

## Easy Home Heating Projects That Save Money

(NAPSA)—Make your home feel warmer without turning up the heat this winter.

The average family spends \$1,400 a year on energy, with nearly half of that on heating and cooling. However, by following some simple steps on home winterizing, and by using energy-efficient heating equipment, homeowners can save as much as 20 percent on annual energy costs.

Before you begin to winterize, you should call in a professionally licensed HVAC contractor to inspect and tune up your heating system. Once that is done, there are several things you can do yourself to prolong the life of the equipment and help ensure proper operation.

- **Oil Heat**—Change fuel filters and service burners if needed. Check fuel tank for water content and fill tank.

- **Forced-Air Systems**—Clean registers and returns, remove grill on returns, vacuum, and reinstall the grill. On older forced-air systems, the entire ductwork should be cleaned every couple of years. Inspect flue pipe for blockages, leaks and holes and make sure vent cap is in place on roof.

- **Furnaces**—Check fan belts, pilot light, humidifier and media pad if needed. On older furnaces, the pilot light may stay on all the time and you can see it; newer models are usually self-igniting and light only when the furnace is running.

- **Humidifiers or Dehumidifiers**—For freestanding units, change or clean filters. For furnace-mounted humidifiers, check, clean or replace the water media pad, or water level on float-type humidifiers. Check waterline/waste line for leaks.

- **Hot Water Heaters**—Drain about 10 to 15 gallons from service valve, located at bottom of water tank, to remove sediment. If water has slight rust color at first, this is OK; if after draining more than 10



**Using inexpensive, energy-saving products can significantly lower your energy costs.**

gallons the water still has a rust color, it's a sign the tank is rusting and that you should consider replacement. On natural gas heaters, inspect flue pipe to ensure it is secure and has no leaks. Lowering the temperature of water in the water heater to 115° to 120° reduces fuel consumption.

- **An Energy-Efficient Hot Water Circulator**—such as the Bell & Gossett ecocirc®—can save an average family of four more than 12,000 gallons of water and hundreds of dollars in energy costs a year.

- **Thermostat Setting**—68° F is recommended for cold months, 65° F at night. The rule of thumb is that you can save about 3 percent on your heating bill for every degree that you set back your thermostat.

- **New Equipment**—If equipment needs replacement, call a local professional for at least two quotes. Local, state and federal tax credits and rebates can assist in the purchase of an energy-saving product.

- For more information on energy-saving tips and ideas, visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov), [www.eere.energy.gov](http://www.eere.energy.gov), [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov) and <http://completewatersystems.com>.