

things you should know about

# Window Shopping



**Belinda Adamson**  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Aspen Home Improvement, Inc.**  
Lancaster

mentation on independent information on the ratings on the window products they offer. Or better still, check them out for yourself. Before you go out window shopping, arm yourself with some information. Here are a few excellent sources.

*National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC)—www.nfrc.org*

*U.S. Department of Energy  
www.energy.gov*

*American Architectural Manufacturers Association  
www.aamanet.org*

If you don't have internet access, visit our showroom and I'll be happy to give you printed reports.

## How important is the U-Factor?

The U.S. Department of Energy says "The lower the U-Factor, the more energy efficient the window is." The National Fenestration Rating Council says, "One of the best ways to measure the effect of windows on building energy use is known as a U-Factor. The lower the U-factor the greater the window's resistance to heat flow and the better its insulating value."

The Department of Energy is currently evaluating potential window criteria parameters for 2009, 2012 and 2015. In the Pennsylvania area they are primarily looking for U-Factors to be in the range of 0.20 - 0.27 by 2015. I know a few points may not sound like much but if each point is equivalent to a 3% increase in energy efficiency a difference from 0.35 (the average vinyl window that has the minimum *Energy Star* requirements) and a 0.24 (a *Starmark* window) double pane would be a savings of 57%. That is a lot of money and a huge factor for your fuel savings.

In today's economy, it is essential to conserve energy, not only for cost purposes but also for environmental reasons. In today's window material product options, you have a choice of wood, vinyl, aluminum or cellular composite.

## The highest priced window doesn't mean it's the best.

One of the strongest features of cellular composite material is energy efficiency. This material insulates substantially better than vinyl, wood, or aluminum.

*Starmark* windows are recognized for their cost effectiveness, low environmental impact, proven performance, and reliability in dry and high moisture and humidity environments.



Aspen Home Improvement, Inc. • 2653 Lititz Pike, Lancaster • 569.3700

"The very best"—a few short words with a huge meaning. That's our goal at Aspen Home Improvement. We never tried to be anything else. Aspen Home Improvement has just recently been awarded the exclusive dealership of the world's most advanced energy-efficient window, the *Starmark*.

Established 18 years ago in Reading and moved to Lancaster 3 years later, Aspen has built a solid foundation and an extensive customer base. We specialize in external products for your home—windows, siding, doors, roofing, decks, sunrooms, soffit, fascia, and gutters.

Our installers are not "Jack of all trades" but *Certified Master Installers*. Aspen prides itself on protecting the environment so much so that we have put in years of research, now being able to provide you with the "greenest window on the planet." Aspen Home Improvement is home of the #1 nationally-rated energy-efficient window. A bold statement, but it's true.

We are a family-owned company you can trust—our non pro-rata warranty applies not only while you own the home but for subsequent owners as well. Should you experience accidental damage to your Aspen windows? No problem, Aspen products and labor are covered for life.



A corner section of a quality vinyl window and a *Starmark* window.

Things in the window industry are really getting hot or should I say "green?" If you haven't shopped for windows for a while you're in for a treat. It seems everyone is looking for *Energy Star* windows and every window company happily supplies them. The problem is it's like buying a car without four wheels—they all have them. (Unless you get the old three wheeler car from England called the Reliant Robin.) That's where it's good to get an independent review on what to buy and why.

## Where do I get independent window information?

The *Energy Star* ratings program by the National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) allows you to compare window products and determine which window offers the best performance and value. The "U" rating is required to be independently tested for any company that wants to be *Energy Star* approved.

Ask the company(ies) you are getting quotes from to provide you with docu-



A good cellular composite window should be:

- 70% better insulator than wood;
- 214% better insulator than vinyl; and
- 1600% better insulator than aluminum.

Cellular composite outperforms wood for the following reasons:

- does not absorb moisture like wood;
- better insulator;
- impervious to rotting;
- resistant to insects;
- hard dent-resistant surface; and
- high-performance paintable surface.

Cellular composite outperforms rigid vinyl by:

- higher flexural modulus (stiffness);
- lower Coefficient of Thermal Expansion (CTE);
- higher Heat Deflection Temperature (HDT); and
- higher softening point.

Need we say more about the way cellular composite outperforms aluminum? Okay, let's repeat the most impressive comparison—1600% better insulator than aluminum!

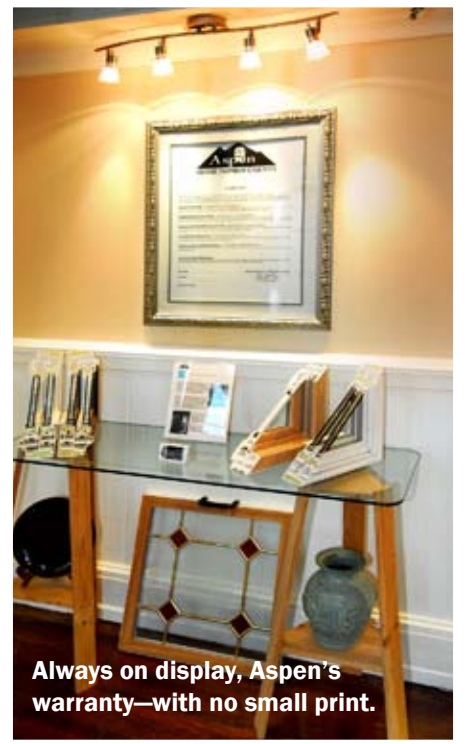
**So why wouldn't you choose a cellular composite window now that you know the difference?**

With every source of heating for your home going up year after year it only makes sense to try and reduce your bills. But the one thing you don't want to do is spend more money thinking you're saving money when it's costing you more to recoup.

If you replace your windows with high quality *Energy Star* windows (not high price), you should see a savings immediately. Your thermostat should be able to be turned back the same day of installation. Thus saving you money right off the bat.

In 1999, people didn't talk about carbon-neutral or zero-energy homes, and the American public was largely unconcerned about global warming. At that time, there were only 7,000 *Energy Star* certified homes. Now, there are more than 800,000. A substantial difference, we heard at the NAHB National Green Building Conference in New Orleans. Even the insurance industry is studying whether to offer discounts to certified green homes.

So now you have all the info you need to make a sound decision on purchasing windows. Or do you? Take the test



below to see what you remember.

- Why is the U-Factor important?
- Where can I get independent information?
- What is the strongest/best material for windows?
- What is the percentage savings to every point difference?
- When should you notice the fuel savings on your utility bills?

R&A

**Aspen**  
HOME IMPROVEMENT

- WINDOWS
- DOORS
- SIDING
- SOFFIT FACIA
- GUTTERS
- SUNROOMS
- ROOFING
- *and More!*

VISIT US IN OUR SHOWROOM OR AT [aspenwindows.com](http://aspenwindows.com)

FREE ESTIMATES  
569-3700  
PARKING IN REAR

Open 7 days a week

Aspen Home Improvement, Inc. • 2653 Lititz Pike • Lancaster