

Benefits of the Pre-Sale Home Inspection

by Andi Peterson Brown

There's always been location, location, location. And now there's inspect, inspect, inspect. In today's real estate market, contracts are almost always contingent upon property inspections. And while buyers are traditionally the party that initiates this process, it is now becoming more common for sellers to perform pre-sale home inspections before their homes hit the market.

A pre-sale home inspection has numerous benefits that can make for a smoother and less stressful close of escrow. Those benefits include the ability to:

Set a More Realistic Price – Having a more accurate picture of a home's true condition is essential to setting a price to which the market will respond positively. If desire and budget allow, repairs can be done ahead of time, preempting surprises down the line and allowing the home to make a first impression that is as appealing as it is accurate.

Absorb Impact – Buyers tend to be more receptive to potential issues when they are aware of them up front. Costly and unexpected surprises that pop up halfway through the deal can be challenging for both parties to accept and sometimes become deal breakers.

– Buyers will still perform their own inspections, but a pre-sale inspection will allow for fewer surprises that come with a price tag. Awareness of problems ahead of time allows a seller to mitigate issues and/or market the home with those repair costs in mind.



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Going Solar—Two Years Later

By Andy Scheck



The biggest of our three solar panel arrays holds 16 of the 32 panels.

Photo Andy Scheck

The time of big bucks government tax rebates or credits from solar panel installation is over, so is it still worth helping the state meet its renewable energy goals? California's goal is to increase its procurement from eligible renewable energy resources to 33% of total by 2020.

Our 6.5Kw home solar system, purchased in 2009, gave us 44% in rebates and incentives. An installer told us today's system price is 7% less, but the rebates are only 33%. The same system we bought in 2009 would cost \$2,700 more today.

Let's look at what made us invest in solar power originally. Our motivation was a mix of saving money, helping the environment, adding to our house value and being one of a growing group of renewable energy producers. Like many we try to save energy whenever we can but with a pool, air conditioning and a home office we use power all day long.

In 2008 we attended a presentation by a solar company at St. Mary's College. Shortly afterwards we contacted the company to take measurements and give us a

quote.

Roof position and shade had a big influence on the placement and performance of our system. We decided to take out one tree in front of the house. We planned to do that sooner or later anyway. That opened up a better roof position, which allowed us to get higher performance while installing a smaller system.

Take the time to talk about different installation options with a solar system provider. Solar systems are designed for 30 years of use and a slightly better performance will add up over the years.

Solar panels produce DC power which has to be converted to AC before being uploaded to the grid. That is done with an inverter; ours is located inside the garage because we didn't like the look of the box outside. Inverters last approximately 12 years and the replacement cost is about \$3000. The solar panel mounts and frames are black to match our black roof.

The predictions for our generated power and energy savings were as promised. ... continued on next page