a light bulb!

Before I get into an update on the local market for you (please see the reverse side of this letter), I do have a few reminders for you.

- This Saturday's class is Sleeping Better Naturally – just register on the web site
- Saturday, the 26<sup>th</sup>, is Paper Shredding Day at my office in Totem Lake. Come one, come all with whatever you'd like to see safely shredded. 10am to 2pm.
- Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, at 7pm in Seattle is The Quickest Way to \$100K class. Come to understand more about how to make your money work for you the way a bank does – from tax benefits to a Return on Investment analysis.

An open invitation as always – bring a friend, or just send your friend! It's my way to continually deliver service to you and the people in your life.

Please read on for the numbers...

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I expect that you, too, have been curious about the local market trends as Spring comes in. All the monthly numbers are on the web site at [www.TheChristineEstesGroup.com](http://www.TheChristineEstesGroup.com). And when you're just looking at month over month, March 2008 over February 2008, the Eastside is up and Seattle Metro is down. But remember my comment earlier this year about individual data points and how they can be misleading?

So I've calculated the quarterly numbers (January through March, for the last five years; let's call it Q1) for averages so that I can tell you about the trends that we're seeing. It all comes down to adjustments – we are seeing adjustments here, too, and that's a good thing. For the Q1 numbers, the Eastside is down 5% this year vs. last, while Seattle Metro is up 10%. Ah, but the Eastside growth in 2006 was 18% and in 2007 was 16%, while Seattle was at 13% and then flat. Makes more sense that the Eastside needs to adjust now, doesn't it?

You may recall that I've also been reporting that the January and February Snohomish and Pierce Counties' numbers are down as compared to King County. That makes more sense now too. Snohomish County growth matched King County growth in 2005 and outpaced it in 2006 and 2007. Pierce County is even more dramatic – it outpaced King County in 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006. And 2007 was only one point lower than King. You've heard me say that the areas with the hottest growth are the ones that need to 'adjust' the most. Perhaps that's why King County is only down 1% for the quarter, while Snohomish is down 4% and Pierce is down 7%.

We'll obviously have a lot more to tell you once we have another quarter's worth of data, but in the meantime, check the monthly trends out to get a sense of the direction. We'll be back with more in May!

Sincerely,



***Always striving to get you good information and resources so that you can make good decisions...if you know of someone who would appreciate the level of service I provide, please call me with their name and business number, and I'll be happy to follow up and take great care of them.***

# Going Green Saving Green

**M**aking your home more energy efficient is often as simple as pulling a plug—unplugging appliances when they are not in use can save \$70 a year on your electricity bill. Read our tips for more easy ways you can save money and reduce your impact on the environment.

## Here are some ways to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and help stop global warming.

- Swapping out one incandescent light bulb with a CFL will save 150 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.
- For every mile that you walk, bike or carpool, you will save one pound of carbon dioxide.
- Recycling half of your home's waste will save 2,400 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.
- Properly inflated tires improve gas mileage by 3%, and every gallon of gasoline saved prevents 20 pounds of carbon dioxide waste.
- Using less hot water reduces energy consumption. Installing a low-flow showerhead and washing your clothes in cold or warm water can save up to 850 pounds of carbon dioxide.
- Adjusting your thermostat by 2° in the winter and summer can save 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.
- Planting trees reverses the effects of carbon dioxide. A single tree will absorb 1,200 pounds of carbon dioxide in its lifetime.



### One very green bedroom

- 1 Ceiling fans provide great air circulation and reduce summer air conditioning bills.
- 2 A low-flow showerhead saves water.
- 3 Hardwood floors require no vacuuming and consequently save electricity.
- 4 Shutters on doors and windows act as great insulators and add a stylish look to any room.
- 5 Using CFL bulbs saves electricity, and putting lights on timers also conserves energy when away.
- 6 Natural fibers on bedding make recycling easier when the time comes to redecorate.

## Dream home, green home

**Thermostats:** Installing a programmable thermostat to keep air conditioning at 78°F when it's hot outside and your heating system at 68°F when it's cold can help save up to 20% in heating and cooling costs—or \$100 a year on your energy bill. If every family in the United States did this, we would reduce carbon dioxide by more than 90 billion pounds.

