

LES, Cengas begin home energy audit programs

By Hollie Wieland

The Home Energy Audit is a new program offered by major electric and natural gas companies. It suggests conservation practices which would work particularly well in an individual's home.

In 1978, the National Energy Act was passed. Under this act, electric and natural gas companies which are more than a certain size are required to offer some of their customers energy audits, according to Harold Simmons, spokesman for Lincoln Electric System.

According to Cengas Marketing Manager Clancy Woolman, there are eight electric and natural gas companies in Nebraska which must comply with the law.

Woolman said many smaller utility companies also are setting up similar services even though they are not required by law to do so.

According to an LES brochure, the audit is "a comprehensive survey of your

dwelling to determine what energy conservation or renewable resource measures, or energy-conserving practices, would help you reduce energy consumption."

The audit cost to the customer is limited by law to \$15, Simmons said, but the average cost to the companies performing audits is \$100 per home, and the companies receive no extra money from the government to cover the cost of the audits.

The audit is available to people owning or occupying one- to four-family residences, Simmons said.

He said an audit usually takes two to three hours to perform. It includes an inspection and measuring of the exterior of the house, a visual check of every room in the dwelling, including the attic, and a check of air-conditioners, heaters and water heaters, he said.

Data from the inspection and records of the house's past energy consumption are fed into a computer and from the printout, a written report is made for the customer, Simmons said.

The report includes suggestions on possible conservation measures, average cost of installment of new facilities, approximate amount of money saved yearly because of new conservation efforts, and approximate time necessary for the measures to pay for themselves.

As additional services, Simmons said, several low-cost or no-cost conservation practices will be explained to customers.

Also, upon request, customers will receive a list of suppliers, installers, and companies giving loans for energy conservation efforts.

In October, LES sent brochures to customers explaining the audit. Simmons said that since this is a new program, there is no way to judge its success yet. According to Woolman, Cengas will start its audit program later this year.

Weatherstripping reduces costs

Winterizing saves money

By Julie Hintz

Homeowners hoping to save money on their heating bills may be interested in ways to conserve energy by winterizing their homes.

According to the Lincoln Electric System, caulking or filling small gaps with sealants, putty, or glazing compounds can reduce the amount of air and moisture coming into a home.

These gaps can be underneath baseboards inside the home, in exterior walls at electrical outlets, around pipes and wires entering the home, or around dryer vents and exhaust fans in exterior walls.

Caulking can result in an energy cost savings of between 2 and 3 percent each year.

Weatherstripping or applying narrow strips of material over or in moveable joints of windows and doors can save 3 to 4 percent of money spent on heating.

Replacing a furnace, boiler or heat pump with one of the same fuel type that uses less energy or replacing the burner in an oil furnace with a more energy efficient burner may help save 12 to 25 percent.

Information in an LES brochure indicates that 9 to 11 percent savings may re-

sult if home owners insulate their floors between the first level conditioned (heated or cooled) area of the home and an unconditioned basement, crawl space or an unexposed surface beneath the home.

Duct and pipe insulation is a material installed around ducts and pipes located in areas of a home that are not heated or cooled. It prevents the loss of heated and cooled air and water.

Storm or thermal windows can create an air space to provide greater resistance to heat flow.

The LES brochure described a clock thermostat as a device designed to reduce energy consumption by regulating the demand on heating or cooling systems. It automatically lowers the thermostat setting during the heating season and raises it during the cooling season.

Heating and cooling system adjustments include cleaning gas or oil furnaces and making combustion efficiency adjustments periodically cleaning or replacing air filters on forced-air heating and cooling systems or lowering the thermostat setting on the furnace.

Open shades and curtains also helps by allowing sunlight in during the heating season, but windows should be covered at night during winter to conserve energy.

Inclement weather newsletter lists closing, clearing procedures

UNL's inclement weather plan will be outlined in a faculty and staff newsletter to be posted on bulletin boards Nov. 14, said a UNL Grounds Department spokesman.

Jay Schluckebier said the decision to close the university during adverse weather is made by the Chancellor's office.

The chancellor will decide whether to cancel all classes and close all offices, cancel classes but try to conduct other business or not to cancel classes.

Local media then will be notified and the decision for university operation during inclement weather will be announced.

When weather is less severe, but snow depths make normal parking impossible, the chancellor may declare a UNL parking emergency, Schluckebier said.

A parking emergency means that parking zone restrictions will not be in effect for people with parking permits, he added.

The announcement will be carried by the local media by 7 a.m. and will remain

in effect until 7 a.m. the next day, Schluckebier said.

If the emergency is not renewed at that time, then all parking regulations will be in effect.

At the same time the parking emergency is aired locally, UNL's FM radio station KRNU will carry information on lot conditions, Schluckebier said.

Permit holders may park in any lot that has been cleared, he said.

However, students, faculty and staff are encouraged to use public transportation during an emergency, Schluckebier said.

Streets, lots and dock areas used by essential services will be cleared first, he said. Large lots (employee and commuter), small lots (employee and commuter) and residence hall lots then will be cleared, he said.

Sidewalks will be cleared at the same time lots are cleared, Schluckebier said.

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