



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Cut Costs This Winter: Vermont Gas Offers Free Energy Audits

South Burlington, Vt. – Now that the winter weather is here, Vermont Gas wants to help Vermonters keep the cold out and keep cash in their pockets by offering free energy audits for homes and businesses. Non-gas customers in the existing service areas and anyone along the Phase I pipeline route are eligible for the free energy audit.

Ormond Mongeon, a Vermont Gas customer, owns several rental properties in Franklin and Chittenden Counties. He and his business partners participated in a Vermont Gas Energy Audit in 2009 at their St. Albans property. So far, they have seen a savings of \$1,000 per year. Thursday, Vermont Gas auditors will survey their Winooski property.

"This program is almost too good to be true. All I had to do was make a phone call, and within a few minutes my property was found eligible for the program," said Mongeon. "I would encourage all homeowners and landlords to see if they qualify for the program. It is a win, win, win proposition."

"Natural gas is a clean, safe and affordable choice for home heating. Vermont Gas customers, on average, can just about cut their heating bills in half by switching to natural gas from fuel oil or propane," said Scott Harrington, an energy efficiency expert at Vermont Gas. "We believe many homes can save even more money through our free energy audit service."

Recommended actions coming out of a free energy audit can include replacing old, outdated appliances with high-efficiency natural gas models. Vermont Gas customers who switch to energy efficient appliances may qualify for financial rebates. For more information, including how to set up a free energy audit, visit www.vermontgas.com/efficiency_programs/tips.html.

Vermont Gas also suggests five simple tips that can be implemented right now:

1. **Seal and Save:** Sealing air leaks could cut 10 percent from an average household's monthly energy bill. Common places where heat escapes include floors, walls, ceilings, ducts, fireplace, doors, windows and electrical outlets.
2. **Seven degrees can make a difference:** Turning the thermostat down 7-12 degrees when sleeping or at work, for just eight hours, can save up to 10 percent on annual heating bills. Consider the installation of a programmable thermostat, newer versions of these devices can even setback the temperature for you automatically. Some new thermostats are manageable from your cell phone or on the internet.
3. **Install Low Flow Shower Heads and Faucet Aerators:** The majority of hot water use in the home comes from taking baths or showers, so using these low flow devices that are readily

available at most hardware and home improvement stores will dramatically reduce the amount of hot water used and help improve the life of the water heater since it will require less use.

4. **Change or clean furnace air filters once a month during the heating season:** Use receipt of your Vermont Gas bill as a reminder
5. **Let the sunshine in:** On sunny days, open drapes and blinds to let the sun's warmth in. Close them at night to insulate against cold air outside.

Budget Plans and Fuel Assistance Programs

Vermont Gas has a convenient payment option which allows you to have the same gas bill in the winter and summer. The budget plan distributes annual gas bills over the full year, smoothing out the higher winter bills. Vermont Gas also offers a Fuel Assistance Program provides a 20 percent discount to eligible low income natural gas customers. To find out if you qualify, call 802-863-4511.

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About Vermont Gas

Vermont Gas serves almost 50,000 customers in Franklin and Chittenden counties and is currently working to expand service into Addison and Rutland counties through the Addison-Rutland Natural Gas Project. The company's long heritage for safe and reliable operations includes its award-winning energy-efficiency programs, which reduce energy use while saving current customers an additional \$13 million annually for homes and businesses. For more information on Vermont Gas' energy efficiency programs visit, www.VermontGas.com

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