



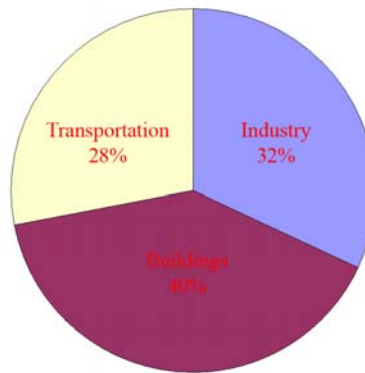
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## Real Estate 411 - The GREEN Home

### Quick FACTS

"Going Green" is no longer just a slogan, it's becoming a strategic imperative for those who are concerned about what energy means for our future and our environment. Most companies and households are looking for ways to reduce their energy consumption, while seeking suppliers/products that offer energy-efficient solutions to the environmental impact of their energy needs. Here is a look at The GREEN Home and cost efficient ways you can reduce your energy consumption starting at home.



#### Breaking Down Energy Use

Buildings account for roughly 40% of all U.S. energy use - residential buildings account for 22% and commercial buildings account for 18%. Industry accounts for 32% and transportation accounts for 28%. Looking at the 40% energy use in Buildings, here is how that breaks down and where the energy is going:

### The GREEN Home

This issue we are exploring the GREEN home and looking at easy and affordable ways to "go green" and bring energy efficiency to a higher level in our homes.



Green isn't just a trend; it's a movement. The National Association of REALTORS® believes that every step toward a greener, more sustainable environment is a step in the right direction. Whether you're looking to green your home, your business or your life, an NAR Green Designee can help.

Many people today are greenwashing, or falsely claiming to be green. To help you distinguish fact from fiction, the Green Resource Council provides NAR

#### Residential Energy Use:

- 1% - Computers
- 5% - Cooking
- 5% - Wet clean
- 7% - Electronics
- 8% - Refrigeration
- 11% - Lights
- 12% - Cooling
- 12% - Water heat
- 31% - Heating

#### Commercial Energy Use:

- 2% - Cooking
- 3% - Computers
- 4% - Refrigeration
- 6% - Office equipment
- 6% - Ventilation
- 7% - Water heat
- 13% - Cooling
- 14% - Heating
- 26% - Lighting

Of course, there will be regional and building specific differences. For example, in Texas, you might use a lot more energy running the air conditioning equipment and maybe a little less energy running the heating.

#### FACT #1: The NUMBERS on how much your energy costs and the carbon it creates

Texas annual CO2 Emissions from making electricity (million metric tons) – 228.92

(for US is 2,345; CA/42, NY/55.58, IL/91.33, FL/125.76)

Texas average price for electricity (cents per kilowatt-hour) – 12.34

(average for US is 10.65; CA/14.42, NY/17.10, IL/10.12, FL/11.22)

Texas average home's monthly consumption (kilowatt-hours) – 1,136

(average for US is 936; CA/580, NY/604, IL/790, FL/1163)

Texas average home's monthly bill - \$140.17

(average for US is \$99.70; CA/83.60, NY/103.25, IL/80.01, FL/130.47)

Green Designees with up-to-date resources and ongoing education about:

Green materials  
Energy-efficient technology  
Green ratings  
Green design  
Green incentives  
Green living ... and more!

If you're ready to buy, sell or build green, call CENTURY 21 Judge Fite Company to find a NAR Green Designee in the Dallas/Fort Worth market.

## 2-Minute 411 with Jim Fite

**6 Things You Can Do Now to get GREEN in your home!**

Watch the video at [www.youtube.com/judgefite](http://www.youtube.com/judgefite)

1. **Change your air filter** – A clogged filter blocks airflow, preventing the air you have already paid to heat or cool from reaching you, which means your system must work harder to reach your desired temperature. Replace your filters monthly during peak seasons.
2. **Check for leaks** – You could be losing 25% of your homes air through leaks and holes. Why spend money heating or cooling your attic? In the summer, check for leaks by feeling around ductwork with your A/C on. If you feel cold air, seal the leak with aluminum tape (not fabric duct tape, which will rot). Pay special attention to duct connections around junctions and any dampers installed by previous homeowners.
3. **Dial it up or down a few degrees** – Each degree you raise your thermostat above 78° in the summer or below 70° in the winter can make a difference in your energy bill. To dial in the perfect temperature, try placing a piece of tape over the temperature readout on your thermostat, then keep adjusting until you are comfortable. You'll

### FACT #2: TAX credits are available at 30% of the cost

Tax credits are available at 30% of the cost, up to \$1,500, in 2009 and 2010 (for existing homes only) for:

- Windows and doors
- Insulation
- Roofs (metal and Asphalt)
- HVAC
- Water Heaters (non-solar)
- Biomass Stoves

