

HOME

4 Tips for Cutting Your Home Energy Bills Even in Winter

NewsUSA

(NU) - Sponsored by GAF - You know it's cold when it snows in Florida.

Which is exactly how the new year unfortunately began thanks to a "bomb cyclone" that hammered much of the East Coast with heavy snow, howling winds, and temperatures so frigid that Niagara Falls on the Canadian border actually froze. Meanwhile, Embarrass, Minnesota - yes, that's really the town's name - was busy winning the unofficial title of "The Last Place in the Freezing Midwest You'd Want to Go Skinny Dipping," by hitting a low of 45 degrees below zero on New Year's Eve.

Forty-five degrees. Below. Zero.

While you're imagining the heating bills in Embarrass and with winter far from over, read on for some tips for lowering your own home energy costs that you may not have thought of.

- **Easiest money-saver ever.** "Aside from the furnace, a laser printer draws the most standby power in the house at \$131.07 watts," SaveOnEnergy.com reports. And yet, even though that translates into about \$131 a year, a new survey found that only 14 percent of respondents unplugged their printers when not using them.

- **Pellet stoves aren't just for environmentalists.** This OldHouse.com likens them to the family pet - "they require a regular feeding schedule" - but Fido won't heat a 3,000-square-foot ranch house, say, for perhaps less than \$120 a month. And with the weather turning chillier in most places, curling up with a glass of wine in front of one of these babies in the living room could be as appealing to romantics as their eco-friendly heating is to greenies.

What's a "regular feeding schedule"? Depending on the size of the hopper and how often you use the stove, you'll need to load in pellets - made from super concentrated sawdust - every four or five days.

- **Make sure your attic is properly ventilated.** Homeowners might as well just send utility companies a blank check if they lack what GAF's Jason Joplin, program manager for the Center for



Homeowners might as well just send utility companies a blank check if their roofs aren't properly ventilated.

Advancement of Roofing Excellence, calls "a continual flow of air to help protect the efficiency of your attic's insulation."

The culprit working against achieving that: excess moisture buildup that clings to your roof's underside in winter from seemingly benign sources - i.e., appliances, showers and cooking vapors - before ultimately soaking the insulation when the condensed moisture falls.

Don't be one of the 86 percent.

Joplin's suggestion to help ward off the problem? A properly balanced ventilation system consisting of Cobra Ridge Vent (installed at the ridge) and Cobra IntakePro (installed at the eave) by GAF (gaf.com), North America's largest roofing manufacturer. "Both products work in tandem to allow cool, fresh air to enter at the eave edge while forcing moist, super-heated air out of the ridge vent," he explains.

- **Adjust door thresholds.** "Sneaky" is the word Popular Mechanics magazine uses to describe this hint. The theory being, if you can see daylight beneath your front door, it means the indoor air - which, remember, you're paying to heat or cool - is escaping outside.

"A little light in the corners is okay, but don't raise the threshold so high that it interferes with opening and closing the door," the magazine notes.