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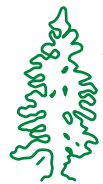
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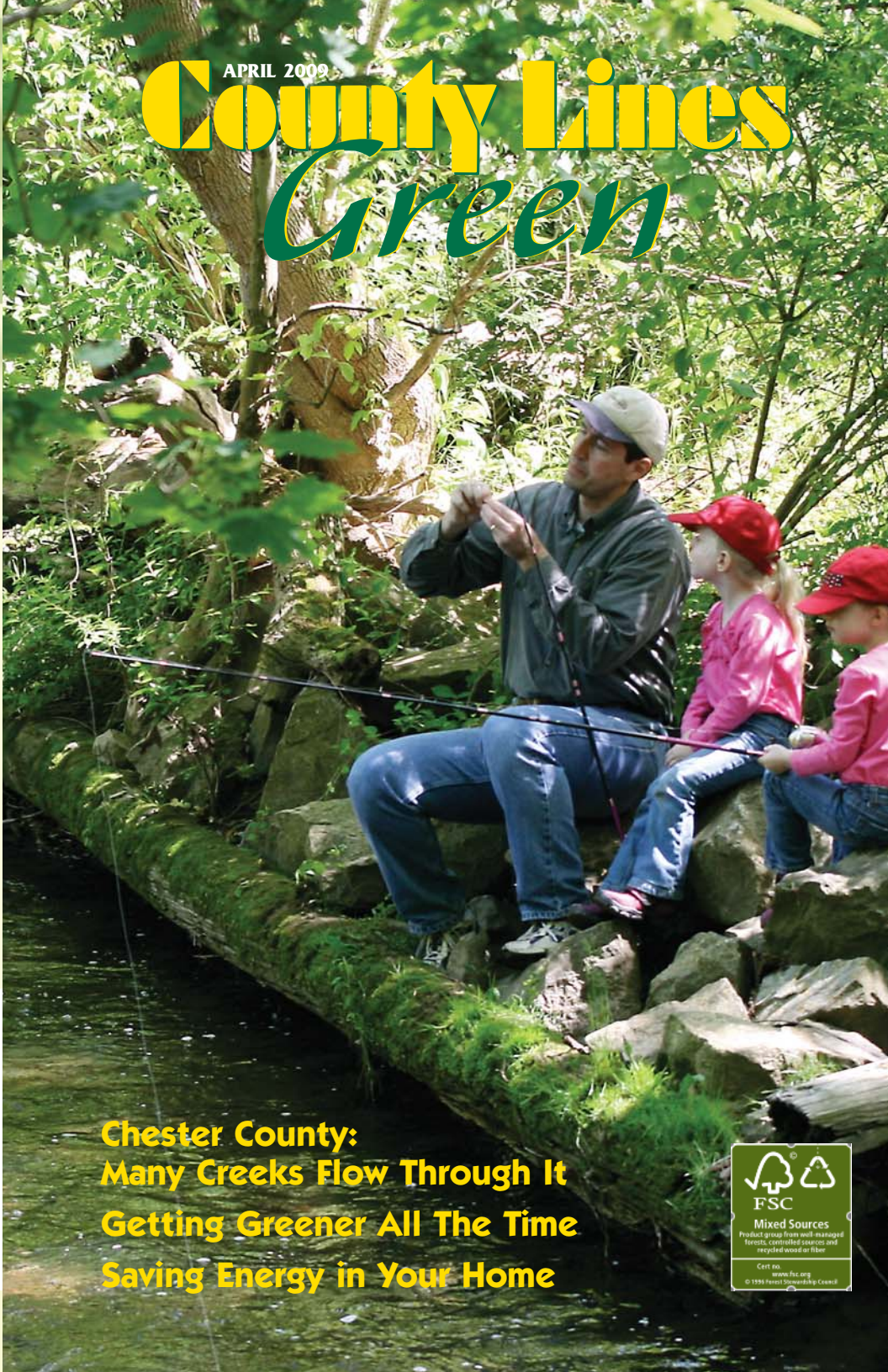
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APRIL 2009
County Lines
Green



**Chester County:
Many Creeks Flow Through It
Getting Greener All The Time
Saving Energy in Your Home**



Global warming demands action.



