



Ruth Brock  
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News Release

## **Savings Starts at Home**

### **Insulation and Windows**

No matter where we reside, homes are more comfortable, cost less to heat, and cool with the right insulation. Unless the home's design includes energy efficiency, adding insulation can be a good way to save money. Older homes do not have much insulation, which can mean high-energy bills. Even if a home is new, more insulation can pay for itself in a few years and increase a home's resale value.

For those homeowners in the market for new windows, consider high-efficiency alternatives. Look for the National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) label, an independent industry rating system for the energy performance of windows, doors, and skylights.

Look for windows made of low emissivity—or “low-E”—glass. Low-E glass has a special thin coating that lets in light, but reduces heat transfer. In warmer climates, consider windows with “spectrally selective coatings”—glazes that let light in, but keep heat out. In colder climates, select windows that are gas-filled to reduce heat loss.

Consider planting a tree. Landscaping is a natural way to shade a home. Well-placed trees and shrubs not only save on air conditioning costs, but also add value to property.

For homes with room air conditions, shading room air conditioners from direct sun will reduce their workload. Always clean the filters once a month and replace them as necessary.

### **The ABCs of Insulation**

The Federal Trade Commission requires insulation manufacturers and sellers to test and label their products. Generally, the higher the “R-value” the more energy saved. When purchasing insulation, installers and retailers are required to give an R-value fact sheet. New home sellers must give information about the type, thickness, and R-value of the insulation in each part of the house. Many state or local building codes include minimum requirements for home insulation. For those purchasing a new home or adding on to an existing home, be sure the home or home addition meets those codes. It will save money in the end.

The amount of insulation needed depends on the climate, the part of the house, and the type of heating and cooling systems. The attic is the best place to start. The Department of

Energy has an online calculator to help determine the amount of insulation needed. Visit the Zip Code Insulation Program website at <http://www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html>. For more information about insulation, visit the Energy Savers website at [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov), or call 1-877-EERE-INF (1-877-337-3463).

For more information, contact Ruth Brock, regional extension agent, at the St. Clair County Extension office at 205-338-9416 or email [brockru@aces.edu](mailto:brockru@aces.edu).

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