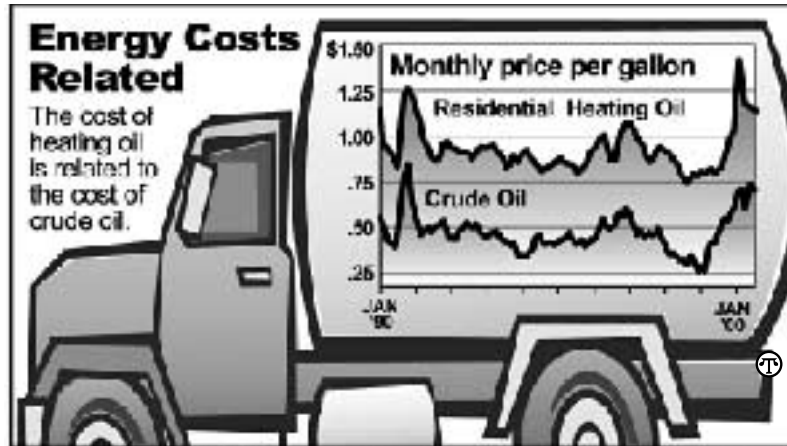


# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Heating Oil Prices: Reaching A Boiling Point?



Source: DR: Plaff's Spot Prices, EIA, Petroleum Marketing Monthly Juan Thomassie

**What's the forecast for your energy bills? It can be a lot milder if you take a few simple steps to reduce your fuel intake.**

(NAPSA)—While only about eight percent of homeowners use heating oil as their main fuel source, those who do have faced some stiff price increases over the last two winters. Home heating prices nearly doubled a year ago and rose even higher during the winter of 2001. Have these prices peaked, or will they continue to rise?

Americans use about 100 million barrels of oil a year to heat their homes and fuel their businesses. The price we pay for heating oil is directly related to the market price for its core component—crude oil—and its price has swung from \$10 a barrel to more than \$30 a barrel in the past two years due to worldwide demand outpacing production.

In addition, a number of unforeseen circumstances contributed to a temporary U.S. fuel crisis that hit homeowners hard. OPEC began reducing output of

crude oil in 1999 to strengthen prices, domestic home heating oil supplies were drained by an unusually cold 2000 winter, and fierce weather in the Northeast froze rivers and ports, interfering with barge deliveries in New York and Boston.

The outlook isn't much better. The Energy Information Administration expects the price of crude oil to remain at about \$30 a gallon for the next 12 months. Milder temperatures in the Northeast could cause heating oil prices to drop a few cents, but homeowners can take these simple steps to reduce fuel intake by up to 40 percent: Replace an out-of-date oil furnace with a new high-efficiency unit, install a retention head, replace worn-out furnace filters, and insulate ductwork.

For more information about home heating oil prices and supply issues, visit [www.oil360.org](http://www.oil360.org).