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The science is overwhelming. Climate change is happening now, and greenhouse gases (GHGs) due to human activity are a leading cause.

In the United States, the power industry accounts for 35% of all GHGs. Some in Washington are developing legislation to limit GHG emissions from all sources, and we strongly support those efforts. But as the nation's largest electric and gas utility, and as a member of the U.S. EPA's Climate Leaders Program, we are acting now.

As you read this, we are on track to exceed our goal of reducing our GHG emissions by 8% from 2001 levels by the end of this year. But that's not enough. By 2020, we are committed to reducing, offsetting or displacing more than 15 million metric tons of GHGs per year. This would be more than our current carbon footprint and is equivalent to taking nearly 3 million cars off our roads and highways. We will do this by cutting emissions wherever we can: in our generating plants, in our facilities, in our electric markets and in the communities we serve.

It's an ambitious plan that will require a total commitment at all levels in the Exelon family of companies. And that's precisely what we intend to do. For details, go to exeloncorp.com.



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Earth Day, Arbor Day and other environmental festivals this spring offer great opportunities for families to share, learn and teach. For a comprehensive list of the major events, go to [Upcoming Events at CountyLinesMagazine.com](http://UpcomingEventsatCountyLinesMagazine.com)

Getting Greener All the Time

Matt Freeman

More and more people these days get it: the world and the United States in particular has to conserve and find new forms of energy, or we're heading for worse and worse trouble. Environmentalism isn't just for do-gooders any more — it's a matter of enlightened self-interest.

But what do you do? T. Boone Pickens wants to build massive wind farms, which is fine for him — he's got four billion dollars in the bank. The bad news is that the rest of us can't afford to engineer a global transformation of the energy infrastructure.

The good news is that more and more, people are discovering that energy conservation and environmentalism in general aren't a matter of sacrifice and effort. You don't have to shiver in the dark at home. You don't have to eat granola or hug trees or make difficult changes in your lifestyle.

People who know about this subject are eager to point out that being greener isn't just good for the planet, it's good for your life. It's a happier, healthier, more efficient, and most of all, more economical way to

live. If that sounds good, but you don't know where to start, rest easy — plenty of people are ready to help.

Thinking Locally

The saying "Think globally, act locally" has long served environmentalists as a reminder that huge tasks can be accomplished by many people working on small pieces of the problem. Thinking and then acting is a key to becoming a better steward of the earth, according to Catharine Swan, executive director of the northern Chester County water resources advocacy group Green Valleys Association.

Swan says people who want to save energy should look closely at their daily habits. Do you always turn on the hot water tap, even if you don't really need hot water? Do you forget to unplug appliances when away from home for long periods, so they waste power in standby mode? Do you still use plastic and not a cloth bag when you go into the supermarket?

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easy to cure. Swan suggests, for example, simply putting the cloth bag beside you on the seat when you go to the market, so you won't forget it. "It has to do with really being able to change your habits, being aware of what your habits are. That's the key," Swan concludes.

Be Green, Save Green

The green movement is snowballing, and one big reason is that people are discovering that a greener life doesn't involve constant effort, sacrifice and self-denial. In particular, they're discovering that a green life actually saves you a good bit of money.

Bill Finch, owner of Alternative Energy Inc., a Downingtown-based business that offers energy- and water-efficient devices for the home, says that when people ask how they can get started saving energy, he offers them a simple, easy first step: replace your incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescents. They use one-quarter the energy and last four to five times as long, he says. Are there drafts in your home? Drafts waste energy, cost money, and are easy to fix: "A tube of caulking could go a long way in making your home a lot tighter," Finch says. And all those appliances with remote controls? They use power all the time, whether they're on or off. If you put them on a power strip and turn that off when you're not using them, you'll save money and conserve energy with a negligible effort and expense.

