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GREEN BUILDING: Stay warm and save energy this winter

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Here's a quick look at ways to save energy in the winter months:

- Seal leaky ductwork. More than 20 percent of the average home's heating and cooling bills go to duct leakage in attics or crawlspaces. Sealing your ducts with mastic (a pastelike substance available at most home improvement stores) can substantially decrease the amount of conditioned air being wasted. A homeowner can spend as little as \$10 and a few hours of time to accomplish this task.

- Switch out incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent light bulbs. If everyone in North Carolina replaced one light bulb with a CFL, it would save 1.5 million kWh's each day.

The energy-efficient light bulbs provide high-quality light output, use 25 percent of the energy, and last six to 10 times longer than standard incandescent bulbs. Remember to turn off your lights when leaving a room. Turning off one 60-watt incandescent bulb that would otherwise burn eight hours a day can save about \$15 per year.

- Add weatherstripping around doors and windows. The more leaky cracks and holes due to windows, doors and plumbing fixtures, the more you will pay for heating. For each unit of cold air that enters your home through a crack, another unit of hot (conditioned) air that you paid for will leave your home through another crack. (This situation is reversed in the summer.) Use of door thresholds, window caulking, and plastic window film can save up to 20 percent in energy with an investment as little as \$25.

- By changing faucets and showerheads to low-flow, a 10-minute shower can use less water than a full bath.

- Consider heating your home with biodiesel, a renewable and clean burning source of energy. Biodiesel can replace the home heating oil (fuel oil) or kerosene in your home furnace or monitor heater without retrofit. An Asheville-based, worker-owned company, Blue Ridge Biofuels, delivers locally made biodiesel to homeowners. For more information or to place an order: call 253-1034 or www.blueridgebiofuels.com.

- Buy Energy Star-certified appliances. An E-Star refrigerator uses 15 percent less energy, dishwashers use 25 percent less energy, and clothes washers use up to 50 percent less energy. In addition to purchasing energy efficient appliances, it is helpful to use these machines at night or early in the morning. The more people use energy at off-peak power times, the better it is for the entire energy system and those that use it.

- Properly insulate your roof/attic because heat rises. If there isn't enough insulation in the space above your home, your money is literally going through the roof. Most ceilings/attics should have at least an R38 rating or 10 inches of insulation.

Rachel Della Valle is outreach coordinator for the WNC Green Building Council. Some of this information was gathered from www.energy

star.gov. For more information about the WNC Green Building Council, go to www.wncgbc.org, call 232-5080 or e-mail info@

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