

# IT'S ELECTRIFYING!



## DEER HARBOR COUPLE GETS ENERGY SMART

Howard Barbour and Sheila Gaquin have been in their Deer Harbor home for 15 years, but this winter is their warmest on record—and their energy bill is going down at the same time. After having an OPALCO Home Snapshot Energy Assessment, they discovered a number of ways to save energy and money. “This was the best \$25 I’ve ever spent on my house,” said Barbour. “We were considering a remodel and wanted to see

what we could do towards energy efficiency. We called OPALCO, they set us up with an appointment—and the contractor, Justin Paulsen, was just fantastic.”

“I expected a perfunctory look around,” said Gaquin, “but Justin spent about 90 minutes with us—looking in the attic, the crawlspace—considering everything from structural issues to appliances. As a building contractor, he is technically very well informed and pointed out things we hadn’t noticed in 15 years—like the fact that our bathroom fans were venting into the attic and not outside. He took the time to help us understand each aspect of our home’s energy efficiency and left us with a very detailed report.”

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Barbour and Gaquin have completed a number of energy efficiency improve-

ments since their assessment—the most significant of those was replacing the drafty single-pane aluminum windows in their living room with new super-efficient vinyl double-paned units. “The old windows dripped moisture and would freeze on the inside,” said Gaquin. “You couldn’t sit here in the winter without a blanket to wrap up in. It is so much more comfortable!” Barbour considered installing the new windows himself, but realized that the installation process is key to gaining maximum energy efficiency and so he deferred to the experts. “We were motivated by the OPALCO rebate—and the federal tax incentive available right now,” explained Barbour. “In fact, we’ve already gotten our check from OPALCO.”

The couple also got the caulk gun out and sealed up a number of air leaks and gaps (like at the hose bib). They have a list of other improvements they’ll make as time and budget allows—like replacing appliances with EnergyStar models (now armed with the understanding that the yellow manufacturer’s energy label doesn’t equate to EnergyStar unless it says EnergyStar), air flow improvements, additional window and sliding door replacements with an upcoming kitchen remodel—and they are considering upgrading their antiquated baseboard heaters with a ductless heat pump system and programmable thermostat. “No matter how long you live in a house, you have blinders on to so many things,” said Barbour. “Having a skillful contractor come in and say—‘this is what you could do . . .’—it was painless.”

Home Snapshot Energy Assessments are offered for a fee of \$25. OPALCO’s Building Performance Institute (BPI) certified contractors inspect your home from top to bottom including insulation, windows and doors, heating system, ventilation and air quality, appliances and lighting. They will prepare a report on your home’s energy efficiency status and potential and make prioritized recommendations for improvements that could save you money on your electric bill—and make your home more comfortable. While the contractor is in the home, they will offer to replace all of your light bulbs with more efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) and install low-flow showerheads as a part of the service for no extra charge. To schedule a Home Snapshot Energy Assessment, call the Energy Services office at 376-3586.

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