Finch says that with a few tools, like the kilowatt meters he sells, people can figure out where their money is being wasted and start saving now. And they become more enthusiastic as the savings here and there accumulate into a bigger pile of money for things you actually want and need. "It gets addictive," Finch says. You can live a sustainable life and reduce your carbon footprint without giving up comfort — that's the message he's sending to his customers.

Many Hands, Light Work

Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." That's happening in the environmental movement, and the once-small group of active advocates is getting bigger all the time. Finch is working to establish a network of green businesses like his. Meanwhile, many organizations are conducting community outreach events this spring to help people learn how to live more sustainably. For event listings, go to County LinesMagazine.com.

What Can You Do

If saving money and living more sustainably at home inspires you to go out into the community and act locally, there's a wide variety of resources and opportunities to help you. It's a good idea to ask yourself what you care about most — fighting pollution? Preserving open space? Resource conservation? Renewable energy? Then you can search print and digital sources for groups that focus on your interest. But Internet searches don't reveal every source, especially those small groups right near you. Sometimes talking to knowledgeable, connected people is the most efficient way to find your niche.

One ideal first stop is the Sierra Club. New networks are great, but the Sierra Club has been around since 1892 and its leaders are as plugged in as anyone. "We're the oldest and biggest grassroots group in the country," says Dennis Winters, conservation chair for the Sierra Club's Southeastern Pennsylvania Group. Winters invites people to join and volunteer or use club leaders as a resource to find other people and groups to work with on what you care about. "Almost anything you're interested in is covered by somebody," he says.

The Sierra Club and other groups also arrange hikes and other activities just for enjoyment. It's one way to reward yourself for stepping up and doing your part. And it serves to remind you that doing good things for the environment is also good for your own life. Why sit in traffic when you could relax on the train? Why bend over a dryer in the basement when you could take a few peaceful minutes and hang out wash in the sun? Why not plan to run several errands at once — saving gas, but also having more time for family, friends and fun?

As more and more people are discovering, it really is true — the green life is the good life. ♦

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Chester County: Many Creeks Flow Through It

John Hoekstra

Close your eyes. Imagine a beautiful creek. What do you see?

Is it a peaceful image of a fly fisherman's line glistening in dusk's waning light? Is it kids tubing (or canoeing or kayaking) over fast flowing waters in the summer heat? Roiling turbulence after the storm? Or is it a flat clear window into the daily lives of tadpoles, mussels and dragon-flies?

None of these scenes need be only imaginary in Chester County. Very likely there's a lovely creek only moments away.

Indeed, our region's abundance of flowing water is much of what drew people here centuries ago. For native Americans and European settlers, the absolute need for reliable clean, potable water was compelling. Here they found it. And the fact that they and their progeny haven't entirely exhausted it is a big reason for the rich history that unfolded here.

The Framework of Water Protection

Which is not to say that our water resources remain clean and safe without effort. Today our region's watersheds are constantly challenged by environmental stresses, and their preservation for future generations — current efforts include discharge restrictions, riparian buffers, sedimentation removal, reforestation, and more — has become at least as much the work of people as of nature.

Accordingly, in the 1990s, to protect ours and other watersheds in Pennsylvania, a state-level regulatory framework was created. Basically, deserving creeks today may be designated "High Quality" (HQ) or "Exceptional Value" (EV). In turn, these designations restrain discharges into the creeks. For an HQ resource, discharges must meet or surpass current water quality *whenever possible*. Discharges into an

