News Release

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A. O. Smith's NEXT Hybrid™ Creates a New Category of Water Heating

Merging Tank and Tankless Technologies for the Best of Both Approaches

ASHLAND CITY, TENN. (October 4, 2010) – The NEXT Hybrid™ Gas Water Heater from A. O. Smith represents a new generation in water heaters, bringing together tankless and traditional technologies to create a true hybrid category.

A. O. Smith's patented design integrates a tankless engine with a small buffer tank to provide the best performance attributes of both technologies. The NEXT Hybrid water heater performs like a tankless model, but the small buffer tank allows it to overcome some of the negative attributes normally associated with tankless models like minimum flow rates or "cold water sandwiches". When a household is using multiple appliances simultaneously, the buffer tank allows the model to provide hot water to the fixtures without reducing the flow rate.

To maximize the energy efficiency of the entire system, the exhaust gas from the tankless engine is routed back into the buffer tank in order to extract additional heat into the water. With this design, the NEXT Hybrid is able to operate at 90 percent thermal efficiency, well ahead of a conventional tank model's 78 percent or a standard tankless unit at 82 percent thermal efficiency. That translates to lower monthly energy costs for the homeowner as well as more environmentally friendly performance.

Both homeowners and contractors will appreciate how much simpler and less expensive the NEXT Hybrid is to install compared to a standard tankless system. Its footprint is similar to conventional models, and it features standard water and gas connections.

The NEXT Hybrid does not require the contractor to install stainless steel venting or upgrade to a ¾-inch gas line. Inexpensive PVC venting and standard ½" gas connections make this model much simpler in replacement applications. Plus, a user-friendly LED display makes programming, operation and diagnostics easy and convenient.

Another advantage is that the NEXT Hybrid is eligible for a federal tax credit equal to 30 percent of its total installed cost, up to a maximum of $1,500.

"The NEXT Hybrid Gas Water Heater represents the future of hot water," said David Chisolm, brand manager for A. O. Smith Water Products Company. "It's built for the way people actually live and use hot water. It captures everything a homeowner wants from both a tankless and traditional water heating system in one simple, energy-saving appliance."

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About A. O. Smith:
Headquartered in Ashland City, Tenn., A. O. Smith Water Products Company is North America's leading manufacturer and marketer of residential and commercial water heaters and hydronic boilers. A. O. Smith offers contractors an additional competitive advantage in that the company designs, builds, distributes and field supports the world's broadest and deepest line of residential and commercial water heaters, as well as commercial boilers. This single-source concept simplifies ordering, installation and service and is backed by more than 70 years of research and innovation.

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