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Efficiency, Installation Ease Grab Awards

Rheem Professional *Prestige*™ Hybrid Electric Heat Pump Water Heater Wins Gold

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Of *The NEWS* Staff

GOLD WINNER

Rheem Mfg. Co.
Rheem Professional *Prestige*™
Hybrid Electric Heat Pump Water Heater
www.rheem.com

Rheem Mfg. Co.'s gold award for the Rheem *Prestige* Series Hybrid Electric Heat Pump Water Heater in the 2014 Dealer Design Awards' Residential Equipment category began with the development of the first-generation Hybrid Electric Heat Pump Water Heater, which the company brought to market in 2009. The company spent more than seven years conducting research for this product design.

Rheem representatives explained that it relied heavily on feedback from its wholesale and contracting customers as well as utility companies when creating this product. In addition, the company took customer feedback from the launch of the first-generation Heat Pump Water Heater into consideration during the development process. Prototyping and field trials played critical roles in the research and design as well.

"Nice job, Rheem. You've made a great product even better," said one of the contractor judges. "There is no better money-saving option than replacing a standard electric water heater with a heat pump heater. The savings alone make it a no-brainer."

The Rheem *Prestige* Series Hybrid Electric Heat Pump Water Heater is a residential, tank-type water heater with an Energy Factor (EF) of 2.45, making it the most efficient water heater Rheem has ever developed.

Some of its key benefits include a color, backlit touch-screen control that provides homeowners with service alerts as well as detailed text-based diagnostic information for the contractor. It is EcoNet™ compatible, which enables Rheem heating, cooling, and water heating products to communicate with each other on one network. It has an operating temperature range of 37°-120°F and is certified for operation in Northern climates.

"This unit can be installed in cooler geographic areas while using the heat pump more days throughout the year," said Rheem, in a press release.

"It has a 12-year warranty for the tank and parts and dry fire protection that shuts down a water heater when it is not full of water."

The unit was designed for residential applications, and it can be used in both retrofit and new construction scenarios. The unit is 21 inches in diameter, which helps contractors fit the unit through access doors or other narrow spots. The installation process is nearly the same as any standard electric water heater, except contractors need to take into account that it requires a condensate drain due to the inclusion of heat pump technology.

Stacey Gearhart, director of product and channel marketing, Rheem, explained that, in 2015, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)



will mandate all residential electric storage water heaters larger than 55 gallons will be required to exceed an EF of 2.057.

"This means any electric storage units developed in this capacity will most likely have to employ heat pump technology to get to that high of an EF," she said. "With this in mind, Rheem will further innovate the hybrid water heater marketplace over the next few years."

While the product already features Wi-Fi capabilities, Rheem is intending to roll out some additional Wi-Fi capabilities, including an application that will allow consumers to control the *Prestige* Hybrid Electric Heat Pump Water Heater from a mobile device.

"We also expect this water heater to become even more valuable to utilities in the future," said Gearhart. "When utilities link the Hybrid Electric Heat Pump Water Heater to their grid, they can monitor and control energy usage at the point of use. In this scenario, a participating

homeowner would permit the utility to limit the operating times of his/her water heater to off-peak hours in exchange for a lower monthly bill. This approach allows utilities to cut back on energy demand when electricity supplies are relatively scarce and expensive." 