

Ah, beautiful spring! When one can just open the window for a lovely breeze and one's electric/gas bill goes down to some of the lowest rates of the year. But, alas, nothing green can stay and the warm spring will soon give way to the hot summer with its shocking electric bills. (I probably shouldn't put a quote from Robert Frost and a pun about shocking electric bills in the same sentence, but hey, it's spring.)

And it is about combating those bills and a "Challenge" that Chanute has taken up that that I write to you today.

A few years ago I volunteered to be a guinea pig for a new program at the College. Rather, I volunteered my house to be the very first training facility for the brand new energy management program. Students spent a week at my place learning to set up specialized equipment, hunting for air leaks, and searching for ways to, as the old McDonalds ad used to say, "Keep the hot side hot and the cold side cold." My house was built in 1927 and insulation back then isn't what it is today. More on that in a second.

Each of the students in the class took turns conducting an energy audit on my house. All of them found the same thing. My house had about the same insulation value of a Coleman tent. I had the happiest squirrels on the block, since I was leaking enough heat to keep them warm all winter. My house was so bad they couldn't even get enough "negative pressure" to adequately check for leaks. They found two gaping holes in my house's envelope where the old ventilation system was removed, but nothing was put over the missing vent pipes. As they were behind other pipes, I would have never found those holes without the guys running these checks. No wonder my energy bill was so high.

That is the advantage of an energy audit. It can really pay dividends on your energy bill, helping you find the holes both big and small in your house's envelope. I highly recommend getting one done.

But there are simple things you can do to improve your home's energy efficiency short of an audit and NCCC wants to help – for free! Over the next few weeks NCCC will be offering free weatherization classes at our newly completed Energy Management Lab at the "S curve" of Lincoln and Santa Fe. The lab is a remodeled 1920 house that still is like my 1927 home in some rooms, with very little insulation, and with modern insulation in other rooms so you can see and feel the difference. In the lab our instructors will show you different types of insulation and how it was installed. Most importantly they will show you how you can do things large and small to your house and lower your energy bill. Plus, we can use your help in return.

NCCC has joined the "Take Charge Challenge!" If you have been reading the paper you know that Chanute is in a competition with area cities to become more energy efficient. If you come to these free workshops on weatherization Chanute gets "points" for our cause. You want to be beat Pittsburg as much I do, right? Sign up for a free class, see our new lab, learn how to save money on your energy bill, and defeat Pittsburg, Parsons, Iola, and Ft. Scott. How can you beat a deal like that?

Here are the dates for the free weatherization classes. BLANK Just call BLANK and they will reserve you a spot in the class. It is that easy.

Since my audit, I have plugged those holes, put on new siding, and even installed new windows. My new energy bill is the proof that this works. I saved my family some money, burned a little less energy, and made a difference in my small corner of the world. Imagine if we all did - and we beat Ft. Scott in the process. Now that is a better world.

As always, I welcome your comments and questions at [binbody@neosho.edu](mailto:binbody@neosho.edu)