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Use at Will – October 2007

**Six Ways Home Performance with ENERGY STAR®
Can Help Lower Your Carbon Footprint**

The combination of high energy costs, increasing concern over energy consumption and the quickly approaching Wisconsin winter should have homeowners asking themselves the following questions: Is there anything I can do to decrease my impact on the energy climate? Is there anything I can do to save money on my heating bill? Is there a way to make my home more comfortable during the cold winter months? With the help of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR, the answer to all these questions could be “YES.”

High energy bills are primarily traced to poorly performing components of a home such as air leaks and insufficient insulation. Also, high energy bills can reflect the degree to which a home’s energy consumption is impacting the environment. These are both important reasons why homeowners should try to pinpoint the exact source of their high energy bills. With the help of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR, and the program’s partnering consultants, finding these problems and solutions to these problems is easier than expected.

Following are six recommendations a consultant partnering with the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program may make to lower energy consumption:

- 1. Add Insulation.** Insulation is designed to resist heat flow – that is, if it is cold outside, insulation helps keep the heat inside the house. In the winter, a lack of insulation makes walls very cold, so the furnace must work harder to keep the house warm. 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.

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2. **Air Sealing.** Air sealing is simply closing holes, cracks and gaps where air can pass into or out of the home. On cold days the furnace runs to maintain a comfortable temperature. A home that has air leaks uses more energy and costs more to heat because the system 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 heating bills.
3. **System Maintenance.** It's important to make sure heating 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. **Replace Outdated Heating Systems.** The decision to upgrade a home's heating system can be a difficult and expensive one. But with the Efficient Heating & Cooling Program, a sister program of Home Performance with ENERGY STAR, homeowners can make upgrades to furnaces and boilers economically with Cash-Back Rewards.
5. **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.
6. **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. In addition to technical expertise, the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR Program offers Cash-Back Rewards and new financing options to consumers who improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Improvements made will pay off not only in lower energy bills, but in peace of mind knowing the home is now comfortable, safe and less of a strain on the environment.

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 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.