

# Home improvements can help lower taxes

(ARA) - While small things help, it's the big steps consumers take to improve their home's energy efficiency that truly make a difference, according to researchers at *Scientific American* magazine.

Of the 505 Americans surveyed by the Earth Institute and Center for Research on Environmental Decisions, more than 40 percent said the most effective way to save energy was to turn off lights, drive less or adjust the thermostat. Less than 10 percent identified what researchers say are more effective measures — improving your home's overall efficiency, like buying energy-saving appliances or replacing old windows with more energy-efficient ones.

"Now is an ideal time to replace drafty windows or doors," says Annette Bravard, vice president of retail replacement at Pella Corporation. "Installing energy-efficient windows and doors can help lower your utility bills and increase your energy efficiency for years to come, and help you qualify for 2010 U.S. energy tax credits. If you've been putting off window or door replacement, now's the time to do it."

To meet requirements for up to \$1,500 in U.S. energy tax credits, qualifying windows and doors must be installed by Dec. 31, 2010.

### SIMPLIFY YOUR REPLACEMENT

Sometimes the most daunting aspect of a home improvement project is figuring out how to pay for it. Once homeowners take the first step toward securing financing options, they're surprised how quickly and easily windows and doors can be replaced, Bravard says.

Whether you want to replace all your windows at once or start with just one door, these steps will help get your replacement project under way.

1. Financing - Contact your lender or the window company you're buying from to discuss possible financing options. Not ready for a big remodeling project right now? Consider a multi-year approach that fits your needs.

2. Schedule appointment - Schedule an in-home consultation with a window company expert to discuss your energy-efficiency, installation and timing goals.

3. Window/door selection - Your window expert will help you choose energy-efficient windows and doors based on your home's style, your climate and your budget. They can also arrange for installation.

Replacement projects don't need to be messy, time-consuming or complicated. In fact, it's possible to install new windows without replacing wallpaper or repainting your walls, Bravard says.

Pella Precision Fit replacement windows provide a simplified solution for home renovation. These easy-to-install replacement windows slide into existing window openings helping retain surrounding interior trim, wallpaper, paint or plaster. The windows are designed for applications where the exterior frame remains in good condition, but an upgraded sash unit can increase energy efficiency and eye appeal.

Choose from awning, transom and casement windows — whichever meet your needs and the style of your home.

Concerned about costs? Consider vinyl windows and doors



PHOTO COURTESY  
ARA CONTENT

that offer low maintenance, durability, distinctive design and energy efficiency.

"With so many energy-efficient options, stylish new replacement windows and doors can help keep your home warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer while

creating a better view," Bravard says.

If you're ready to take on this energy-saving project, visit [pella.com](http://pella.com) for a downloadable step-by-step guide to window and door replacement.

## PLAN

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performance of your side walls by up to 25 percent by providing a blanket of insulation. This helps reduce the impact of thermal bridging between your wall studs to minimize air leakage, significantly cutting down on the energy needed to heat or cool a home, and even reducing the effects of outside noise.

According to Pat Culpepper, president of Progressive Foam Technologies, Inc., a foam manufacturing company that helps leading vinyl siding manufacturers produce insulated-backed siding, the product has multiple benefits in addition to energy efficiency.

"Homeowners don't just want energy efficiency, they want their home to look better and they also want to min-



For a more extensive winterizing project, consider renovating your home with insulated siding such as Variform by Ply CSL 600 shown here. (Photo Courtesy ARA Content)

imize maintenance," Culpepper says. "With wider profiles than regular vinyl siding, insulated siding provides a true wood look, without the maintenance of real wood."

According to Culpepper, insulated siding is the only cladding product on the market that can actually save homeowners energy and offer payback down the road.

Additionally, the foam backing makes it extremely durable, helping to prevent damage and denting from hail, high winds and even the accidental hit from baseballs or golf balls.

Beyond energy efficiency and durability, insulated siding is an exceptionally dry wall system, making it resistant to mold growth and deterioration due to moisture absorption. "In the 20 years that we have been manufacturing insulated-backing for

siding, we have had zero water damage claims," says Culpepper.

Today's vinyl siding manufacturers offer insulated siding options at various price points and in an assortment of colors. For superior performance and a wide selection of coordinating design accents, Blais recommends Mastic Home Exteriors by Ply Gem Structure EPS. Options such as Napco by Ply Gem American Essence or

Variform by Ply Gem CSL 600 also offer classic styling in up to 14 colors.

Visit [www.plygem.com](http://www.plygem.com) for more information on gutter protection, insulated siding and other home improvement products - including windows - that can help increase comfort and efficiency, minimize maintenance and add beauty this winter and year-round.

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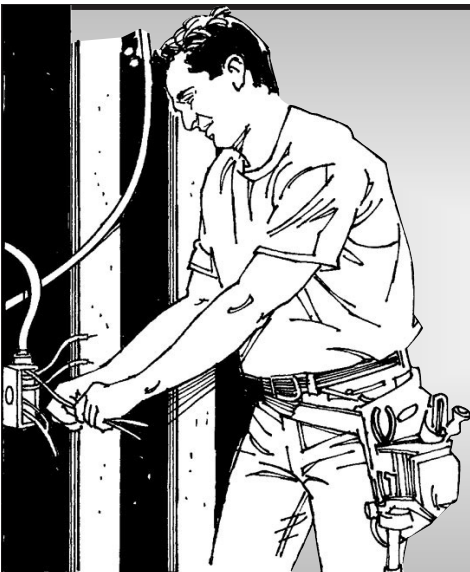
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