

Partnering to save energy and money

Carolyn Kaufman had heard of energy audits before and knew there was energy and money to be saved in her home. But a good deal and a great partnership finally made her pull the trigger.

“I’d been wanting to do some heating related upgrades like insulation and sealing the house so it turned out to be a good time to do it,” says Kaufman.

Kaufman is talking about perfect timing, and the perfect partnership between Xcel Energy, the Denver Energy Challenge and Elevations Credit Union. Xcel Energy provides rebates for Home Energy Audits, which is where Kaufman started. The Denver Energy Challenge provided expert advice at no charge and Elevations came through with a low interest loan to help her finance the rest of the project. The three entities help the homeowner determine where energy can be saved at home.

“The loan also provides homeowners the ability to afford whole home energy solutions through our Home Performance program, rather than completing efficiency measures one at a time,” explains Xcel Energy’s Christmas Ramirez. “It’s more efficient and cheaper in the long run.”

The result is lower bills and recouped cost.

Start with a checklist

It all starts with a Home Energy Audit where an energy auditor reviews the attic, insulation, doors, windows, furnace or boiler, appliances and energy bills. They identify things like:

- Drafty windows
- Insufficient insulation
- Humidity problems
- Inefficient appliances
- Poor ventilation
- Inefficient heating and cooling systems

“Audits are a great places to start because they’re comprehensive and help you avoid the common trap of self diagnosis,” says

“I’m **really happy** with it ... The home seems **warmer on cold days** and **cooler on those 100 degree days.**”

CAROLYN KAUFMAN

Homeowner



PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Project	Home Energy Audit and multiple improvement measures
Home Energy Audit Cost	\$400
Xcel Energy rebate for audit	\$200
Efficiency work costs	\$5,500
Xcel Energy rebates for efficiency measures	\$550
Loan interest rate	2.75%
Estimated annual savings	30% reduction in energy usage

Grant Swanson, energy auditor and co-owner of GB3 Home Performance Contractors. “If it’s cold, they call a furnace guy or window contractor to get new product installed and might not ever see a meaningful dip in their utility bills. An audit tells you exactly where you can save and it’s the quickest way to help the homeowner achieve their goals.”

The audit revealed leaks around the windows but not from the windows themselves. The leaks were coming from the area between the sill and wall. Simple caulking would fix it.

"The house is 50 years old so I guess it's not surprising there are leaks," says Kaufman.

Swanson and Kaufman reviewed the rest of the audit findings and decided to do the following:

- Add attic insulation
- Install air sealing and weather stripping around windows and doors, including door sweeps on exterior doors
- Seal crawlspace
- Replace incandescent lamps with CFLs

The beauty of an energy audit is that there are some measures the homeowners can do on their own. Kaufman and her husband caulked the windows, added insulators to the outlets and installed the CFLs by themselves.

More efficient, more comfortable

Kaufman says the work was well worth the investment.

"I'm really happy with it, especially if I never have to change a light bulb again," she jokes. "The home seems warmer on cold days and cooler on those 100 degree days." With no air conditioner in the home, Kaufman says keeping cool in the summer can be difficult.

She also liked the fact that the energy auditor took care of the paperwork.

"We don't mind helping with that," says Swanson. "Our mission is to make homes more comfortable, more energy efficient, healthier and safer. If we do our work right, they get lower energy bills, we help the environment and everybody's happy."

To learn more about the Energy Efficiency Finance Program and other efficiency rebate programs offered by Xcel Energy, visit **ResponsibleByNature.com**.