

INSIDE GRUNDY COUNTY
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September 30, 2005

With higher energy costs, most of us are looking for ways to reduce our heating and cooling costs. To save energy in your home, you may want to follow the recommendations found in ISU Extension publication Pm-789 Saving Energy in Existing Houses.

Most energy loss occurs in two general ways: 1) air and heat leaks through cracks and holes in walls, ceilings and around doors and windows and 2) heat is lost through doors, windows, ceilings, walls and foundations. In order of priority, the following steps can be taken to reduce heat loss:

- caulk, weather-strip, and glaze
- improve windows and doors
- control moisture problems
- insulate ceilings
- insulate exterior walls
- insulate basement walls, crawl spaces or slab foundations.

Pm-789 will guide you through the steps necessary to improve the energy efficiency of your home.

In addition to the steps shown above, you may want to try the following suggestions found on the Iowa Energy Center website:

<http://www.energy.iastate.edu/efficiency/residential/>.

Use a programmable thermostat which automatically coordinates indoor climates with your daily and weekend patterns, by increasing home comfort and reducing energy bills without your having to "remember." It's one of the most cost-effective energy-saving investments you can make.

Clean or replace air conditioner filters monthly. Make sure your air conditioning equipment is properly maintained with a professional tune-up.

Close blinds or shades on the south and west facing windows of the house during summer days or install shading devices and/or plant vines and trees.

Let nature do its work and allow the sun to help heat your home on winter days by keeping blinds or drapes of sun exposed windows open in the daytime and closed at night to conserve heat. Close all unoccupied areas and reduce heat. Close the damper on fireplaces when not in use.

Caulk and weather-strip to ensure that you're not wasting energy on heat or air conditioning that escapes through leaks to the outdoors.

Take showers instead of baths to reduce hot water use.

Use ceiling and other fans for additional cooling and better circulation.

Turn off everything not in use: lights, TVs, computers, electronics.

Replace your four most used 100-watt incandescent bulbs with four comparable 23-watt compact fluorescent bulbs to save more than \$108 over three years. If all U.S. households did this, we'd save as much energy as is produced by 30 power plants annually.

Consider safer, more efficient ENERGY STAR torchiere lamps over popular halogen torchiere lamps, which can CAUSE FIRES, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. While relatively inexpensive to purchase, they are expensive to operate.

Use dimmers, timers, and motion detectors on indoor and outdoor lighting.

For more information on conserving energy or to request publication Pm-789 Saving Energy in Existing Homes, please call the Grundy County Extension office at 319-824-6979.