

Heat from page 1F

Others he's been involved with include Hampton Elementary School in Rochester, a newspaper production plant in Sterling Heights and a hospital in Flint.

Hawkins said his company is now heating about 80 job sites around the state. Those include Diversey Corp. in Plymouth, a hospital in Ann Arbor and a fire/public safety structure in Grosse Pointe.

Temporary furnaces used on commercial projects burn natural gas or propane.

"Natural gas is approximately half the cost of propane," Hawkins said. "They use propane when portability is required."

What a gas bill

The daily natural gas cost to run the monster four million BTU furnace set at 60 degrees at Diversey would approach \$240 in January, \$32 in April, Hawkins estimated.

Units of 600,000 or one million BTUs are most commonly utilized on commercial jobs, and gas charges generally would be proportionally lower, he said.

Size of a building project, materials used in construction and natural air infiltration determine what size temporary furnace is needed.

Rental equipment charges range from \$11 per day to \$4,000 per season, Hawkins said.

Few residential builders apparently use temporary portable heating systems.

"Typically, what happens is we go in there and frame the building in conditions like today (snow and cold)," said Dens Christy, president of C&C Custom Builders in Bloomfield. "We'd install the permanent heating system (furnace) and fire it up."

That's very inefficient, Christy con-

ceded, but it does provide adequate warmth to do other rough work inside like installing heating ducts. Once that's done, there's enough heat to drywall and handle other finishing touches.

Eric Guidobono, president of Cambridge Homes in Novi, confirmed that procedure for winter residential construction.

He literally hangs the permanent furnace from floor joists, completes concrete work, moves the furnace to its permanent position, finishes the duct work, then moves on to drywall.

"It's good enough as long as the house is insulated," Guidobono said. "I don't know any other way of doing it that's cost effective."

Occasionally, portable units fueled by propane will be used as supplemental heat sources on larger houses during construction, Guidobono added.



Window treatment: Windows have become increasingly important as people remodel their existing baths or design new baths for their homes, said Chris Allen, sales manager for Fella Window and Door of West Bloomfield.

Houses grow in size as families shrink

(AP) — If you're buying a new home, chances are it'll have three bedrooms, central air conditioning and a two-car garage.

And while the size of the typical American family is shrinking, builders have been adding floor space, according to a survey released by the Departments of Commerce and Housing and Urban Development.

The survey showed little change in the characteristics of houses built in 1991 and in 1992. But it found "significant changes" between 1988 and 1992.

"For example," the summary said, "the median size of new one-family houses has increased by 110 square feet, or 6 percent" during the five-year period. The median means half of the homes were larger and half were smaller.

Generally, new houses were larger in the Northeast and South, where the median size was 2,000 square feet and 1,945 square feet, respectively. They measured 1,890 square feet in the West and 1,965 square feet in the Midwest. The departments reported earlier that 608,000 new homes were sold in 1992, 10.4 percent more than in 1991 and the largest number since 650,000 were sold in 1989.

The median price was \$117,000 last year, down 9.2 percent from \$128,900 a year earlier. Fifty-nine percent of the homes built last year had three bedrooms. Twenty-nine percent had four or more and 12 percent had two or less.

Seventy-seven percent of the new homes were installed with central air conditioning, including 97 percent of those located in the South. Central air also was found in 77 percent of the homes in the Midwest, 54 percent in the West and 63 percent in the Northeast.

Perhaps recognizing the growing mobility of the American population, builders equipped 64 percent of their homes with two-car garages.

Eleven percent had garages for three or more cars and 8 percent had room for one. Another 2 percent had carports, while 15 percent offered no automobile protection.

The survey found that 65 percent of the homes used natural gas for heat; 29 percent used electricity; 4 percent, fuel oil, and 2 percent, "other types or none."

Sixty-six percent of the new houses were heated by warm-air furnaces; 24 percent by heat pumps and 6 percent by hot water or steam. Five percent of the homes either had no heating system or used "other types" such as electric baseboards, radiant heat or space heaters.

Complementing the heating systems were single fireplaces in 58 percent of the homes. Six percent of the structures had two or more fire-

places, while 36 percent had none. The exterior of 33 percent of the homes was wood; 23 percent, vinyl siding; 21 percent, brick; 14 percent, stucco; 5 percent, aluminum siding, and 4 percent, cinder block, stone and other types of material.

Lumber from page 1C

"To get lumber prices down, you need production," he said. "As quick as it went up, it can go down. A lot of lumber (pricing) is psychological."

Jones, from Georgia-Pacific, observed that not only has the number of houses going up nationally increased, but so has their size, further affecting lumber inventory.

Robert R. Jones, a West Bloomfield builder and a BASM director (no relation to Chuck Jones), believes that a timber summit would focus public attention on harvesting limitations

and break the gridlock affecting supply and price.

"Opening up more land certainly would open up more product," builder Jones said. "My understanding is there are many mills that would like to operate with three shifts that are only operating one."

Lumber typically accounts for just under 30 percent of his building expenses, Jones said. "Lumber affects cabinets, windows, trim, obviously the roof. It includes rough framing, trusses, flooring. It cuts across so many items in the house. Where it's

really going to hurt is affordable housing."

Jobs and tax revenue also could be at risk if residential builders cut back on production, Capaldi said.

The construction of 1,000 houses generates more than \$45 million in wages, \$18.8 million in federal, state and local tax revenues and almost \$2 million in property taxes, he reported.

"For just one single family home you're talking about the employment of an average of 16 to 20 different subcontractors and suppliers," Capaldi said.

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