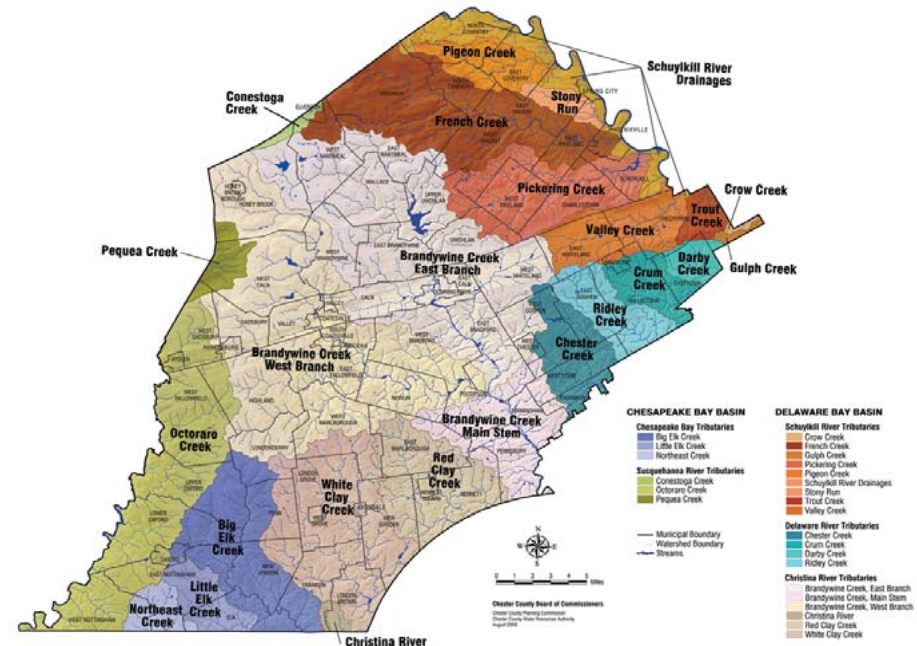
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SOME COUNTY LINES FAVORITES

If you're a landowner living near a creek, how you landscape makes a difference! Scott Arboretum in Swarthmore (610-328-8025; scottarboretum.org), Tyler Arboretum in Media (610-566-9134; tylerarboretum.org) are good places to learn more. We also recommend the following landscapers and nurseries for their knowledge, experience and environmental commitment.

Ecodesign, West Chester. Creates, installs and restores ecologically balanced, artistic gardens and landscapes in suburban, urban and rural spaces. 610-659-6737 ecodesignmanage.com.

Flowing Springs Landscape Design, Malvern. Experienced horticulturists, masons and other craftsmen using natural materials and plants to create unique vantage points for enjoying the great outdoors. 610-408-073; flowingsprings.net.

Jonathan Alderson Landscapes, Wayne. Deeply committed to native planting and ecology. 610-341-9925; jonathanalderson.com.

Mostardi's Nursery & Greenhouse, Newtown Square. Offers a wide selection of native plants, shade and evergreen trees, organic fertilizer, compost and natural pest control. 610-356-8035; mostardi.com.

R-P Nurseries, Kennett Square. Family owned, established over 140 years ago, this is one of the most experienced and knowledgeable nursery and landscaping operations in the region. 610-444-1116; rpnurseries.com.

W.D. Wells & Associates, West Grove. Services include the design and implementation of meadows, native design and wetland buffers. 610-869-3883; wdwells.com.

EV stream must *always* meet or surpass the stream's current water quality.

So how does this framework apply to Chester County's resources? Let's look at the largest watersheds in the county: French, Pickering, Valley and Brandywine. (See map on prior page.)

French Creek

French Creek is the region's jewel. Starting in French Creek State Park and Hopewell Big Woods region and flowing down through the heart of Phoenixville, it is now an EV watershed providing beautiful scenery and numerous recreational opportunities to our citizens. Regional land planning and land preservation efforts, along with streamside buffer projects, foretell a reasonably healthy future for this exceptional resource.

Pickering Creek

Once heavily industrialized, Pickering Creek has healed substantially from its days of powering numerous mills. And so some feel that Pickering's current HQ designation represents enough protection. On the other hand, growing pressure to urbanize Pickering's landscape might write a

very different future for this creek.

Pickering Creek starts near Route 100, feeds into the Pickering Reservoir, spills over the dam adjacent to Route 23 in Schuylkill Township, and eventually mixes into the Schuylkill River. Along its picturesque course, it directly supplies many farms and private wells. As a resource for Aqua Pennsylvania, a public water utility, it also serves thousands of homes and businesses.

In 2004, GVA (Green Valleys Assoc.), with the assistance of many who live in this watershed, gathered important facts and information about this creek and its tributaries and submitted a petition to upgrade the protection to EV. The evaluation for this upgrade is ongoing, with new information sent to the state agency recently and in 2008.

