HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Your Attic Could Hold The Key To Cutting Energy Costs

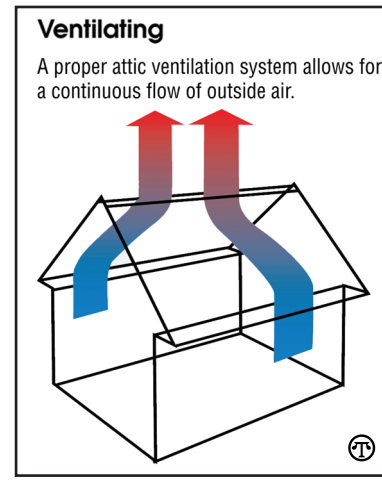
(NAPSA)—With heating and cooling accounting for as much as half the energy used in homes, trying to reduce your electric bills with simple fixes like programmable thermostats won't get you that far. Instead, if you're looking to really cut your energy consumption without spending a lot on home improvements, the smartest place to start is your attic.

"Proper attic ventilation" may not exactly be the latest buzzwords out of Washington, but maybe they should be. It's estimated that nine out of 10 homes in North America lack such properly ventilated space—and it's costing every single one of them extra bucks on utility bills.

"The temperature and dew point of the air inside your attic needs to be as close as possible to the air on the other side of your roof," writes syndicated columnist Tim Carter at Askthebuilder.com. "Wide differences in either of these numbers can cost you money in repairs or higher heating and cooling bills."

In other words, this is a year-round issue. In the summer, for example, an improperly ventilated attic can become as hot as 160°. The heated air eventually penetrates the living area below, causing air conditioners to work overtime.

In the winter, everything from household appliances to showers and cooking vapors contributes to excess moisture buildup that clings to the underside of a roof. When that condensed moisture falls—and it will—the attic insulation becomes soaked. At that point, you can say good-bye to any energy efficiency and potentially hello to damaged siding, wood framing, and interior and exterior paint and wallpaper—maybe even toxic mold growth.



(Another nightmarish scenario, witnessed in some colder climates: The underside of a roof is warmed to such an extent that melted snow and ice then refreezes while running off it—forming ice dams that push up under the roof—causing water leaks inside the house.)

Venting Attics

A proper ventilation system, by comparison, allows for continuous air flow throughout the attic. That means installing sufficient intake vents in your soffits and exhaust vents in your roof. One cool new product: the Green Machine Solar Powered Roof Vent. Made by GAF Materials Corporation, North America's largest roofing manufacturer, it's solar-powered so there's no need for complicated electrical wiring, and—once installed—the vent helps to remove an attic's hot, stale air.

Plus, the Green Machine's weatherproof design resists winds up to 110 miles per hour. For more information on effective attic ventilation and other valuable tips, including a video on avoiding roofing disasters, visit GAF at www.gaf.com.