



The Daily Gleaner

All Things Efficient

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Have you received your energy audit from Efficiency New Brunswick yet? Perhaps you are in the midst of renovations, or have decided to finish your basement this summer. Are you looking to replace that old appliance or furnace, and are wondering what the most efficient model is so you can save energy and money over its life span? There are many web sites and resources out there, but www.allthingsefficient.ca is a one-stop shop that connects everything you need to know when purchasing your next energy efficient product.

Last month, at the same time as www.greenmattersfredericton.com was launched, *All Things Efficient* launched a resource tool for New Brunswick residents. It is a bilingual online resource that will help New Brunswick homeowners find the most energy efficient home products or services, information about manufacturers, while offering a quick link to a list of suppliers located in the province.

All Things Efficient is an initiative launched by the Conservation Council of New Brunswick, supported by EcoAction and the Environmental Trust Fund. The web site informs New Brunswickers that an investment in energy efficiency not only creates long term savings on their energy bills, but also that reducing energy demand also contributes to combating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). Households account for 26% GHGs in New Brunswick, and the quickest and most cost effective way to reduce our energy consumption is through more energy efficient households.

Most products, such as windows or heating systems, have an energy efficiency rating (ER). The product is assigned a number based on how energy efficient it is. As an example, the ER of a window is calculated from the rate of heat transfer (called a U-Value) with the window's potential solar heat gain and air tightness. Although the ER calculations can be confusing, the end result is that you can use them to make informed decisions about energy efficient products for your home. To help you, *All Things Efficient* has listed these products in order of their efficiency rating (ER), and has also included contact information of suppliers, so that New Brunswick homeowners have quick and easy access to the products and services they need to make their home more efficient.

We all know that Energy Star appliances and electronics use less energy, but did you know that leaving them plugged in still produces electricity even when they are not turned on? Think about your electronics that have digital clock displays, or that your television turns on immediately after pressing the power button. This is called being in "standby" mode, also referred to as a "phantom load". According to The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), an estimated 75% of energy used in the average home comes from phantom loads. Of course we cannot unplug our refrigerators, but entertainment centers and office equipment that is not in use can be unplugged to save a surprising amount of energy. An inexpensive trick with electronics is as simple as a power bar that can be turned off with a switch when your electronic equipment is not in use.

And, let's not forget incentives! Enbridge Gas is offering up to \$3000 to convert to natural gas central heating and water heating. Contact them today - it is the most efficient way to heat. If you want to compare heating costs from various sources, just visit www.allthingsefficient.ca.

And by the way, remember to use your air conditioner a little less this summer, or keep it on low and close windows and curtains. Look for more tips on how to become more energy efficient in next week's column.

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