

# BUDGET

# STRETCHING

# IDEAS

## Fix Up Your Home To Lower Energy Bills

(NAPSA)—Opening that utility bill is often enough to warm people to the idea that some simple home improvements can help lower their energy costs. For senior citizens, this can be an added financial challenge: many can't afford to make the investments in improvements that would make their homes more energy efficient and save them significant money in energy bills.

In almost all cases, senior homeowners could lower their monthly expenses simply by replacing old appliances and lighting. Jeffrey Taylor, vice president of Wells Fargo Home Mortgage's Senior Products Group, said older adults are the least likely to take on such projects because of the cost.

"One of the best ways to lower heating bills is by installing a new, high-performance furnace," he said. "This is expensive for most families, but even more cost prohibitive when the homeowners live on fixed incomes."

A growing number of older adults, however, are finding money for home improvements by turning to a reverse mortgage.

A reverse mortgage is a loan that lets senior homeowners convert part of the equity in their home into tax-free income without having to sell the home, give up title or take on a new monthly mortgage payment. Reverse mortgages are a great way for seniors with built-up equity in their homes to generate the income they need to meet an immediate need or an extraordinary expense.

"Many program participants are gaining access to funds and using



them to pay for new thermal windows and doors, putting on a roof or replacing older high-consumption water heaters," added Taylor. "By using a reverse mortgage seniors aren't busting their budgets or dipping into savings."

With a reverse mortgage, a senior borrower never makes monthly payments until he or she moves, sells the house, or vacates the home for other reasons; never gives up title; never is forced to move; and never owes more than the sale price of the home or the amount borrowed, whichever is less.

"Because fixed incomes can prevent older adults from qualifying for many standard loans, a reverse mortgage gives them a way to make their homes work for them," Taylor said.

Reverse mortgages are not right for everyone, so experts recommend consulting with a financial advisor.

For more information about reverse mortgage products and services, visit [www.reversemortgages.net](http://www.reversemortgages.net), or call (800) 336-7359.