

Air seal your home to realize savings on energy use, bill payments

New windows, caulking and insulation can make serious headway into making your home more energy-efficient. But know that 30 percent of your heat loss is leakage from points other than where you might think.

Although windows, doors and outside walls contribute to air leakage, the biggest holes are usually hidden from view and are in places that connect the house to the attic, crawl space or basement.

Dropped ceilings and kitchen soffits, ductwork and plumbing areas, attic accesses and pull-down stairs, recessed light fixtures and wiring penetrations



Larry Kaufman

You can test the airtightness of your home by using a special fan called a blower door. The blower door test allows you to determine how much air leaks out of a house every hour. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) recommends an

through the top plates of walls represent major connections between the attic and conditioned space.

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air infiltration rate of 35 percent each hour for ideal air quality, but most older houses in Michigan have air infiltration rates of 70 to 80 percent.

Reducing the leaks in your house to less than 40 percent will save on your energy bills and provide additional comfort.

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programs such as the DOE/Environmental Protection Energy Star Program require an energy rating to qualify for rebates. Michigan's Energy Star Program provides homeowners with \$300 rebates for making even minor improvements to their homes.

On a 100-point scale, in which 86 points garners a five-star rating, a two-point improvement in a house at the low end of the scale and a one-point improvement for homes with higher energy-efficiency ratings is enough to get the rebate.

For more information on

this rebate, call (517) 241-6228. Installing a \$45 clock thermostat, for example, will improve your rating by a point and provide an inexpensive but efficient way to help control energy usage.

Although that simple improvement may be enough to get a rebate, the cost of having a contractor test your home will cost \$300 to \$400.

Still, the test will result in a plan to make your house as energy-efficient as you want it, you'll save money on your energy bills by making improvements and the energy rating will add resale value to your home.

Check out the Home Energy

Analysis Team (info@michiganheat.com) or Michigan Energy Services of Ann Arbor to get an energy rating for your home.

I don't like to brag, but my 34-year-old abode is now a five-star house by adding new windows, blown cellulose in the attic and caulking doors, windows and the basement. You, too, can get a gold star and save money at the same time.

Larry Kaufman of DTE Energy's Residential and Small Business Marketing group has conducted more than 50 energy savings workshops for the utility and is an expert advisor on home energy efficiency.

House situates large bedrooms, rec room on 2nd level

Arched windows in the conical shaped face of the Howard (406-64) add an attractive facade to this contemporary 3,164 square-foot, story-and-a-half home.

Various roof lines add to the unique look, as does the three-car garage.

The vaulted entry is past the diminutive covered porch.

Formal living and dining rooms are to the right.

Oversized windows bathe the living room in light.

French doors enhance the dining room, adding a touch of elegance. On the left side is a pocket door that allows privacy from the kitchen beyond.

The c-shaped kitchen provides a great amount of counter and cabinet space, as well as a built-in dishwasher. An eating bar runs along the left side of the counter backing to the family room. A pantry is on the opposite wall.

A bay-window nook overlooks the deck.

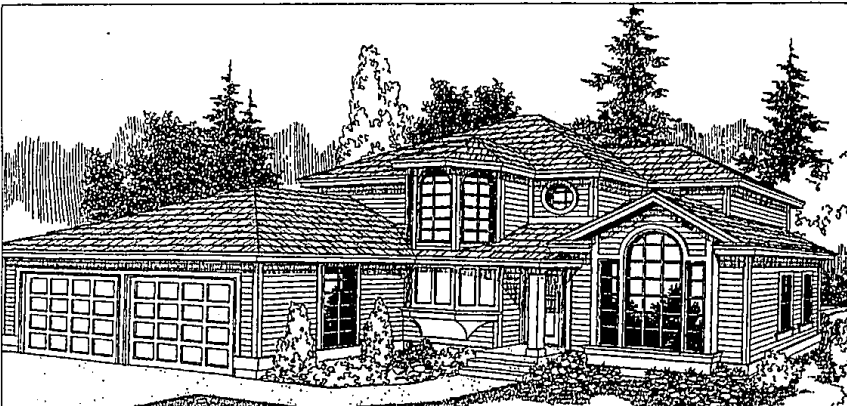
The half bath and laundry are clustered together between the garage and family room.

