

Products

Water Heater. The Geyser heat-pump water heater connects to the tank of an existing water heater or any similar insulated storage tank but runs more economically than standard electric or gas-fired units, says the manufacturer. The heating element of the existing water heater can be either left on to supplement the heat pump in high-demand situations or turned completely off. The water-heating unit works like any other heat pump, concentrating available heat in the air through a reverse refrigeration process. As a side benefit, the discharge of cooler, drier air may eliminate the need for a dehumidifier in some applications. The unit qualifies for energy tax credits and is available from the manufacturer for \$1,400.

North Road Technologies, 888/316-2057, northrdt.com.



Sun Boost.

Advertised as the first solar-assisted heat pump in the industry, the *Lennox XPG20 Sun*

Source Comfort System has a photovoltaic panel that helps power the unit's outside fan. Heat pumps in the series have base efficiency ratings as high as 18.2 SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio) in cooling mode and 9.7 HSPF (heating seasonal performance factor) for heating; ratings jump to 20 SEER and 10.7 HSPF when the solar assist kicks in, according to the manufacturer. A two-stage compressor runs on low speed for most heating and cooling loads for more economical operation. Specially designed ridged fan blades and an insulated compartment housing the compressor reduce outside noise, says the maker. The unit is Energy Star rated and qualifies for energy tax credits. It costs \$3,500 to \$5,000.

Lennox, 800/953-6669, lennox.com.

Energy Monitor. For contractors serious about assessing building performance, Onset has assembled the *HOB0 Measurement & Verification System*. This portable energy-analysis tool kit contains prewired energy sensors, a four-channel data logger, related cables and accessories, and software to transfer collected data to a spreadsheet. The sensors and data logger are used together to monitor the performance and energy consumption of a building's equipment and systems and help track and verify the success of specific energy-efficiency improvements. The single-phase kit costs \$900.

Onset Computer, 800/564-4377, onsetcomp.com.



Products

Compliant Vanity. All of cabinet manufacturer Xylem's vanities are made from wood products that comply with California's stringent new air-quality standards, which impose strict limits on formaldehyde emissions. The *Wave* vanity — described by the company as "Asian-inspired" — features a scalloped relief detail. It comes in two sizes, 24 and 42 inches, and can be purchased alone or with a matching rectangular basin. The 42-inch cabinet (shown) costs \$830.

Xylem, 866/395-8112, xylem.biz.



Spot Ventilation. Panasonic's *Whisper-Comfort Spot* energy-recovery ventilator (ERV) is mounted in the ceiling like an exhaust fan, but — unlike a simple fan — it draws in fresh air to balance the volume of exhaust air while also transferring heat and humidity between the two air streams with its "capillary core" exchanger. The ventilator runs at three speeds and draws 17 to 23 watts of electricity, making it economical enough

to use in areas where indoor air quality necessitates a continuous-use air exchanger. It's sold online for \$328.

Panasonic, 800/211-7262, panasonic.com.



Exchange Rate. When outside temperatures are a chilly 32°F, Venmar's *EKO 1.5* heat-recovery ventilator (HRV) uses a polypropylene core to transfer up to 75 percent of the heat from the exhaust to the supply air, says the manufacturer. The unit's automatic defrost cycle recirculates warm inside air to prevent ice buildup in the core, which could create negative pressure in the house.

The unit has four speeds, and its two ECM motors draw a total of 24 watts at low setting. It comes with a programmable controller for \$1,137.

Venmar Ventilation, 800/567-3855, venmar.ca.



Solar Flair. The *FusionSolar* metal roof by Custom-Bilt Metals combines standing-seam roofing with unobtrusive photovoltaic solar energy collection. The thin-film laminate solar collection coating fused to the metal generates electricity at a lower cost per watt than roof-mounted photovoltaic panels, says the manufacturer. The roofing takes no electrical expertise to install but comes with wiring schematics for your electrician. The metal roofing alone costs \$800 per square, with an additional \$8 per watt (figured at 5kw per 1,000 square feet) for the solar coating and related hardware. So, for example, 10 squares of solar roofing costs \$48,000 — \$8,000 for the roofing plus \$40,000 for the solar components. The roofing qualifies for federal tax credits.

Custom-Bilt Metals, 800/826-7813, custombiltmetals.com.

Products

Easy Drawer Adjustment. Like many of FastCap's products, this one was invented by a cabinetmaker looking to streamline his production process. The *Miller FastBlock* is designed to make mounting drawer guides in face-frame cabinets easier by providing for simple adjustments to align the back end of the guides. Slotted screw holes allow for slight up and down adjustment, and a block held with a set screw can be set flush with stile overhangs from $\frac{5}{8}$ to 1 inch. FastBlocks cost \$4 a pair.

FastCap, 888/443-3748, fastcap.com.



Strategic Air Command. Air-quality standards may require either continuous use or high-volume intermittent use of exhaust ventilation. The simplest way to provide this air exchange is to



use an existing bathroom fan. The *Airetrak Advantage* programmable fan controller by Tamarack Technologies lets you cycle the fan for a programmed number of minutes per hour and — for some fan models — specify low-speed operation. An override switch turns the fan on at full speed and can be

set to run the fan for a specified period after the bathroom is vacated. The product is available from the manufacturer for \$90.

Tamarack, 800/222-5932, tamtech.com.

Shower Preheater. Countless gallons are wasted as bathers wait for shower water to warm up. What's even worse are the countless gallons of hot water wasted as distracted bathers busy themselves with other things while their empty shower runs hot. Fortunately, there's a fix for the latter scenario: the *Evolve Roadrunner* low-flow showerhead. Its heat-sensing valve cuts the flow to a trickle when the water temperature reaches 95°F and resumes full flow only after the bather opens the valve. It runs at a low 1.5 gallons per minute and comes in chrome and brushed nickel finishes. The chrome version costs \$40 from the manufacturer.

ShowerStart, 480/496-2294, evolveshowerheads.com.



Counter Clamp. If you've ever had to lie on your back inside a cabinet to snug up a joint in a laminate countertop, you know what a pain those traditional draw bolts are. In a new twist on draw-bolt fastening, the *Zipbolt Mini UT #10.800* uses a perpendicular geared drive that lets you snug the fastener with a 4mm hex wrench or driver bit. And because the ends are curved, they fit in a 1-inch-diameter drilled hole, which is easy to make with a Forstner bit and allows for slightly greater lateral adjustment while the joint is being assembled. Zipbolts cost around \$2 apiece.

Zipbolt, 508/679-6479, zipbolt.com.au.