



UIL HOLDINGS COMPANIES

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Winners of Fifth Annual CT Zero Energy Challenge Announced

*Homes from Brooklyn, South Glastonbury and Watertown recognized, take home cash prizes in nationally recognized program*

NEW BRITAIN, Conn. (February 24, 2015) – [Energize Connecticut](#) with its utility partners, Eversource and the United Illuminating Company, have named three winners of the fifth annual Connecticut [Zero Energy Challenge](#) (ZEC), a statewide design/build competition for single and multi-family homes. This year's competition featured 11 homes from across the state built between June 1, 2013 and December 31, 2014.

Participants are challenged to construct high efficiency homes that consume little to no energy and the winners are awarded cash prizes. ZEC homes are the pinnacle of high performance homes and demonstrate to the building community, as well as to anyone considering building a home in Connecticut, that zero energy construction is achievable.

[RESNET Rating Standards](#) are used to determine each home's [HERS Index](#) (Home Energy Rating Score), a nationally-recognized scoring system for measuring a home's energy performance (the lower the number, the more energy efficient the home; a score of zero represents a net zero energy home).

“The Zero Energy Challenge is a great opportunity for builders to showcase the innovative building techniques and new technology they are using to build a net zero energy home,” said Bill Dornbos of ENE (Environment Northeast) and Chairperson, Connecticut Energy Efficiency Board. “Building a zero energy home is becoming a more common practice, and the challenge also demonstrates that any homeowner can do it. Whether building a large or small home, building one that is net zero energy is a realistic option that delivers many benefits for years to come.”

Competing builders and architects implement energy-saving features into the home's design to increase energy performance and lower its HERS Index. The project's cost effectiveness and the home's total estimated operating costs are also used to determine the winners in each category.

This year's Zero Energy Challenge winners include:

### 1<sup>st</sup> Place – \$25,000

Winning Categories: Lowest Overall HERS Index, Lowest HERS Index without Renewables (tied), Lowest Projected Annual Net Operating Cost

Project: Benker Residence, Glastonbury, CT  
Builder: Glastonbury Housesmith LLC, Glastonbury CT

“It was important to us to build a home that was both durable and energy-efficient. By doing so, we will not only save money in the long run, but also achieve a lower overall environmental impact. We followed the most current building science construction principles, and the house will use no fossil fuels anywhere. The builder, Glastonbury Housesmith, made the house a huge success in our eyes.” - Homeowner Carl Benker

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – \$10,000

Winning Categories: Lowest HERS Index without Renewables (tied), Most Affordable  
Project: Lehto Residence, Brooklyn, CT  
Builder: Lehto Design/Build, Killingly, CT

“This is the second year in a row that we participated in the Zero Energy Challenge and took home an award, a tremendous honor to us. With this home, we were able to incorporate advanced building techniques and the latest technology to bring it to net zero.” - Builder Nick Lehto

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Honorable Mention

Project: The Taft School Residence, Watertown, CT  
Builder: BPC Builders, Wilton, CT  
Architect: Trillium Architects LLC, Ridgefield, CT

“One of my responsibilities at The Taft School is to always be looking for new and creative ways to cut operating costs. Taft is committed to building and renovating our properties with the goal of attaining the highest levels of energy efficiency and sustainability possible. We are proud of this home that will be used to house a Taft faculty family, and we will continue to emphasize innovation and energy efficiency in all of our school facilities.” - The Taft School CFO/Business Manager Gil Thornfeldt

Specific project information for all entries can be found by visiting [CTZeroEnergyChallenge.com](http://CTZeroEnergyChallenge.com).

The Connecticut Zero Energy Challenge is now seeking participants for its 2015 challenge. The deadline to apply is June 1, 2015. Homes must be completed by December 15, 2015. If interested in applying, please visit [CTZeroEnergyChallenge.com](http://CTZeroEnergyChallenge.com) for more details.

### ***About Energize Connecticut***

Energize Connecticut helps you save money and use clean energy. It is an initiative of the Energy Efficiency Fund, the Connecticut Green Bank, the State, and your local electric and gas utilities, with funding from a charge on customer energy bills. Information on energy-saving programs can be found at [EnergizeCT.com](http://EnergizeCT.com) or by calling 1.877.WISE.USE.

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