

Home Improvement Projects Save Energy And Money

(NAPSA)—What's the forecast for home heating bills? The average American household spends \$1500 annually on energy bills, a number that may go up as much as 50 percent this year, but you can beat those numbers by making the most of some tips to conserve energy, protect the environment and lower utility bills.

Because electricity is generated by burning fossil fuels, which release greenhouse gas emissions into the air, using less energy at home directly reduces the risks associated with global warming. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), if just half of all American homes were heated with ENERGY STAR-qualified products, the change would prevent nearly 70 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions, equivalent to the emissions of nearly six million cars.

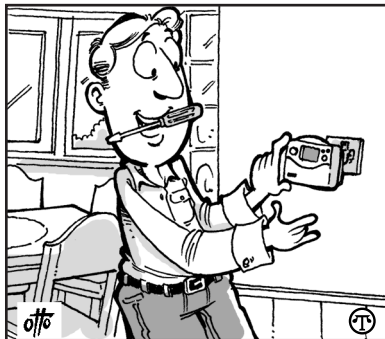
Energy-Saving Ideas

1. Seal up your home. One of the most cost-effective ways to reduce energy bills is to air-seal holes, cracks and openings in your home, and then add insulation to stop the flow of heat through the walls and ceiling. Consider the following steps:

Weather-strip and insulate your attic hatch or door to prevent warm air from escaping out the top of your house.

Seal holes in the attic that lead down to the house, such as open wall tops and ducts, plumbing or electrical runs.

Weather-strip doors and windows that do not seal tightly. Use



A simple change such as installing a programmable thermostat can save money and protect the environment.

foam gaskets around electrical outlets (under the plates) to reduce drafts.

For more information on home sealing, consult EPA's new "Guide to Energy-Efficient Heating and Cooling" at www.energystar.gov/heating.

2. Heat your home wisely. When your heating system works effectively, you will be more comfortable and save money.

Replace furnace filters before the heating season and change them once a month for maximum savings.

Cover the filter slot with a piece of wide tape to keep air from getting in around filter edges without passing through the filter.

Seal duct joints with shiny foil tape with an UL-181 label.

Set back your thermostat while you're asleep or away. When used properly, an ENERGY-STAR-qual-

ified programmable thermostat with four temperature and time settings can save you \$100 each year on energy costs.

Ask your heating contractor to service your heating system and check your duct system too.

3. Change a light. If every household changed a light to one that has earned the ENERGY STAR, the nation could save enough energy to light seven million homes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to that of one million cars.

4. Power-down computers and electronic products when not in use. These products often use energy even when switched off.

5. Look for products that have earned the ENERGY STAR.

The government's ENERGY STAR is on more than 40 different kinds of products for the home, including lighting, home electronics, heating and cooling equipment and appliances.

These products provide the features and performance you want while helping you save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Check with your utility company to see what rebates are available for the purchase of ENERGY STAR-qualified appliances, lighting or HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) systems.

Getting Help

For more tips and a "Guide to Energy-Efficient Heating and Cooling," visit www.energystar.gov/heating.