

nothing more than the conventional aluminum foil applied to a novel use, they do not involve the substantial development and marketing costs typically associated with a new product. As their use becomes widespread, the returns to both public and private investment will be substantial. Figure 5.2 summarizes the energy savings achieved to date.

5.3.4 Market Penetration

Radiant barriers first became commercially available in approximately 1985. The partnership of a trade organization, in this case RIMA, in the development stage provided ready acceptance by the manufacturers and distributors. Since the technology is easy to install and does not require any specialized materials, it has not been patented. This has resulted in a mushrooming of manufacturers and distributors with varying prices and qualities. The product diversity does not pose problems as long as the foil used is of the same emissivity. Typically, sellers of radiant barriers also carry other types of insulation products such as multilayer insulation and insulation bubble products. The various marketing avenues in operation are shown in Fig. 5.2.

The geographic concentration of the market for radiant barriers has been limited to the southwestern and southeastern United States because performance of the technology has only been tested in similar climates so far. California is another potential market for the product that is likely to open up after hearings by the Bureau of Home Furnishers scheduled for later this year are conducted.

In the first year of commercialization, there were around four firms with sales of one million sq. ft. of radiant barriers selling at an average price of \$70