

It was the resounding success of the Building America and Environments for Living™ programs with the Las Vegas division of Pulte Homes that brought the same work to Pulte Homes in Houston (In Las Vegas, the high performance Pulte Homes have meant increased sales, higher profit margins, and reduced callbacks). “What really impressed me was the great culture of the employees and contractors,” says Tim Mayo, Vice President of Construction for Pulte Homes in Houston. Mayo wanted to enhance the company culture in Houston in just the same way.

But bringing the two programs to Houston required lots of dedication and hard work — Houston is whole different climate and building environment than Las Vegas. “The added air sealing details, particularly in the conditioned attics and at the soffits, proved to be a real challenge,” relates Mayo. The solution in this case proved to be highly professional spray foam urethane application, combined with “bird blocking” at the troublesome eaves. The switch to high performance vinyl windows was also challenging. The Houston window market is almost exclusively aluminum single-pane. Both price and availability were a problem. In this case, Pulte Homes leadership in the Houston marketplace is likely to provide the solution — Pulte demand for higher performance windows has a new local producer planning start-up in Houston over the next year or so.

There have been several bright spots along the way. Local Pulte Homes HVAC contractor, Ray Yates of Big Tex, proved to be the biggest Building America supporter, right from the start. “He was already delivering duct leakage testing at 5% and felt that with the whole house performing at Building America standards, his call backs would be reduced,” says Mayo. The air sealing details and high performance windows just made it easier for Yates to do his job, such as placing supply registers where they made the most sense, simplifying duct layout. And Mayo could just not say enough about their air sealing contractor, Commercial and Industrial Applicators. Their commitment and attention to detail has been critical to meeting Building America performance standards.

Another distinction of Pulte product in Houston is the Environments for Living™ energy guarantee. As of July 1, 2002, every new Pulte Home in Houston will be either gold or platinum level — that means 30% to 50% greater energy efficiency for Houston Pulte buyers. The buy-in from the sales staff was immediate and complete. “No one else is doing the EFL Platinum energy guarantee,” says Mayo. “They love this program.” Platinum-level Pulte Homes will include a built-in dehumidifier, a big plus in the hot, humid climate of Houston. Standard issue equipment has proven effective for the whole house because of the air distribution provided by the controlled mechanical ventilation and right-sized, high-efficiency air conditioner.

Mayo feels that the most important change at Pulte Homes in Houston with the Building America process has been the sense of pride that comes with the quality of work. Pulte has two to three times more inspections under Building America and this has definitely caught the attention of employees, subcontractors and suppliers. The Houston market is unique in that the county has NO municipal inspections, so the Pulte program is an industry stand-out. On occasion, the added inspection can pose scheduling challenges for site superintendents, but Mayo remains convinced that it’s worth the extra effort.

Mayo has read the [Builder’s Guide – Hot Humid Climates](#) from “cover to cover.” He and his staff have found that hands-on demonstration during training is most effective with staff and trade contractors. He did relate that their energy raters have taken to customizing, enlarging, and laminating Builder Guide details for use on job sites!

Mayo clearly stands behind the Pulte Homes commitment in Houston to Building America. He moved into his own new Platinum EFL Pulte just at the end of 2001!



See the [Cinco Ranch Parkland Place Energy Analysis](#) for more information about energy savings.



## Cinco Ranch Parkland Place

Houston, Texas

Pulte Homes

2,020 -2,880 sq. ft., 3 - 4 bedroom, 2 - 2½ bath  
\$157,000 - 175,000

### Key Features

- Unvented attic (all ducts in conditioned space)
- Air sealing, including spray urethane
- Spectrally selective, low-e windows
- Significant tonnage reduction of air conditioning system, 12 SEER unit
- Transfer ducts (sized and designed for pressure equalization and aesthetics)

### Cost Summary for Building America Metrics

• Unvented attic	+ \$ 500
• High performance windows	+ \$1000
• Controlled ventilation system	+ \$ 150
• Detailed air sealing	+ \$ 250
• Pressure relief ducts/grilles	+ \$ 100
• Dehumidifier	+ \$ 175
• Downsize air conditioner to 2.5 tons	- \$1250
<b>TOTAL PREMIUM</b>	<b>+ \$ 925</b>



### Key Partners/Products

- Big Tex Air Conditioning and Heating
- Tenneco
- Commercial & Industrial Applicators
- Guaranteed Watt Savers
- Environments for Living™
- Williams Insulation