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Is Your Home Ready for Summer?

- A Five Step Countdown to Cool Your World with ENERGY STAR® -

MADISON, Wis. (June 12, 2007) - This summer, Focus on Energy is helping consumers count down the ways to stay cool and comfortable while saving energy and money and helping protect our environment. The average family spends \$1,900 a year on energy bills with nearly half going towards heating and cooling. With a few simple steps, such as seasonal maintenance of properly sized and installed, energy efficient heating and cooling equipment along with properly sealed ducts, Wisconsin residents can save as much as 20 percent on annual energy costs. Following the recommendations in the Five Step Countdown will not only save money on energy bills, but also help reduce the risks of global warming. Countdown to a cooler planet and a more energy efficient home with the following recommendations from Focus on Energy:

5. Find and seal air leaks that cause drafts and make cooling systems work overtime.

Eliminating air leaks in a home's "envelope" or "shell" — its outer walls, ceiling, windows and floors, is often the most cost effective way to improve a home's energy efficiency and comfort. Small cracks and poor insulation allow air from inside the house to leak outside. In the summer this means cooler air leaves the home, increasing the demand on a cooling system to maintain a comfortable temperature. To get the biggest savings, the easiest place to add insulation is in the attic; however, it is important to determine how much and what kind of insulation you already have. Consultants and qualified contractors that partner with Focus on Energy are trained to help identify where and how much insulation is needed. In addition, leaky ducts decrease an air conditioner's ability to deliver cool air to where it is needed. By sealing ducts with foil tape or duct mastic, homeowners ensure the cool air goes where it is supposed to go.

4. Look for the ENERGY STAR when purchasing cooling products.

Products such as room air conditioners, central air conditioners and dehumidifiers that display the ENERGY STAR operate more efficiently, which saves energy and helps protect the environment. The ENERGY STAR can be found on items in more than 50 product categories, including lighting, consumer electronics and appliances.

3. Schedule annual, pre-season maintenance checkups with a licensed contractor to ensure a cooling system is operating efficiently and safely.

Dirt and neglect are the leading causes of system failure. Get a cooling system checkup and regularly clean or change the system's air filter according to the filter's instructions – generally once a month. Keep it clean to keep it efficient. If a cooling system is more than 12 years old

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and needs replacing, consider an energy efficient model. It's important to purchase the correct size cooling system for the intended space and have it installed properly so it delivers the full energy performance promised. Properly sized and installed, regularly maintained energy efficient heating and cooling equipment along with properly sealed ducts, can save homeowners as much as 20 percent on annual energy costs.

2. Use ceiling fans wisely.

ENERGY STAR qualified ceiling fans can help cut home energy use by lessening the strain on an air conditioning unit or eliminating the need to use air conditioning all together. When using air conditioning, a ceiling fan allows the thermostat setting to be raised about 4 degrees Fahrenheit with no reduction in comfort. Ceiling fans create a wind chill effect that increases comfort in a home, even if it's also cooled by natural ventilation or air conditioning. They effectively circulate the air in a room to create a draft throughout the room. Remember to turn the fan off when leaving the room because ceiling fans cool people, not the room.

1. Learn what else can be done to make a home more energy efficient by visiting the Focus on Energy Web site.

The average home can be responsible for twice as many greenhouse gas emissions as the average car. Learning how energy is used in a home is an important step toward cutting energy costs, improving a home's energy efficiency and protecting the environment. Focus on Energy's Web site, focusonenergy.com, offers many suggestions for reducing energy consumption and saving money on utility bills.

For more ways to help protect the environment from home, please visit focusonenergy.com.

About Focus on Energy

Focus on Energy works with eligible Wisconsin residents and businesses to install cost effective energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. Focus information, resources and financial incentives help to implement projects that otherwise would not get completed, or to complete projects sooner than scheduled. Its efforts help Wisconsin residents and businesses manage rising energy costs, promote in-state economic development, protect our environment and control the state's growing demand for electricity and natural gas. For more information call (800) 762-7077 or visit focusonenergy.com.

About ENERGY STAR

ENERGY STAR was introduced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1992 as a voluntary market-based partnership to reduce air pollution through increased energy efficiency. Today, with assistance from the U.S. Department of Energy, the ENERGY STAR program offers businesses and consumers energy efficient solutions to save energy and money, and help protect the environment for future generations. More than 8,000 organizations have become ENERGY STAR partners and are committed to improving the energy efficiency of products, homes and businesses. For more information, visit energystar.gov.

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Energy experts from Focus on Energy are available for interviews or to answer additional questions regarding ENERGY STAR qualified products, as well as other energy related topics. To speak with a Focus on Energy expert, contact Rebecca Ehlers at (414) 225-9568 or rehlers@hyc.com.