

# **“Prepare Home to Halt Next Winter’s Energy Loss”**

by Carl Scott

Believe it or not it's time to think about winter. It is time to begin planning to reduce our energy bills for next winter.

Recently Earle Garber of Wisconsin Rapids wrote an article titled "Take Steps to Improve the Environment" for the Central Wisconsin Sunday paper. I recommend anyone who is interested in sustainable practices to check the newspaper archives and read the article. The article is an outline for sustainable and energy saving practices. Garber is to be commended for his interest in the environment.

This article will address one area where "do it yourself" can make an impact on your energy bill and the environment. The topic is air leaks.

You can save energy and approximately 10 percent on your energy bill by plugging air leaks in your home. Cold air leaking into your home during the winter will waste many of your energy dollars. One of the fastest money saving solutions is caulk. Sealing around windows, penetrations and doorways to the exterior will reduce the leakage of cold air into your home and dollars from your budget.

The following areas need to be checked:

- **Windows**
- **Doors**
- **Ceiling fixtures and electrical outlets**
- **All exterior wall penetrations for plumbing or electrical lines**
- **To save energy do the following:**
  - **Install gaskets under the receptacle and switch plates located in exterior walls.**
  - **Caulk all windows and doorways where they intersect with the wall.**
  - **Caulk all plumbing and electrical lines that penetrate exterior walls.**
  - **Install clear vinyl plastic over single pane glass and any leaking storm windows.**

Check with your local utility company for free energy-saving programs and ideas. Many utility companies have free energy audit programs for their customers. Please consider an audit to help pinpoint areas of savings. Remember that we are all in this together and every little bit helps our country towards energy independence.

Carl Scott is a Sustainable Marshfield Committee member.