Tax credits are available at 30% of the cost, with no upper limit through 2016 (for existing homes and new construction) for:

- Geothermal Heat Pumps
- Solar Panels
- Solar Water Heaters
- Small Wind Energy Systems
- Fuel Cells

\*Source [www.energystar.gov/taxcredits](http://www.energystar.gov/taxcredits)

FACT #3: **The average home's annual energy cost is \$1,900 and the average annual carbon output for the power used in a two-person home is 16,290.** Here's the great thing about cutting your home's power use: You don't have to do much of anything. Sure, you should remember to turn off lights and keep the fridge door closed. But you can make a huge impact simply by using the energy-efficient products companies are scrambling to make. Incandescent bulbs will be hard to find in a few years, and non-Energy Star-rated appliances are an even rarer breed. The key is knowing what to replace and when.

### The GREEN Home: What is SEER? EER? and HSPF?

(For detailed definitions visit [www.DallasRealEstate411.com](http://www.DallasRealEstate411.com))

**Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER)** is most commonly used to measure the efficiency of a central air conditioner. The higher the SEER, the more efficient the system.

**Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER)** is a measure of how efficiently a cooling system will operate when the outdoor temperature is at a specific level (95oF). The higher the EER, the more efficient the system.

**Heat Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF)** is the most commonly used measure of a heat pumps heating efficiency. The higher the HSPF, the more efficient the heat pump.

Get more GREEN facts at [www.DallasRealEstate411.com](http://www.DallasRealEstate411.com).

## Real Estate 411 - QUICK TIPS

### TIP #1: EASY Energy-saving tips for your home

It costs more than \$160 billion a year to heat, cool, light, and live in our homes. According to the Department of Energy (DOE), homes account for 21% of the country's energy use each year and contribute about 17% of greenhouse gas emissions. Homes are more energy efficient than they used to be, but there are many ways to improve energy use and lower utility costs. The DOE estimates that many people could save 20-30% on household energy bills by making some cost-efficient improvements.

likely find you can stand it a few degrees warmer or cooler than you thought. (Fix any leaks in your home first so you're not wasting air.)

4. **Install a ceiling fan** – A ceiling fan doesn't actually change the temperature of a room, but it does make it feel hotter or cooler by moving the air around, creating a windchill effect in the summer and circulating rising warm air in the winter.
5. **Balance your airflow** – If one room seems consistently warmer or cooler than others, try keeping all your interior doors open so air can move freely around rather than constantly adjusting your thermostat. If you want an advanced project, install manual duct dampers to change the airflow to certain rooms. Just cut the duct, insert the damper, and tape it in place. Put them close to junctions and in easy-to-access locations.
6. **Manage your windows** – Close curtains or blinds of south-and west-facing windows in the summer to reduce solar heating and keep your home cooler. Open them in the winter for the opposite effect. For windows without curtains or blinds, consider installing sunshades or reflective film to achieve a similar effect. And check your windows for leaks: missing or damaged weather-stripping can have you air-conditioning the countryside!

For detailed information on "Six Things You Can Do Now" visit [www.DallasRealEstate411.com](http://www.DallasRealEstate411.com).

## Why go GREEN?

- For the **ENVIRONMENT**
- For the **SAVINGS**
- For your **HEALTH!**



## HEATING AND COOLING

About 46% of your utility bill is for heating and cooling. These home systems also emit 150 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year.

Homeowners should have their air conditional system inspected by a professional each year to make sure it is working as efficiently as possible. Also, make sure your systems are properly maintained and controlled:

- **Install a programmable thermostat** – it lets you adjust temperatures automatically according to your schedule. You can save around 10% a year on heating and cooling bills by simply turning the thermostat back 10-15 degrees for 8 hours.
- **Clean or replace furnace filters** once a month or as needed.
- **Clean warm-air registers**, baseboard heaters, and radiators; make sure they are not blocked by furniture, carpeting, or drapes.
- **Avoid setting the thermostat at a colder setting than normal** when you turn on the air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster.
- **During cold months, keep draperies and shades on south-facing windows open** during the day to allow the sunlight to enter, and closed at night to reduce the chill.
- **During warm months, deep the window coverings closed** during the day.

Also, consider energy-efficient upgrades. If your heat pump or air conditioner is more than 10 years old, or if your furnace is more than 15 years old, they may need to be replaced. It can save up to 20% on heating and cooling costs.

## INSULATION

Proper insulation throughout the home also can save homeowners money throughout the year. Insulating your water heater tank and water pipes prevents heat loss. Insulate heating ducts in unheated areas, such as attic and crawlspaces too. Keeping ducts in good repair can prevent heat loss of up to 60% at the registers. A thin coat of radiant barrier spray applied to the underside of the roof deck can block up to 75% of the sun's radiant heat from entering your home through the attic.