**Water heaters:** Water heating accounts for about 13% of home energy costs, so turn your water heater down to 120° or the “Normal” setting when home and to the lowest setting when away. Also consider wrapping your water heater in an insulated blanket. You'll save 1,000 pounds of carbon dioxide a year.

**Light bulbs:** According to climatecrisis.org, energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL) last 10 times longer than regular incandescent bulbs, use 60% less energy and can save 75% of lighting costs. If every American home replaced five incandescent bulbs with five CFL bulbs, we would save as much as \$6.5 billion a year in electricity costs and prevent greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to that from more than eight million cars.

**Sprinklers:** Use a sprinkler timer. Timers will automatically shut off your sprinkler system after a set period so you don't have to remember. Also, use sprinklers that emit large drops of water, low and close to the

ground (not the sidewalk or street), and water early in the morning. This will ensure that the water soaks into the soil instead of evaporating.

**Green energy:** The decision to switch to green energy (wind or solar-powered) should be made on a cost-by-cost, region-by-region basis. CIBC World Markets reports that buying a solar system can yield homeowners a 6% return on their investment and take 16 years to pay off. Depending on the state you live in, you also may be eligible for a refund or other incentive when you use solar energy.



Solar-powered garden lights recharge themselves every day, look stylish and can be repositioned any time you want!



**M**aking your home more energy efficient is not only good for the environment—it's good for your bank balance. ABC News reports that the average family spends nearly \$2,000 a year on energy bills, and simply heating and cooling their homes accounts for half of that bill. Sealing your home's "envelope"—ensuring that walls, floors, ceilings and the roof are well insulated—can save up to 10% on your annual energy bill and cut down on carbon dioxide emissions.

## SAVE MONEY AND SAVE THE PLANET.

Whether you're remodeling your current home or designing a new one, you have a great opportunity to incorporate some green design principles into your space.

**Kitchen:** Buy ENERGY STAR® qualified appliances and equipment—they're up to 40% more efficient.

**Bathroom:** Showers account for 32% of home water use, so consider installing a high-efficiency or low-flow showerhead. Also, get those leaky fixtures repaired and save up to 20 gallons of water per day (or 200 gallons per day, if it's a defective toilet).

**Carpet:** According to *Domino* magazine, 4.7 billion pounds of carpet is dumped in landfills annually because its synthetic components can't be recycled. What's more, synthetic rugs and carpets can release harmful fumes in your home for weeks after installation. Try using carpets and rugs made from natural fibers, which can often be recycled.

**Wallpaper:** Look for wallpaper made from fast-growing, renewable resources or recycled paper. It takes 70-90% less energy to make recycled paper and prevents deforestation worldwide.

**Paint:** When painting walls, make sure you buy just enough paint to eliminate waste. Use an online paint calculator (try [www.artsparx.com/paintcalculator.html](http://www.artsparx.com/paintcalculator.html)) to help determine the right amount for the job.

**Landscaping:** Plant trees on the east and west side of your house to keep it cool in the summer and warm in the winter. The right tree in the right place can reduce the sun's heat by 20-50%, and evergreen trees, shrubs and vines can offer natural insulation in the winter. For resources, go to [www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com) and [www.gardensalive.com](http://www.gardensalive.com).

**Design materials:** Avoid heavily packaged products to reduce waste and cut down on carbon emissions. Also, check into the products you're buying for your home and see how eco-friendly they are. Try [www.thedailygreen.com](http://www.thedailygreen.com).

## 150 MPG is near!

GM has built muscle cars like the Corvette for years, but their newest passion is an electric car designed to deliver 150 mpg, named the Volt. The company plans to unveil the vehicle in 2010. The car is designed to run 40 miles solely on electricity before a small gasoline engine kicks in to recharge the advanced lithium batteries.

## Think globally, buy locally.



Did you know that the average distance your food travels from farm to plate is nearly 1,500 miles? A huge amount of fossil fuel is used to transport foods such long distances, contributing to global climate change. Even the refrigeration required to keep your food from spoiling consumes a significant amount of energy.

Consider buying from local farms. Local foods from small farms are fresher, undergo minimal processing and contain fewer preservatives than food shipped long distances. When you shop, remember to bring reusable bags to tote your purchases. Every year, Americans throw away 100 billion polyethylene plastic bags, and less than 1% of them are recycled. The bags take up to 1,000 years to dissolve; when they do, they leave dangerous toxins behind. Experts say the bags also kill millions of animals every year.