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Time for your Home Energy Evaluation

Nearly 17 percent of all energy used in Canada goes toward running our homes. Every time we use energy from fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas, we produce greenhouse gas emissions. By using less energy in our homes, we help reduce the production of the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change and harm our environment. Nowadays, homes that are more than 25 years old have the potential to save an average of 35 percent of their energy use. Homes that are more than 50 years old could achieve even greater savings – an average of 38 percent. These are important statistics for New Brunswick because our houses are among the oldest in Canada – over 30 percent of homes in this province were built prior to 1960. Older homes are often draftier and less well insulated, so they are less comfortable to live in and more costly to heat.

Efficiency New Brunswick has a very progressive residential efficiency program that subsidizes the cost of an EcoENERGY home energy evaluation by \$400! Efficiency NB covers \$300 of the cost of the evaluation, and from their website you can print off a \$100 coupon to present to the company that you choose to conduct your energy evaluation. This means you end up only paying \$50 for an evaluation of a home that is up to 2000 square feet, and \$50 more for each additional 1000 square feet.

Efficiency NB provides a list of ecoENERGY Advisors that offer this service in New Brunswick. Call toll-free to any of the following companies:

Amerispec: 1-866-922-6607

Enercheck Solutions: 1-866-990-2499

Enerplan Consultants Ltd.: 1-866-363-7752

Legacy Technical: 1-888-545-1882

Sustainable Housing: 1-877-722-2842

The wait time for an energy advisor to come to your home to conduct your evaluation will vary from two weeks to a month depending on the time of year and the demand for service at that time. Before the evaluator comes to your home make sure you go to the Efficiency NB website to clip your \$100 coupon (www.energycnb.ca/coupon-e.asp).

After you receive your ecoENERGY evaluation and determine what energy efficiency advice you would like to follow, you may want to take advantage of the *Existing Homes Energy Efficiency Upgrades Program*. This program is for New Brunswick homeowners who make energy efficiency upgrades to their home as recommended in their ecoENERGY initial evaluation report. You can receive a grant of up to \$2000 or an interest-free loan of up to \$10,000. The program is designed to provide New Brunswick

owners of single-family homes with financial assistance to make their houses more energy-efficient in order to conserve energy. For more information check out the Efficiency NB website at www.energycynb.ca or call 1-866-643-8833. Efficiency NB also has energy efficiency programs for new homebuilders; multi-unit residential buildings; and a retrofit program for low-income households.

Some large projects that might be suggested in your evaluation are things like: replacing old doors and windows with energy efficient models; increasing insulation in basements and attics; and upgrading your heating equipment to high-efficiency oil or natural gas.

But even before you receive your ecoENERGY evaluation there are still some do-it-yourself actions you can take to make your home more energy efficient right away, such as: lowering your water heater temperature; caulking around doors and windows; installing programmable thermostats and setting a daytime and nighttime temperature (remember as a general rule, you will save 2% on your heating bill for every 1°C you turn down the thermostat).

Improving the energy efficiency of your home has many benefits: cost savings, improved home comfort, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and increased value of your home.

These past few weeks we've felt the days and nights cooling off, and though it is still only September, on chilly mornings we might be tempted to turn our heat on! So now's the time to take a few large and small actions to ensure our home energy use this winter is as low as it can be.

Sonya Hull is project manager for Fredericton's Green Matters greenhouse gas reduction campaign. She is booked for her ecoENERGY Home Evaluation next month.