

NEW HOME OWNERS

PRIORITIZE PRIORITIZE PRIORITIZE YOU CAN SHRINK YOUR ENERGY BILLS



Don't wait! Start saving money immediately and protect yourself from rising fuel costs. Call your utility for an energy audit to find out how to achieve the biggest savings in your new home. It will give you the information you need to prioritize conservation and efficiency investments.

For \$25 to \$35, you can get a walk-through energy audit which includes looking at the insulation levels, appliance efficiencies and the historical fuel bills of the home.

For about \$100, the inspection of your home by a qualified energy auditor will include all of the above, a blower door test to measure air tightness levels plus the use of an infra-red camera to find insulation voids.

The following are some potential energy savers that may be appropriate for your home:

***Set-back Thermostat:** A five degree set-back for 8 hours a day in the winter can save 5% of your heating bill.

***Water Saving Fixtures:** Dual flush toilets or low-flush toilets, low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators save water and money.

***Insulation** can lower bills and increase your comfort in winter and summer. Seal bypasses (air leaks to the attic) before insulating. Air sealing and insulation should be done first before upgrading appliances so the new systems are appropriately sized.

*** Forced Air Systems - Air Conditioning & Humidity Control:** If your furnace has a variable fan speed; a lower fan speed diminishes the efficiency level but increases the dehumidification capabilities so on humid days your AC can still make your house comfortable. On less humid days be sure to increase the fan speed for greatest efficiency.

***Heating System:** New high efficiency heating systems have an AFUE (annual fuel utilization efficiency) in the 90+ percentile. For the average home, the extra cost of a high efficiency heating system over an average one (AFUE in the 80's) is paid back through savings in three years.

***Air Conditioning:** Look for high efficiency. An AC system should never be over-sized. Consider a 'Saver Switch' discount from Xcel.

***Heating with Wood:** If you have an existing fireplace install an energy efficient fireplace insert. Inserts are a mechanism for circulating room air into the fireplace and around the fire to absorb heat and then re-distribute the warm air back into the room. A standard fireplace can send more heat up the flue than it puts into your home.

***Energy Star Appliances and Lighting:** Dishwashers, clothes washers, dryers, refrigerators, hot water heaters as well as heating and cooling systems all have a large impact on your utility bills. Check for the Energy Star label when replacing or purchasing appliances and lighting fixtures. Energy Star products meet the energy efficiency requirements of the Environment Protection Agency and the Department of Energy.

To contact your utility for an energy audit or information on rebates and incentives call:

Center Point Energy 612-321-5011

Xcel Energy 1-800-895-4999

Additional Information on Energy:

Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) is a non-profit lender for the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and administers funding for 34 of the NRP neighborhoods. www.mncee.org. In addition to utility audits CEE offers a more in-depth audit service for new homeowners experiencing major issues including ice dams and condensation.

Minnesota Housing Finance Agency offers below-market loans to buyers with low or moderate incomes and to first-time buyers. Call 651-296-7608 or 1-800-657-3769. www.mnhousing.gov

Home Ownership Center provides a confidential review of your finances and helps determine what mortgage loan programs will be the best. Call 651-659-9336 www.hocmn.org/

Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Agency (CPED) offers information about housing and low-interest mortgages for Minneapolis residents. Call 612-673-5095 www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped

Minnesota Office of Energy Security, Energy Information Center or call 651-296-5175. Information and free brochures on energy topics from **Alternative Energy Sources to Ventilation**. has publications and tips, all designed to give you helpful, unbiased information so you can be a better consumer of energy, a more careful purchaser of real estate or insurance, and a lot more. www.energy.mn.gov

Minnesota Energy Challenge is a great source of information for homeowners about energy use, including rebates, financing, etc. www.mnenergychallenge.org

Other resources for more information on conserving resources, improving efficiency and environmentally friendly options: www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us or call 311 for info on green building, building permits, recycling, transportation, sustainability

www.energystar.gov energy efficiency information on appliances, lighting, new homes and more

www.greeninstitute.org/ Re-Use Center (S. Mpls)

www.mngreenstar.org Minnesota green certification program for home construction and remodeling

www.usgbc.org US Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design commercial / residential

www.campls.org/WX.html Community Action of Minneapolis low income weatherization program