The master suite flows from the family room. It has a coffered ceiling and walk-in closet. The master bath has a step-up to the shower and tub, as well as dual sinks and its own linen closet.

The sweeping angular stairs have long, arched windows to light the treads.

Three bedrooms, a bath and recreation room are upstairs. The set-up of the bedrooms is unique.

One is by itself next to the bath. The other



two are adjacent to the recreation room with doorways straight into the rec room from both.

A linen closet and storage room are off the upstairs hall.

For a study plan, including sealed floor

plans, elevations, sections and an artist rendering, send \$24.95 to Landmark Designs, 33127 Saginaw Road E., Cottage Grove, OR 97424. Please specify plan name (Howard) and number (406-64.)

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Restoring siding is fairly easy once you know the routine

(NAPS) - That new home won't always be new.

Most people install aluminum, vinyl or hardboard siding on the house with the idea it will last forever and not need maintenance. Unfortunately, anything that is exposed to the elements will need upkeep so that it will continue to look good. Ultraviolet rays from the sun, airborne pollutants, rain and other environmental factors cause the original finish on manufactured sidings to chalk, fade, or become porous,

allowing dirt to collect and penetrate the surface. Mildew can form on damp, shady parts of the siding.

Painting is the solution to aluminum, vinyl or wooden siding that looks worn.

Painting these types of sidings after proper preparation of the surface will eliminate the problems, renew the finish and make the house almost like new.

Painting siding gives the homeowner a chance to choose a completely new look or color. However, when

painting vinyl siding, don't use a deeper color than the original since deeper colors can cause warping on some grades of vinyl siding.

Benjamin Moore & Co. has several recommendations for anyone planning to paint.

Surfaces must be clean and free of grease, dirt, mildew, excess chalk and loose or scaling paint. Dull any glossy surface. Scrape away old, damaged paint and smooth rough spots with sandpaper.

Sink all nail heads below

wood surfaces and fill in holes with putty.

Treat any mildew with a commercial mildewicide or a solution of household bleach and water.

Rinse thoroughly and let dry completely before painting.

Wash under eaves or overhangs with a detergent solution and rinse with a strong stream of water to remove surface salts that can prevent paint adhesion.

Chalking should be removed by power washing

followed by priming. If the siding has only faded and has only a minor amount of dirt, a simple rinsing with a garden hose should be sufficient.

When painting siding, use a quality latex paint.

Always mix paint thoroughly by stirring well before using and occasionally during use.

After you have almost finished a can of paint, open the next can, stir it and add it to the used can.

Pour paint back and forth a bit to ensure color uniformity.

Never paint in direct summer sun, when the temperature is below 50 degrees, on damp surfaces or during foggy weather.

Always paint from the top down to avoid dripping and splattering what you have already painted. Paint gutter and eaves first.

Work side to side coating four or five boards at a time completely across the house. This will minimize lapping. Finish painting by doing the trim.

Keep things neat around the house this summer

(NAPS) - When the children are out of school, chances are your next new home will need a bit of tidying after they're finished doing whatever kids like to do. Cleaning up after kids can be quite a chore, but with these easy steps, it doesn't have to be unbearable as we hit the dog days of summer.

Kids need space to move, so send them outside for a good part of the day. After playing in the dirt, have them remove their shoes before stepping into the house. Going swimming or under the sprinkler? Be sure to get all wet bathing suits to dry in the yard before they end up for hours on the floor.

Assign summer duties. Just because kids aren't in school doesn't mean they shouldn't have responsibilities. Assign various age-appropriate chores. Teaching kids necessary home care tasks will foster a sense of teamwork, especially if you make it fun.

Play music to get them in the

mood. Make sprucing up and picking up a game. Try to find cleaning utensils, mops and scrubbers with fun designs so kids will want to use them.

Contain the mess. Designate a play area just for them. Use the basement, a spare room or even the kids' bedrooms as official fun places.

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