

'Green' Your Home

Home Builders Association of Greater Southwest Illinois

There are many ways that you can "green" your home and save you money on utility bills year-round.

Here are a few recommendations for home owners who want to increase their home's efficiency, decrease costs, and take advantage of the other benefits of "greening" your home.

- **Add insulation** - Adding insulation will help save energy costs, increase comfort by better controlling temperature, and improve indoor air quality by eliminating many gaps through which dirt, dust, and other impurities can enter. Insulation is rated by its ability to resist heat flow, known as the "R-value." The higher the R-value, the better its ability to resist heat flow.
- **Install high-efficiency windows** - Ordinary window glass transmits ultraviolet heat rays from the sun into your home. ENERGY STAR-rated windows can help control this. These windows may have two or more panes of glass, warm-edge spacers between the panes, improved framing materials, and microscopically thin metal or metallic oxide layers deposited on windows to reduce radiative heat flow.
- **Seal exterior penetrations** - Inspect your home from the inside and outside and plug cracks or openings in order to reduce cold air drafts and heat loss, especially the areas where window frames meet the structure or siding of the house. Use caulking to seal all small cracks on non-moving surfaces and install weather stripping on windows, doors and other movable parts of the home.
- **Replace your appliances with ENERGY STAR-rated ones** - ENERGY STAR -rated appliances, ranging from dishwashers and refrigerators to computers and televisions, meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and U.S. Department of Energy. Qualified refrigerators, dishwashers and vent fans use ten to 50 percent less energy and water than standard models, more than making up for the slightly higher costs of these products.
- **Install low-flow water plumbing fixtures** - In the average home, flushing toilets accounts for around 30 percent of water usage. By using low-flow plumbing fixtures such as toilets, faucet aerators and showerheads, you can save up to 25 percent of that water compared to conventional fixtures while providing the same utility.
- **Install a high-efficiency HVAC system** - High-efficiency ENERGY STAR HVAC equipment can reduce utilities costs on average by ten to 30 percent over minimum efficiency equipment. It also can improve home comfort with more heating and cooling and a quieter operation, and often features higher quality components that result in longer equipment life.

Not only will green remodeling help you enjoy your home more during the time you live in it, it will make it more attractive to potential buyers when you decide to sell. According to research by the National Association of Home Builders, 72 percent of consumers report energy efficient features in a home would influence their purchase decision.

For more information, contact Home Builders Association of Greater Southwest Illinois by visiting www.hbaswil.org or call 618-343-6331.