

BOOST THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR NEXT BUILD WITH RATERS LIKE LORI SANDERS



Raters are an essential component of successful high-performance home projects. They are true partners to builders, contractors, and technicians alike. As a Rater who serves the Eastern Washington area, Lori Sanders, owner of [Energy Incentives, Inc.](#) in Kennewick, sees herself as a detective. She arrives on the scene and looks for clues that indicate whether code standards may have been overlooked. The analogy stops short at the relationship between Sanders and the professionals who develop properties.

“Raters are non-adversarial,” Sanders said. “My job is to help builders do better, and if something is wrong, I bring it to their attention so they can correct it and not continue to make the same mistake.”

Bringing in a Rater is like “going to a friendly mechanic when you’re buying a car,” said Sanders. “It should give you peace of mind.”

Sanders and other Raters provide third-party verification of a home’s energy performance. Their findings culminate in a [Home Energy Rating System \(HERS®\) Index score](#) that indicates the energy efficiency of a home.

RATER OVERVIEW

Business name:
Energy Incentives, Inc.

Location:
Kennewick, Wash.

Year established: 2002

Certifications:
HERS® Rater, ENERGY STAR® Multifamily New Construction, ITC Level II Thermographer, LEED Green Rater, and Air Barrier Association of America Whole Building Airtightness Program™

Raters offer services beyond testing and inspections

Conducting tests and inspections and modeling energy performance are the foundation of what Raters do; however, there are other ways they contribute to a project, such as providing insight on utility incentive program requirements or energy performance and tax credit certifications. Energy Incentives, Inc. partners with ENERGY STAR® to help builders meet eligibility requirements for the organization's residential new construction certification.

Sanders and her team have continued to broaden their knowledge of above-code techniques and strategies, in addition to their ENERGY STAR and [RESNET®_accreditations](#). Recently, they completed advanced air barrier training courses, expanding the company's capabilities to conduct tests on buildings of all sizes.

Sanders loves working on the consulting side of the industry, providing solutions to common issues people face with energy code. On any given day, she does a little bit of everything. "Yesterday, I was doing a lot of code compliance work, helping builders get their [code compliance calculator](#) documentation right to qualify for the [Washington State Energy Code](#) prescriptive path," she said. "I have about 10 homes to energy model and one ENERGY STAR final verification on a duplex to prepare."

Embracing high-performance strategies is easier with a coach

Builders and technicians can look at Raters as "high-performance building coaches" who can provide insight into the kinds of practices to avoid and why.

Sanders believes businesses that get ahead of changing code cycles can gain a competitive edge. By starting to develop projects that exceed current prescriptive requirements sooner, builders can better prepare themselves for industry-wide changes. Raters can help you "see buildings as systems and understand how individual components interact and impact energy performance," she said.

A Rater's work can help ensure customer satisfaction

Raters pay close attention to the details. Because of their experience and training, they can spot potential issues that technicians and builders can miss. Whether by oversight or a lack of awareness, mistakes happen. An extra set of eyes looking at a home is always a good idea.

Identifying and addressing problems before homeowners see them will result in fewer callbacks and warranty claims. "The tests and diagnostics Raters run draw attention to problems, both evident and hidden," Sanders said. "Builders need to know these things before turning homes over to their buyers."

Fewer complaints and callbacks from customers can boost a business's reputation and result in more word-of-mouth marketing. "Even if building the most energy-efficient home isn't your strongest motivation, building something of high quality probably matters to you," said Sanders. Raters can help homes achieve both outcomes.



Lori Sanders, Owner,
Energy Incentives, Inc.



Sanders conducting
a duct leakage test to
check conditioned air
delivery accuracy.



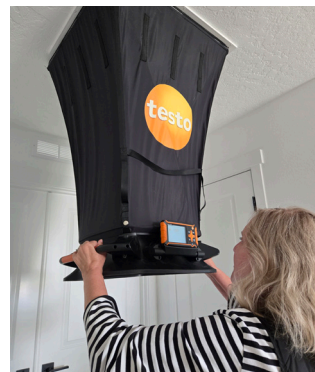
Sanders using an
infrared camera to
ensure insulation
was installed with the
highest quality.

Give your business a strategic boost by working with a Rater

[According to a study from the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance](#), there are 50 to 70 Raters actively working in the Northwest region. Of the Raters surveyed for this study, most have earned HERS, ENERGY STAR, or LEED for Homes certifications. The work Raters do to help builders meet tax credit and utility incentive program qualifications can add more value than their services cost.

Raters are eager to share resources and contacts to help builders improve their processes and achieve greater results. Sanders suggests businesses look at what other people are doing and ask questions. “If you’re struggling to figure out how to get a home code compliant, I can run the numbers or share how I helped someone with a similar issue,” she said. “Raters really know energy-efficiency requirements. We can find options that work for you.”

[Reach out to Sanders](#) to learn more about what Raters like her can offer to your projects. Get connected with a Rater in your area by using the [“Find a Professional” tool on BetterBuiltNW.com](#).



Sanders testing duct system airflow to make sure enough conditioned air reached all rooms.