

## **The Weather Outside is Frightful..... And the heating bills are even scarier!**

Winter in Western New York hit full force the second week in December this year. An unusually warm November left us all with a little extra money in our pockets from savings on our heat utility bills. In January reality hits us full in the face every time we open the door to go outside. The cold wind and accumulating snow piles mean that our furnaces are running all the time and costing us a lot of money. There are several things the average homeowner or renter can do to save money and decrease heating energy use. You can spend a little time and even less money completing the following check list. You can also spend a little more time (2 hours) and no money coming to a FREE "Save Energy, Save Dollars" workshop thru Allegany and Cattaraugus County Cornell Cooperative Extension. CCE is always looking for agencies and groups host a workshop in your community. If you would consider being a workshop host site or if you would like to register for a workshop give us a call: **Allegany Co., Teri Violet @ (585)268-7644, ext.20 or Cattaraugus Co., Aihme Ellis @ (716)699-2377, ext.113**

### **No Cost /Low Cost Tips to Reduce Your Home Heating Energy Use**

For most people, the heating system is the single largest energy user in their home. Home heating alone often accounts for more than 60% of your total energy bill.

#### **Keeping Warm**

- **Thermostat Advice** . Set your thermostat at the lowest comfortable setting and leave it alone during the day. Overnight, lower the setting by 5 to 10°. Use your judgment if someone is elderly or ill. Check your thermostat location make sure your thermostat is not affected by drafts that will give you an incorrect reading. Install a programmable thermostat.
- **Seal the Hatches.** Use weather-stripping around all attic stairwells and insulate attic door with rigid board insulation to reduce heat loss.
- **Electric Outlets.** Stop cold air infiltration from electric switch and plug outlets by using draft blockers.
- **Seal the Outside.** Caulk around foundation walls, pipe outlets, clothes dryer vents, and any other gaps on the outside of your house. Weather-strip your garage door to reduce drafts. Tape or cover unused keyholes.
- **Install door sweeps** to inside doors adjacent to the garage and doors adjacent to the outside.
- **Ventilation.** Attic and crawl space vents should be left open all year to prevent moisture problems. If your home lacks attic vents, consult a contractor.
- **Window Habits.** Open curtains and/or shades of east, south, and west-facing windows on sunny days to let the sun heat your home. Close them at night. Keep draperies closed all day on north facing windows. Repair cracked or missing windowpanes. Keep storm windows and doors tightly closed.
- **Unblocking Heat.** Check all the places where heat enters the room. Make sure drapes and furniture do not interfere with the flow of heat.

- **Add Humidity** . Humidity usually makes you feel more comfortable at the same temperature. Use a room or furnace humidifier or keep shallow pans of water on radiator tops or near hot air vents.
- **Clean Burners** . Your heating system should be cleaned and inspected once a year. In addition, if you have an oil-fired system, ask your heating contractor about the possibility of reducing the nozzle size of your oil burner.
- **Radiator Recommendation** . Make or buy reflectors to place behind radiators to increase heat reflection into the room. During the heating season, **remove radiator covers** that interfere with heating efficiency.
- **Furnace Filters** . During the hearing season, check the filters on your forced-air furnace every month. Replace as necessary.
- **Heating Ducts** . Use foil tape or mastic to cover any gaps or cracks on the ducts of your forced air heating system.
- **Fireplace Use** . The best way to conserve energy with fireplaces is not to use them. When used, they draw warm air from adjacent rooms and send it up the chimney. If you do not want to block off your fireplace permanently, keep the damper tightly closed when not in use. Use thermo-glass doors to cover the face of the fireplace to reduce heat loss.
- **Air Conditioner Insulating** . Seal all air gaps between your air conditioner and window. During winter months, thoroughly cover the unit outdoors with sturdy plastic and tape. Use an inside cover to further eliminate drafts and cold surfaces.

### **Workshops to Help You Save Energy and Money**

These two-hour workshops provide energy and financial information to folks faced with higher energy costs:

**Save Energy, Save Dollars:** Learn about low-cost and no-cost ways to save energy and reduce your energy bills. Also learn about programs that can help you afford energy-efficiency improvements with subsidies, low-interest loans, or free services to qualifying households. Free energy-saving materials to be provided.

**Making Ends Meet:** This workshop provides information on developing and using a household spending plan. We also explore ways to maximize resources and reduce energy use. Participants will receive a free money management kit.

**Exploring Credit/Debt Management Issues:** This workshop provides information on selecting and using credit wisely, strategies for paying down debt, obtaining and reviewing a credit report, and understanding a credit score. Participants receive free credit management tools.

*Pre-registration is required.*

HeatSmartNY workshops are **FREE TO THE PUBLIC**

**For the schedule of workshops in Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties and to learn more about programs to help you control your energy bills, visit [www.HeatSmartNY.org](http://www.HeatSmartNY.org) or call 1-877-NY-SMART**