

..... **Feature story**

Media Contacts: Robyn Nowak / Tim Wirtz
Hoffman York
(414) 225-9520 / (414) 225-9522
rnowak@hyc.com
twirtz@hyc.com

.....

**Wisconsin Family Wins Home Energy Makeover
and Helps Others Learn About Energy Efficiency**

On Dec. 31, 2007 Focus on Energy, Wisconsin’s energy efficiency and renewable energy initiative, launched a contest to find a Milwaukee area family with a home in need of energy efficient improvements. The contest, named Home Energy Makeover, was sponsored by Focus on Energy in partnership with WITI-TV FOX 6 and awarded one lucky winner with energy efficient improvements for their home, including insulation and air sealing, ENERGY STAR® qualified appliances and a new furnace, air conditioner and tankless water heater.

Only one family won the contest; however, many more families have benefited from the winner’s experience by learning about what goes into making a home energy efficient and the importance of energy efficiency.

Everyone’s a Winner

John and Corinne Kangas of Waukesha, Wis., were named the winners of the contest, valued at approximately \$20,000, on Feb. 3, 2008 during halftime of the Super Bowl telecast. It wasn’t long after the announcement that the Kangas home began its energy transformation.

“We found out we had won the contest when we saw the TV commercial announcing the winner during the Super Bowl. My family was jumping up and down — we were so excited,” said Corinne Kangas. “Our home is older, so knowing we won’t have to worry about things like the furnace or the air conditioner gives us great peace of mind. Plus, we couldn’t wait to learn about the process of making our home more energy efficient.”

For several weeks, FOX 6 joined the homeowners on their journey to energy efficiency, covering such details as the energy evaluation of the home, the advantages of ENERGY STAR qualified appliances and the installation of a tankless water heater. Through each step, FOX 6 viewers learned how they could benefit from the same improvements to their homes.

- more -

“By identifying what the home needed and then making the necessary improvements, the Kangas family can expect to save approximately 30 percent on their energy bills,” said Rich Marshall, Focus on Energy Project Manager. “More importantly, if other homeowners made just a few of the improvements the Kangas family received they could save significantly too.”

Marshall recommended the following steps for families looking to make their homes more energy efficient:

1. **Add Insulation.** Insulation is designed to resist heat flow. 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 the home already has. Consultants and qualified contractors that partner with the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program are trained to help identify insulation needs.
2. **Air Sealing.** Air sealing is simply closing holes, cracks and gaps where air can pass into or out of the home. A home that has air leaks uses more energy and costs more to heat and cool because the systems must work longer to maintain that temperature. Hidden air leaks often add up to the equivalent of an open window. Sealing air leaks will maintain a comfortable temperature throughout the home year-round and will help to lower energy bills.
3. **System Maintenance.** It’s important to make sure heating and cooling systems are operating the way they are designed to. It’s best to replace the furnace filter monthly, and make sure the supply and return registers aren’t obstructed.
4. **Programmable Thermostats.** Programmable thermostats help save money and keep homes comfortable by automatically adjusting temperature settings while the homeowner is asleep or away, saving as much as \$100 per year.
5. **CFLs.** By changing the five most frequently used light bulbs in your home to ENERGY STAR qualified CFLs you can save about \$35 each year in energy costs.
6. **Conserve hot water.** Set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees. Each 10 degree reduction can save up to five percent on water heating costs.
7. **Unplug appliances with “phantom loads.”** Some appliances such as DVD players, stereos and computers use power even when turned off. Plugging these appliances into a power strip that is turned off when the appliances are not in use will save energy.
8. **Ceiling Fans.** Ceiling fans can be used in lieu of air conditioners; however, be sure to turn the fan off when you’re not in the room to save energy — fans cool people, not rooms.
9. **Call Focus on Energy.** While the above tips are important, nothing compares to a personalized, professional opinion. When homeowners call Focus on Energy, they learn how to schedule a home energy evaluation and find out exactly what energy efficiency improvements their home needs.

Homeowners looking to learn more can watch the entire transformation of the Kangas home by visiting myfocusmakeover.com. Those looking to find out more about Focus on Energy and its energy saving programs can visit focusonenergy.com or call (800) 762-7077.

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 be 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.

###