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Audi ting the Energy Audi tor

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GRANTS UP TO \$10,000

We recently went "on site" with Eco-Energy Auditor Mary Verk. Marty is a seasoned pro at this audit work, he has 6 years under his belt, having completed over 1500 residential audits for the previous EnerGuide Program and now the EcoEnergy Initiative. Before we get started the actual audit there has been a number of changes in the past 2-3 months.



The program has expanded and there are increased levels of grants along with changes in the eligible improvements. Both the federal and provincial governments sponsor this program with grants available up to \$10,000.00 per home. Some examples are worth noting. No longer can you get a grant for a 90% effi-

cient gas furnace. It must be a 92% unit and there are substantial grant increases if you install a 94% rated condensing gas furnace with a brushless DC motor. The previous grants were a combined federal/provincial \$1000.00. The grants have been increased to \$1580.00. Ground source heat pumps went from \$7000.00 to \$8750.00. When you look at a water to water geothermal installation and the fact an average cost is \$15-18,000.00, it makes this system worth looking at. Attic insulation grants have gone up \$300.00.

This program currently has a deadline of March 31, 2011; just 19 months away. The plus is if you get an audit done you have 18 months from the date of your audit to get the recom-

mended upgrades done. For example if you get your audit done in January of 2011 you have until June of 2012 to complete your upgrades and still receive the grant money.

How do you get started? You have to book an appointment with a local Natural Resources Canada licensed provider or go to www.ecoaction.gc.ca/homes or www.ontario.ca/HomeEnergy. You can also call them at 1-800-622-6232. Marty is a licensed energy advisor who is contracted with Hearth-Makers Non-Profit Energy Cooperative in Kingston Ontario. Marty said that when you book your audit you will be asked to do some things. If you have a wood burning appliance it must be cleaned out thoroughly. The attic access must be clear for him to get into and you must have your property tax bill available. This is how they register your home.

When we arrived Marty took pictures of the home and measured the outside. This is how he establishes an approximate air volume of the home. He documented the type and number of windows. We then went inside to the basement where he documented a number of items, furnace, hot water system, type of foundation, insulation, finished basement, it is a large list. Next he walked the main floor and made notes, then entered the attic and recorded the insulation type and estimated levels including visual ventilation. He entered this extensive list into his computer which gives him a modeling of the home. This modeling is derived from the thousands of homes done by the EcoEnergy program throughout the country. He then set-up the blower door and prepared for the

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depressurization test. He explained that on an average sunny day the outside air pressure, which is rated in Pascals, at around 102. Using the blower door he drops the inside pressure to around 50-55 pascals. This is similar to receiving a direct 35 mile an hour wind against the house. The test quickly identifies the air leakage in the home. Marty commented he usually has the homeowner go with him to see where the areas of improvement are needed. While a smoke pencil or candle helps, Marty noted that the sensitivity of the back of your hand works pretty well too. The modeling software in his computer identifies the level of air leakage. He stated that while large holes are usually obvious, the accumulation of smaller air leaks can actually become worse over time as the air is forced in and out of the home. Put a number of small holes together and they can be more leakage than one large void. Marty took considerable time with the homeowner, discussing the findings and making a num-



ber of verbal suggestions. He told the client that they would receive their actual printed report in about 2 weeks.

While we were standing outside discussing the audit, Marty commented that this program is an excellent means for an average homeowner to find out just how much air leakage the home has and where to begin making the necessary upgrades. He noted that historically he finds that windows were high on the list for heat loss, followed by poorly insulated basements and the header areas where the foundation and the framework meet. Simple improvements like the foam insulation pads behind all your exterior wall electrical switches and plugs can help. There **isn't one specific area, rather an accumulation of air leakage that** needs to be improved in nearly every home.

Marty went on to state that once the homeowner has **completed his recommendations, he reminded me that you don't** have to do everything on the list, you must have a confirming evaluation. You can also re-enter the program after your post-retrofit program evaluation has been done if you want a new 18 month deadline. This post-retrofit audit cost is 150.00 but this fee is covered by Ontario. One final tip, if you want to re-enter **you must clear this with your auditor's Eco-Energy Provider.**



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