Valley Creek

General Washington and his soldiers drank directly from the pure waters of Valley Creek during their winter in Valley Forge. Amazingly, despite its proximity to one of the largest urban areas in the country, the creek is still home to naturally reproducing native trout. Cherished by local anglers, it is currently designated EV.

Become a Champion of the Creeks

The days are gone when creeks remained healthy on their own. Here are several organizations you can help to make a difference.

Brandywine Valley Association
West Chester 610-793-1090
brandywinewatershed.org

Chester Ridley Crum Watersheds Association, Media
610-892-8731; crcwatersheds.org

Darby Creek Valley Association
Drexel Hill 610-789-1814; dcva.org

Elk Creeks Watershed Association
Oxford 610-998-9900

Green Valleys Assn., Pottstown
610-469-4900; greenvalleys.org

Octoraro Watershed Association
Nottingham. 717-529-2132; theowa.org

Red Clay Valley Assn., West Chester
610-793-1090; redclayvalley.org

White Clay Watershed Association
Landenberg. 610-274-8499
mercury.ccil.org/~wcwa

Over the past several decades, the Valley Creek watershed, which runs from Exton to Valley Forge in more or less the same corridor as Routes 30 and 202, has become heavily commercialized, presenting a tough challenge to Valley Creek's EV status. The possible widening of the PA Turnpike poses yet another threat.

Yet the news isn't entirely ominous. The Valley Creek Restoration Partnership recently completed a major restoration and relocation of Crabby Creek, a tributary of Valley Creek, which had been all but destroyed as a natural brook trout nursery.

Brandywine Creek

The largest watershed in Chester County, Brandywine Creek, has been the backdrop to some of our nation's greatest historical moments. Today, its rolling scenery, equestrian events, museums, public gardens and other attractions are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Only small portions of it, however, currently enjoy HQ or EV designations.

Due in part to the work of the Brandywine Valley Association and the Brandywine Conservancy, the Brandywine has come a long way since the mid-1940s, when some considered it an open sewer. Even so, the

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creek periodically climbs out of its banks, floods downstream communities, and thus reminds us important work still remains undone.

* * *

The creeks in our county are natural treasures to be preserved even as they are used. Wade in them, fish in them, tube down them, or just sit quietly on a stream bank and relax. Enjoy the bubbling flow.

Just don't forget our creeks when you draw water from the tap, irrigate your garden, and plan your landscape. Our creeks aren't just opportunities for recreation and artistic rendering. They are also a big part of the plumbing that ultimately fills your glass. ♦

John Hoekstra, Director of Watershed Advocacy, Green Valleys Association, has championed watershed protection and resource sustainability for over 12 years in Chester County. He is the recipient of the Governor's Award for Watershed Stewardship, and serves on the Delaware Regional Water Resource Committee (State Water Plan), PA Campaign for Clean Water, Valley Creek Coalition and Federation of Northern Chester County Communities.



Ever wonder where your dollars go? For this family, through the windows, eaves, and a very poorly insulated roof. Thermal image courtesy FLIR Systems, Inc.

Saving Energy in Your Home

Matt Lillard

According to the US Environmental Information Administration, buildings account for over 38% of the energy used and over 38% of the associated CO₂ emissions. As we watch the price of our home energy bills rise, reducing these costs becomes ever more important.

When it comes to improving energy efficiency, the best investments to make first are those that cost the least and pay back the fastest. What you want is high "return on investment" (also called ROI.)

Understand, ROI in a particular home is influenced by many factors, including location, construction, orientation to the landscape and sun, tax, lifestyle, energy prices, and more. And so, if you want truly accurate projections of ROI for particular improvements, you will probably need to contract a professional energy audit, discussed later. Still, it's useful to generalize, which is what I do here.

Savings in Any Location

As you've likely heard, the best ROI in most homes is to switch out your incandescent light bulbs for compact fluorescents. CFLs use 75% less energy than their older cousins, and tend to last twice as long. For lights used regularly, a one-year payback — essentially 100% ROI — is common.

