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### **TIME FOR SPRING HOME IMPROVEMENTS FOR BLACK HILLS ENERGY CUSTOMERS**

#### *Schedule a Black Hills Energy free home audit and learn to use energy wisely*

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa, April 13, 2009 — With spring in full bloom, now is the time for Black Hills Energy customers in Iowa to make energy-efficient home improvements that can save them money on their energy bills, making their homes more comfortable year-round.

Homeowners may be unaware that their windows, doors and attics can all be sources of energy loss. That's why Black Hills Energy encourages residential customers to take advantage of a free energy audit, valued at approximately \$150. It will provide recommendations and efficiency tips that will help keep the weather outside.

"We want to help our customers make their homes as energy efficient as possible. That way, they will stay cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter," said Matt Daunis, Black Hills Energy's director of energy efficiency.

According to Daunis, Black Hills Energy's audit will provide information on how to reduce energy use. From low or no cost ideas, such as changing a furnace filter or closing a vent in an unoccupied room, to more comprehensive solutions, these professional energy advisers provide free assessments to customers. Both homeowners and renters are eligible for energy audits from Black Hills Energy.

"During a home audit, the adviser will check insulation levels, heating and cooling equipment and operating conditions, air infiltration levels and even behavioral factors that influence how much energy is really being used," Daunis said. "For example, residents often don't realize they're leaving their thermostats set at an expensive and unnecessary level each day when they leave for work and school. An energy adviser can help pinpoint these kinds of opportunities for savings while maintaining the comfort they value."

Advisers will install beneficial, low-cost upgrades such as outlet gaskets, faucet aerators, pipe insulation, low-flow showerheads and other infiltration measures—at no cost to the consumer—and provide educational information on managing energy costs.

Homeowners can also learn more about how to qualify for Black Hills Energy rebate programs. The residential audit is a preliminary step to qualify for insulation measures.

Incentives and rebates are limited, so they will be awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more information on home audits, call 888-567-0799 or visit [www.BHEhowto.com](http://www.BHEhowto.com).

### Energy-Saving Tips

Some common home-improvement tips that may result from a home energy audit include the following:

#### Summer:

- Use ceiling fans to distribute cool air.
- Check to make sure fireplace dampers are closed and fit tightly.
- Install water flow restrictors and aerators.
- Install an attic ventilating system that will draw cool air up through the house and can provide as much cool air as an air conditioner at a much lower cost.

#### Winter:

- Adjust the humidity in the home. A well-humidified house at 68 degrees Fahrenheit is as comfortable as a dry house at 75 degrees.

### Basic energy-efficient upgrades for homeowners

Generally, a homeowner can make basic upgrades based on the age of the home. For a complete home analysis, schedule an energy audit with a Black Hills Energy professional energy adviser who can perform a free residential audit and provide recommendations specific to each individual home.

For more information on home audits, call 888-567-0799 or visit [www.BHEhowto.com](http://www.BHEhowto.com).

#### 10-Year-Old Homes

##### Replace

- Retire and recycle pre-1993 refrigerators. Replacing a refrigerator manufactured prior to 1993 with a new ENERGY STAR model can save more than \$55 per year on energy bills. Refrigerator models that are at least 10 years old use 35 percent more energy than new ENERGY STAR qualified models.
- Replacing a 10-year-old room air conditioner with a new ENERGY STAR qualified model will save an average of \$250 during the lifetime of the unit.

#### 15-Year-Old Homes

##### Improve Your Water Heater

- Water heaters can last up to 15 years on average. Replace water heaters with an ENERGY STAR model.
- Set water heater to 120 degrees.
- Insulate hot water pipes as well as the length of pipe that leads into the heater.

#### 20-Year-Old Homes

##### Heating

The No. 1 source of energy consumption in the wintertime is heating. If a home's furnace is more than 20 years old, a homeowner should think about investing in a new ENERGY STAR model.

#### 30-Year-Old Homes

##### Windows

Install double-pane, high-efficiency windows. Drafty, single-pane windows can increase heating/cooling costs by up to 15 percent.

- Insulate attics with a minimum of 6 inches of insulation (preferable 10 inches to 12 inches). Consider adding insulation in attics and/or walls. A homeowner can increase the comfort of the home while reducing heating and cooling needs up to 30 percent by investing just a few hundred dollars in proper insulation and weatherization products.
- Replace older windows with energy-efficient windows.
- Install glass storm doors.
- Install weather stripping along cracks located at windows and doors. For most homeowners, this is an easy, do-it yourself project. As much as 7 percent to 12 percent of a structure's heating and cooling loss occurs around windows and doors, so weather stripping is an important part of an energy-saving plan.

### **About Black Hills Energy**

Black Hills Energy, a division of Black Hills Corp. (NYSE: BKH), serves 149,500 natural gas customers in 130 Iowa communities. Black Hills Corp. — a diversified energy company with a tradition of exemplary service and a vision to be the energy partner of choice — is based in Rapid City, S.D., with corporate offices in Golden, Colo., and Omaha, Neb. The company serves 759,000 utility customers in Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming. The company's non-regulated businesses generate wholesale electricity, produce natural gas, oil and coal, and market energy. More information is available at [www.blackhillsenergy.com](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com).

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