

The future's in the tank(less)

As energy costs continue to soar across the country, people are scrambling to find ways to reduce their energy bills. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, replacing standard electric storage tank water heaters with tankless ones can save consumers up to 34 percent of their bill. They also report that tankless water heaters can be 24 to 34 percent more energy efficient for homes that use 41 gallons or less of hot water daily. Additionally, the DOE advises that you can see an energy savings of 27 to 50 percent if you install a tankless water heater at each hot water outlet.

Tankless water heaters, also referred to as demand or instantaneous water heaters, are well worth consid-

ering when looking for ways to reduce energy costs. "Many people aren't aware of just how much energy their water heater uses," says Ken Berke, chief executive officer of DesignerPlumbing.com, which specializes in tankless water heaters, decorative plumbing, and related home improvement products. Berke says people are always shocked when they find out their energy savings could be up to 50 percent. Water heating bills are the third largest energy expense a home has and usually account for around 16 percent of utility costs. Using tankless water heaters can help reduce those numbers. Instead of the standard-type heaters, which cause standby heat losses, tankless water heaters heat the water directly without using a storage tank. The fact that you don't have to wait for water to

heat up is another benefit to consumers. Homes that use this type of system never run out of hot water as long as they stay within the range of the heater purchased.

Sizes range from small large to extra large and can be powered by natural gas (NG), liquid propane (LP), or electric. Higher efficiency models use a computer controlled electronic ignition for on-demand heating applications at maximum efficiency. Some models are available with hydraulically controlled ignitions for areas with great threats of power outages. High altitude applications are now possible through the use of certain models that maximize efficiency even when breathable air is limited. Certain models may be used for hydronic floor and wall heating as well.