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## **Keep the Heat Beneath The Feet** **Radiant Floor Heating — A Barefoot Kind of Comfort**

Apple Valley, Minn., Oct. 1, 2004 — When choosing options for your new home or remodeling project, what do you consider? Carpet vs. wood vs. tile? Bay vs. casement vs. double-hung? But what about the heating?

If you're like most people, you probably don't even know that you have a choice. Forced-air heating is most common and the most familiar to homeowners. It integrates easily with air conditioning and ventilation systems. You turn the thermostat up or down and leave it at that.

But have you ever noticed that despite what the thermostat says, you feel chilly when you step out of the shower onto the cold tile? Do you avoid the basement or lower-level in the winter months? That area of the home becomes almost inhabitable because it's just too cold.

That's not the case with radiant floor heating. Although a lesser-known form of heating, the concept originated in 60 A.D. by the Romans.

In hydronic radiant heating systems — offered by companies such as Uponor Wirsbo — warm water circulates through tubing that is installed directly under the floor.

– more –

**Uponor Wirsbo  
Radiant Floor Heating  
Page Two**

The heat radiates upward from the floor, surrounding families with an even, comfortable temperature — without having to increase the thermostat.

In fact, many families feel warmer at a lower temperature setting with radiant floor heating than at a higher setting required with forced air. With homeowners experiencing 20 to 40% in energy savings over forced-air systems, they enjoy comfort at a significantly lower cost.

Industry experts say that homeowners are beginning to give radiant floor heating the same consideration as they do for comparable upgrades, such as wood floors, granite countertops and cabinetry. It can be installed during construction and used as soon as the home is completed. Or homeowners may wait to complete the system by installing the tubing in the concrete slab before it is poured — so it is ready for radiant comfort whenever they decide to complete the system.

Radiant floor heating keeps all kinds of floors warm — tile, wood, slate, linoleum, carpet — even concrete. And radiant floor heating is not just for entire homes. It's perfect for heating a garage or even just one room. Imagine stepping onto a warm bathroom floor on those frigid winter mornings — or increasing your living space by turning a cold basement into a cozy retreat.

Radiant floor heating also works well in remodeling or retrofit projects for existing homes.

– more –

**Uponor Wirsbo  
Radiant Floor Heating  
Page Three**

For example, Wirsbo offers Quik Trak<sup>®</sup> — wood panels that are only a half-inch high — which can be installed easily over an existing concrete slab or plywood subfloor. A groove down the center of the panel holds the Wirsbo tubing in place, and a finished floor can be installed immediately, which helps avoid any construction delays.

"Consumers see lower utility bills and increased comfort associated with radiant floor heating immediately," says Joe Pauley, president, Uponor Wirsbo.

Pauley acknowledges the current market share for radiant floor heating, compared to forced air, is small.

"The perception among those who have heard about radiant floor heating is that it is a luxury item and intended only for the higher-end home — and that simply is not true," he says. "We believe the flexibility of our systems makes it a viable — and hopefully one day a standard — option for all home owners."

Radiant floor heating is practical and offers comfortable, even heat. It's perfect for homes with vaulted ceilings because it keeps heat at the floor level where it's needed. For those homes heated by forced air, comfort is not always achieved.

And many times, people don't even realize it — or have just come to expect and accept cold floors, drafts and nosy motors and fans that blow dust and allergens throughout the home.

– more –

**Uponor Wirsbo  
Radiant Floor Heating  
Page Four**

Radiant floor heating also allows you to place your furniture wherever you want – without worrying about blocking vents and the heat source.

Using the same technology as radiant floor heating, this application can also be installed outdoors to keep sidewalks and driveways clear from snow and ice. Wirsbo Snow & Ice Melting systems circulate a warm water and glycol solution through durable PEX tubing buried in concrete, asphalt or a sand bed.

The system is controlled simply by flipping a switch manually or by an automatic programmable control that responds to changing weather conditions. The control detects snow and ice accumulation, and instructs the system to start melting on demand — even when you're not there. That means no more shoveling, plowing, sanding or salting. Designed for both residential and commercial applications, this system provides a safe, convenient alternative for snow and ice removal.

To learn more about the comfort and economical benefits of radiant floor heating and snow and ice melting systems, contact a reputable manufacturer, such as Uponor Wirsbo ([www.wirsbo.com](http://www.wirsbo.com)).

Uponor Wirsbo, provider of life, safety and comfort systems, is the nation's leading manufacturer of crosslinked polyethylene (PEX) tubing used in plumbing, fire sprinkler and hydronic radiant floor heating systems. Uponor Wirsbo is headquartered in Apple Valley, Minn., a suburb of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

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