## WINDOWS

The average home loses more than 25% of its heat through windows. Installing storm windows can reduce heat loss between 25-50%. Energy-efficient windows save even more energy. Look for windows that are Energy Star-compliant for year round savings. Dual weather-stripping provides an energy efficient, virtually weather-tight seal. Another option is window film, which can reduce excessive heat gain through your windows giving you even more energy savings.

## LEAKS

A huge energy stealer is excess air leaking from your home. Seal air leaks around utility cut-throughs for pipes, gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets. Also, add caulk or weather-stripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows.

Making some energy efficient changes today will pay off for years to come.

### TIP #2: **Learning the lingo – 6 technical terms explained:**

- **Kilowatt-Hour** – The basic unit for measuring your power usage. For example, a 100-watt lightbulb left on for one hour would draw 0.1 kilowatt-hour.
- **Energy Star** – A government agency that certifies everything from lab-tested appliances to homes as being more energy-efficient than average.
- **Energy Guide label** – The FTC requires home appliances to sport one of these, listing estimates of the product's energy efficiency and that of similar models.
- **Tiered Rates** – A utility may charge one rate up to a fixed kilowatt-hour and a different rate for additional usage to discourage consumption.
- **Phantom Load** – The energy that many appliances and gadgets continue to draw when they are off. It's only a few watts per device, but it adds up.
- **Lumen** – A measure of brightness. A 100-watt incandescent puts out 1,500 to 1,700 lumens, the same as a 23-watt CFL.

### TIP #3: **Your homes biggest power suckers and what you can do to zero in on the savings potential for your home.**

- **The Office** – The Department of Energy estimates that 75% of the power used by electronics and appliances is drawn while they're off. Turn off the power strip when you're done for the day.



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- **The Living Room** – Even efficient LCD and plasma flat-screens draw between 35 and 300 watts and account for 4% of the country's household energy use. Power them down when you're not actually watching.
- **The Oven** – Electric ovens use about 440 watts; electric ranges 536 watts. Avoid opening the door, which can drop the temperature by 25 degrees. Also, skip preheating unless the recipe specifically calls for it.
- **Freezer** – A standalone freezer in a warm garage has to work extra-hard to stay cool. Move it into the basement. If you're buying new, opt for a chest model, which is 10-25% more efficient than an upright.
- **The Pool** – Swimming-pool pumps are one of the biggest energy users in the home, costing as much as \$240 a year to operate. Cut the filtration time to six hours or less a day.

**TIP #4: Read your water bill** - If your water bill or meter lists your usage in hundred cubic feet, multiply that number by 748 to find your total use in gallons.

**TIP #5: Measure water flow** - Put a five-gallon bucket under your shower, and use a watch to time how long it takes to fill it up. Divide by five, and that's your gallon-per-minute flow rate.

**TIP #6: Six Easy Power Tips**

- **Warm up the fridge** – Energy Star recommends setting your fridge thermostat to between 35° and 38° F and your freezer to 0°. Setting them lower offers no benefits for your food and uses more power. To check the temperature, place a thermometer in a glass of water in the middle of the fridge and read it after 24 hours. And keep that door closed!
- **Cool down the hot water** – Some manufacturers set electric hot water heater thermostats to 140° at the factory. But you can save between 6-10% on your hot-water energy costs by cranking the dial back to 120°. Your showers remain hot – just add less cold water to the mix. And don't forget to turn off your water heater if you're heading out of town for more than a day or two.
- **Put the PC to sleep** – Because a computer requires a surge of power to start up, the Department of Energy recommends shutting it down only if you're going to be away from it for more than two hours. You should, however, use your computer and monitor's sleep mode, which can cut power by 70-90% and doesn't require a full reboot.
- **Find new power** – Many regions have more than one power utility and they often have different pricing structures, so switching could save you money. There's no central repository, so for finding one in your area, Google is still your best bet.
- **Shade the A/C** – Keeping your window air-conditioner out of direct sunlight can help it use up to 10% less power. If you can, install it on the north side of the house, and plan shrubs or trees to shade it (just don't impede airflow around it).
- **Make your bed** – It sounds crazy, but if you have a waterbed, waterbed heaters actually use more power annually than your dishwasher. One way to lessen that load is to simply make the bed everyday instead of leaving it unkept. The covers help keep the water warm, saving about 30% of the energy needed to heat it.

We are spreading the word that "Real Estate is GREAT! at CENTURY 21 Judge Fite Company". There is real estate to be bought and sold in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex and we are doing it! Join us in spreading the word that real estate really is GREAT here in our market.

Each month we will deliver a new Real Estate 411 that will give you INFORMATION you need to know. REAL ESTATE 411 will deliver GOOD NEWS about what is happening here at CENTURY 21 Judge Fite Company and in our local real estate market.

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