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**Homeowners Can Lower Their Energy Bills and Carbon Footprint**

*- Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® Program helps save energy and money -*

**MADISON, Wis. (October 17, 2007)** — Wisconsin residents know that with winter comes higher energy bills; however, what many don't realize is when their energy bills increase, so do their carbon footprints. Focus on Energy, Wisconsin's energy efficiency and renewable energy initiative, is encouraging Wisconsin homeowners to use this time of year to take action against high energy bills and unnecessary energy use by taking advantage of the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program.

“We have a network of independent consultants and qualified contractors that have been trained to use the most advanced, state-of-the-art equipment to test the energy efficiency of your home, identify problems and recommend solutions,” said Sue Hanson, program manager for Home Performance with ENERGY STAR. “Once the recommended improvements have been made, we come back to test the house, ensuring the work was done to program standards. This gives homeowners peace of mind knowing the work was done correctly and that their efforts are not only benefiting themselves, but the greater good by lessening their impact on the environment.”

According to Hanson, the housing sector accounts for more than one-third of all energy consumed in the United States on a daily basis. “This is why it is extremely important for us to look at where we live in a different light, and make some changes. A home should be a sanctuary – not a burden on our energy climate.”

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### **Making a Difference**

One homeowner making efforts to reduce the environmental impact of her home is Georgette Frazer of Marshfield, Wis. Frazer and her husband built their 2,700 square foot home in 1991; at the time, the couple incorporated passive solar design, as well as an octagonal architecture to take advantage of natural air circulation. These features, among others, helped to reduce the home's dependence on its gas furnace and forced air heating.

“My husband and I have always been interested in our effect on the environment, so we decided we wanted to do more to impact our long-term energy and financial savings,” said Frazer. “We became interested in using renewable energy, but we knew we had to make sure our home was working at peak energy efficiency before we could take action – this is why our first step was to have a Home Performance with ENERGY STAR evaluation.”

The evaluation of Frazer's home included, among other tests, an infrared camera inspection. This revealed the home's need for added insulation and air sealing in some key areas. Once the couple completed this recommended improvement, they were ready to start assessing their home's renewable energy capabilities. A Focus on Energy site assessment helped them decide that a solar domestic hot water system was their best option.

The installation of Frazer's 224 square-foot solar domestic hot water system should cut the home's natural gas consumption by 35 percent, shielding them from increases in energy costs and helping the couple gain energy independence. According to Frazer, they wouldn't have been able to complete the system if it wasn't for the technical assistance and a \$2,500 Cash-Back Reward from Focus on Energy.

“Our solar hot water system has been up and running since August of this year, and so far we have all the hot water we need,” continued Frazer. “We're especially looking forward to this winter because the excess heat from the water heater will be used to heat the space around the furnace, consequently the furnace doesn't have to work as hard to heat the house. We can't wait to see the savings on our heating bills.”

### **Taking the First Step**

“Georgette Frazer and her husband are shining examples of doing their part to make a difference; however, we want everyone to know that every little bit helps,” said Hanson. “Whether it's installing a renewable energy system, changing a light bulb or making energy efficient improvements to your house, Focus on Energy is here to help.”

## **HOMEOWNERS CAN LOWER THEIR ENERGY BILLS AND CARBON FOOTPRINT**

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To find out more about the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program, including details on financing, Cash-Back Rewards, eligibility requirements and names of consultants and qualified contractors who work with the program, visit [focusonenergy.com](http://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 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](http://focusonenergy.com).

### **About the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program**

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR is one of the Focus on Energy Residential Programs. It is designed to provide owners of existing Wisconsin homes a cost effective way to reduce their energy bills and enhance the safety and comfort of their homes. To participate, a homeowner must have a comprehensive home evaluation and work completed by consultants and contractors partnering with the program. To date more than 4,500 whole house projects have been completed under the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program. For information, call (800) 762-7077 or visit [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com).

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