

## Green Incentives

A company institutes its own rebate incentive program for energy-efficient upgrades.

This year, **BOWA Builders**, in McLean, Va., began giving clients an incentive to choose BOWA-recommended environmentally conscious upgrades by rebating the company's fees on up to \$100,000 in related costs. "For those upgrades, we will not charge any of our overhead and profit," CEO Larry Weinberg says.

For example, the company recommends closed cell foam insulation. With BOWA's Environmental Incentive Program (EIP), the client only pays the difference in cost between fiberglass and the foam materials. BOWA Builders caps the EIP so the upgrades cannot exceed 50% of the cost of the whole project.

Weinberg says he was concerned about the hypocrisy of encouraging clients to spend money on green practices while his company then benefits from that additional spending. BOWA Builders provides clients with a list of recommended upgrades. "We tried to be

realistic," he says. Besides foam insulation, other recommendations include a green roof, a geothermal system, high-efficiency HVAC, LED or Energy Star lighting, and low-VOC paints and finishes.

Weinberg says that new federal and state tax credits and rebates are also encouraging homeowners by decreasing the investment cost. "We thought that if we helped a little as well, maybe it would help move the needle a bit," he says.

BOWA sent out a press release about its program, but most client education about green practices and EIP occurs during the remodeling process. "We are typically involved early on in projects in partnership with the client and architect," Weinberg says. "We are always providing alternatives — it becomes part of the discussion." Three clients — one of whom opted to install a geothermal system — have taken advantage of the program and now have projects under construction. —N.P.

Photo: courtesy Alters

