



Community Action Connection

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The Comforts of Home

Whatcom County residents take Community Energy Challenge

www.oppco.org

by Sydney Brusewitz

Bob and Bernie Prouty were looking for a way to stabilize the temperature in their home in Bellingham and reduce utility costs through reliable and knowledgeable contractors. They called the Community Energy Challenge (CEC) number, expecting the staff would simply replace doors and windows in order to make the house warmer.

The CEC is a new program offered by the Opportunity Council and Sustainable Connections for homeowners who want to reduce energy use and expense. This program is making energy efficiency affordable, accessible and attractive for businesses and households throughout Whatcom County.

During an energy assessment of the Prouty home, the CEC building analyst told them air sealing, insulation and ventilation are essential to making their home more comfortable. It was valuable information the Proutys used when deciding which improvements they wanted to make.

“When you have money to invest in home improvement, it is important to have a plan of action so you’re taking the appropriate steps to do the job well,” Bob Prouty said.

The CEC staff is doing its part by hiring qualified contractors like Chuckanut Builders to complete the energy efficiency upgrades for homeowners.

“[Some of] the many benefits of working as a contractor for the CEC are that we have been able to add four more employees to our payroll, we have a steady flow of work and have been introduced to many new clients,” Chuckanut Builders contractor Ian Rae said.

The Proutys were impressed by all the procedures, such as the follow-through and the communication among program staff and the homeowners.

“The checks and balances integrated into the structure of the program worked to our benefit,” Bob says.

The CEC makes achieving energy efficiency as easy as possible from start to finish. The program includes a full energy assessment, a customized energy action plan detailing cost-effective measures, assistance with utility rebates, attractive and accessible financing opportunities, reliable contractors and quality assurance inspections.

“The Prouty job was one of our favorites because they were so enthusiastic about weatherizing their home,” Rae says. “Because of this work, the clients now have a more comfortable, durable and energy efficient home and they expect to save approximately \$408 per year.”

One year later, the Proutys notice the benefits and comfort of using less energy.

“The stability in temperature and the improvement in ventilation makes a world of difference to wake up to every day and come home to after vacation,” Bernie Prouty boasts.

As of Jan. 18, the Prouty’s home is one of more than 300 energy efficiency residential projects completed by the CEC. Annual savings for the homeowners average \$450 per home. This program has also supported 84 local jobs.

For more information about the CEC and to follow project progress go to:
www.communityenergychallenge.org.