Leaks that allow heated or cooled air to go outside are other big energy wasters. And fixing them tends to be cheap. Ergo: big ROI. Use caulk or expanding spray foam for the bigger cracks. Weather-stripping doors and

windows to a tight seal and repairing broken windows that don't close or latch fully are other big wins.

Don't, though, ignore big but hidden holes in favor of small but obvious cracks! A common, and one of the largest leaks in the home is often the attic entrance. These openings need insulation and weather-stripping just like an exterior door. Fixing these is easier than ever thanks to prefab covers (like those sold by ESS Energy Products), which help to save energy AND are made primarily from recycled materials.

The next places to look for low-hanging fruit are "phantom loads," i.e., power drawn by appliances even though "turned off." Examples: appliances with a clock or lights that are always on, appliances with instant-on capability, chargers for cell phones that continue to draw power even after the phone is fully charged. Studies say that as much as 10% of our national energy use goes toward phantom loads!

Solutions include placing all the appliances on a power strip and turning off the power at the strip. If your memory is as bad as mine, try timers to turn off the power strips during times when you're typically asleep or at work. A new kind of smart power strip can also sense when the power load drops, indicating that a battery is fully charged, and turns off power to the outlet automatically.

Appliances, particularly refrigerators, also offer substantial energy saving opportunity. Also consider that, when it comes

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to saving energy by replacing them and other electrical appliances, the government has simplified some of the analysis. Choose "Energy Star" appliances; they use 10-50% less energy and water than standard models. Start your search at Energy Star.gov, then turn to local sources, like the Alternative Energy store, a Chester County source for energy efficient appliances.

Special Considerations in SE PA

Southeast Pennsylvania is a heating dominated climate. This means that over the course of a year, we have more total demand for heating than cooling. And so we can expect more "bang for the buck" out of high efficiency heaters than from high efficiency air conditioners. Heating appliance savings, however, are a complex subject. The considerations for swapping out your existing furnace or boiler include fuel type, cost of fuels, and the efficiency limits for each type of appliance.

The amount of insulation recommended varies by region. Insulation levels are measured in R-value. The higher the R-value the more the insulation resists the movement of heat through it. The Department of Energy recommends improving existing attic insulation to R-38 in our area. Check out the Energy Star website for recommended levels for walls, basement and crawlspaces.

Another consideration unique to our area is the heavy use of coal to generate our electricity. Pennsylvania and nearby areas are relatively rich in this material, and so our electricity prices are relatively low. But coal is one of the dirtier fuels and will likely be hit hard by carbon regulations. In short, expect electric prices to go up, and with them, the ongoing cost of operating your electric appliances.

I Don't Do Windows (Often)

You might wonder why I haven't mentioned replacing your windows. Almost everyone thinks their windows leak. This

is because heat from our warm bodies is drawn to the cool glass surface, making us feel like there's a breeze on us.

Sure, replacing your windows can lower your energy bills, but with the cost of windows being so high, the savings generally take several years to recoup. The ROI tends to be low. So we don't typically recommend that people start with windows unless they are defective or otherwise very leaky. Certainly, before replacement, do consider that windows that leak at the closure can be sealed inexpensively with weather-stripping, or if they leak from the cases, caulk can do the trick.

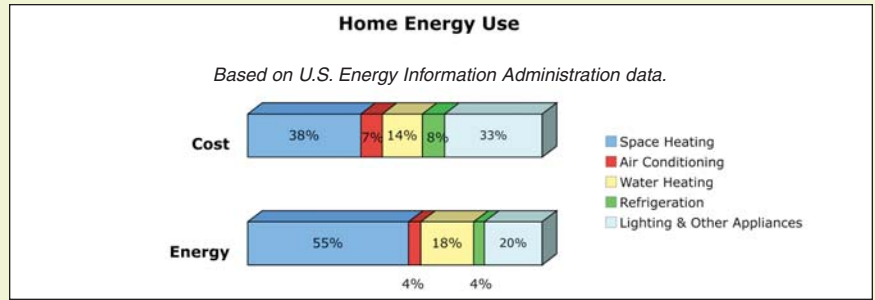
When in Doubt Call the Experts

Which brings us back again to the subject of professional energy auditing and expertise. A key objective of an energy audit is to locate and measure energy losses precisely, thus enabling calculation of ROIs and prioritizing possible improvements. Ultimately, you want to devote time and materials to *actual* problems rather than *suspected* ones, and to *big* ones rather than *small* ones.

