

ENERGY SAVING IDEAS

Cool News For Homeowners

(NAPSA)—The high cost of keeping your home comfortable doesn't have to get you hot under the collar if you heed a few hints:

- Determine how airtight and insulated your home is. Check ductwork for leaks, the "R" value of your home's insulation (living area, basement, crawl space, attic), any leaky seals or gaps around doors and windows, double-glazed windows (is there moisture inside or are double-glazed windows "cloudy"?).

- Ask your air-conditioning contractor to give your house a checkup. If your home system is more than 10 years old, it may not be at the height of energy efficiency, so even if it is in good condition, changes in technology have probably created units that can offer more affordable comfort. With new 13-SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) high-efficiency units, homeowners should expect to see their air conditioners and heat pumps translate energy used into affordable comfort.

- Have a contractor check your system to determine how efficiently it cools. Is it properly sized (one sized too large will do the job, but at a price that is more expensive; and one that is too small will constantly cycle and run up bills while not delivering comfort)? Would a dehumidifier help (taking some moisture out of the air could make your home feel cooler without touching the thermostat)? Is the air filter working properly and are there other small problems that could escalate into larger ones and affect the entire system if left uncorrected?



To keep your heating and cooling costs from going through the roof, be sure you have enough insulation in your attic and have a contractor check your system to determine how efficient it is.

- Changing the thermostat setting a degree or two can save you many dollars. A programmable thermostat remembers and adjusts heating and cooling times even when you forget.

- Pull the shades on the side of the house where the sun is in warm weather to ease the load on your air conditioner.

- Don't let children (or anyone else) stand in open doors minutes at a time.

- Get a service contract. When choosing an air-conditioning contractor, consider one with NATE certified air-conditioning or heat-pump technicians. Certified professionals have passed a stringent test that is national in scope. You can find contractors employing NATE certified technicians at www.natex.org.

Keep these tips in mind and you may find you can keep more money in your wallet and more comfort in your home.