

Save Money By Making Your Home Energy Efficient

NewsUSA

(NU) - With the increase in energy prices, it's important to know that there are ways to lower your energy bill, maintain the overall comfort of your home and be energy efficient.

There is another big plus to being energy efficient: You help the environment. Using less energy means less air pollution from power plants that burn oil, coal or natural gas. Pollution from these sources can cause respiratory disease, smog and acid rain and contribute to global climate change.

Consumer Federation of America offers these tips on how to be environmentally friendly and save energy in your home.

- **Clean or replace the air filters in your home's heating and cooling system regularly.** A dirty air filter can increase your energy costs and lead to equipment failure. It's also good to have your systems checked once a year by a licensed professional. Regular maintenance can detect problems early.

- **Use light bulbs and fixtures that have earned the Energy Star label — the government's symbol for energy efficiency.** Such lighting uses two-thirds less energy and can last up to 10 times longer.

- **Install a programmable thermostat.** It will automatically adjust the temperature to meet your comfort needs efficiently

during different times of the day or week. A programmable thermostat can save you up to \$100 a year when properly programmed and used.

- **Seal air leaks in your home.** Add new weather-stripping and caulking around windows and doors. Caulk and weatherproof all exterior openings for plumbing and electrical service, and look for other openings that need to be sealed, such as attic vents and ducts.

Effective air sealing, combined with the right amount

of insulation, can save up to 10 percent on energy bills. And if you're in the market for new windows, look for energy-efficient ones to help keep your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

- **When replacing older, inefficient appliances in your home, look for new ones that have earned the Energy Star label.** They meet strict energy-efficiency criteria set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy; use less energy; help prevent air pollution; and reduce energy costs in your home.

For more information on buying energy-efficient products for the home, log on to www.buycorner.org. For Energy Star information, visit www.energystar.gov or call (888) STAR-YES.