For example, in the case of a "leaking window" described above, a blower-door test, fairly standard in a professional audit, would tell *how much* your windows are actually leaking and whether they are leaking at places that can be cheaply sealed.

Similarly, an expert can help you draw a line between solving a problem and creating a new one. It's rare, but you *can* over-seal a home, trapping in moisture, contaminants, allergens and pollutants that can damage your home and health.

In other words, an audit buys you valid, actionable information; the sort of information you need to make rational investment decisions. The only thing worse than choosing the wrong place to start may be not starting at all. But the only thing better than knowing your improvement options is knowing which ones will payback the soonest. ♦



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Want to improve the energy efficiency of your home? Or buy or build a new one that uses all we know about green design, technology and construction? Here's a list of green architects, builders and contractors who may be able to help you.

Acoustical Spray Foam, Allentown. Specialist in spray insulation. 610-797-9272; asispray.com.

Alternative Energy, Inc., Downingtown. Energy- and water-efficient devices for the home. 484-593-4262; altern-energy.com.

Arvak Energy Solutions, Boyertown. Full service installer of solar electric and solar hot water systems. 484-948-8515.

Berks Solar, Berks County. Photovoltaic installations in the Berks County area. 610-682-4300; berkssolar.com.

Creswell & Company, Pottstown. Green builder of custom homes, additions, and renovations. 610-469-6569; creswellandco.

D&M Insulation Systems, Pottstown. Insulation specialists, offering various kinds of foam and soy-based insulations. 610-705-6262; dminulationsystems.com.

ESS Energy Products, Paoli. Manufactures, sells kits to limit energy loss through attic entries. 877-ESS4NRG; essnrg.com.

Earth Rising Ventures, Phoenixville. Developer of Kimberton Village Green. Residents will have no energy bills. 610-650-7755; earthrisinginc.com.

Green Savers, Avondale. Home energy audits, HERS ratings, green mortgages, green audits, product and contractor referrals, seminars. 302-383-2000; yourgreensavers.com.

Hugh Lofting Timber Framing, West Grove. Long lasting energy efficient homes and structures. 610-444-5382; hughlofting-timberframe.com.

Independence Solar, Cherry Hill, NJ. Turnkey solar energy solutions. 215-717-7100; independencesolar.com.

Magrann Associates, W. Conshohocken. Residential energy and green building consultants. 856-722-9799; magrann.com.

Open Sky Energy Systems, Swarthmore. Designs and installs solar and other renewable energy systems. 484-573-5080; OpenSkyEnergy.net.

Redstone Contracting, Pocopson. General contractor, dedicated to green design and maximizing energy efficiency in your home. 610-335-0979; redstonegc.com.

Residential Energy Solutions, Elverson. Energy audits, thermal imaging, blower door and duct testing, alternative energy feasibility assessments. 800-789-5131; residentialenergysolutions.com.

Solardelphia, Philadelphia. Design and installation of photovoltaic systems. 877-345-7652; solardelphia.com.

Sunergy Systems, Pottstown. Solar thermal installer. 610-705-3325.

SunPower Builders, Collegeville. Designs, supplies and installs photovoltaics, solar energy systems. 610-489-1105; sunpower-builders.com.

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SR. ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE / Kathy Dress

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES / Mary DeStafney • Helen C. Hopkinson

EDITORIAL ADVISORS / Matt Lillard • Dan Orzech

INTERN / Christina Kish

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www.greenvalleys.org

Go to **WWW.GREENVALLEYS.ORG** to register for the run/bike and for more info!

Get ready for the bike loop at a FREE bike maintenance workshop! **April 23rd** at Phoenix Cycles in Phoenixville, PA

Green Valleys Association at Welkinweir
1368 Prizer Road, Pottstown
Near routes 23 and 100



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