

Why We Should Focus on Energy Efficiency...

The typical U.S. family spends close to \$1,500 a year on home utility bills which totals \$115 billion being spent in the U.S. each year on fuel and electricity. For the 95 million people who had housing problems (high cost burden, overcrowding, poor quality or homelessness) in 2001, these bills are part of the housing cost burden they face every month as the bills come in. By making a few simple changes, a household's energy costs can decrease anywhere from 10 to 50 percent.

Rebuilding Together and the American Petroleum Institute hope to assist low-income homeowners by providing the repairs to make their homes more functional as well as help reduce future utility costs to ensure that the more than 90% of persons age 65 and older who want to remain in their homes are able to. Home energy audits can help you understand where your RT affiliate might be able to make some energy improvements in the homes your volunteers are renovating - view some examples online at <http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/calculators/homes.cfm>.

- *Insulation:* One of the most effective ways of increasing a home's energy efficiency is to insulate unconditioned areas: areas that are not a part of the heating or air conditioning service.
- *Heating:* Accounts for 49% of utility costs in an average home and a typical home can lose up to 60% of its heated air before it reaches the register.
- *Air leaks:* Air infiltrating floors, walls, ceilings, ducts, and plumbing penetrations account for 59% of air leakage in a typical home. Most of these leaks are easily addressed by caulking penetrations to the outdoors or unconditioned spaces, having a professional seal the seams in the ductwork, and insulating electrical outlets.
- *Caulking and weather-stripping:* Can save a typical homeowner more than 10% on energy bills.
- *Lighting:* Switching from traditional incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent light bulbs can make a difference. A compact fluorescent will last 10 times as long and require less energy.