



Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative



Check Out These Sites!

1. **www.download.com**
-Offering thousands of free software downloads
2. **www.microsoft.com/securityessentials**
-Microsoft's free Virus Protection
3. **www.ehow.com**
-A guide on how to resolve many computer issues along with other topics
4. **www.malwarebytes.org**
-A free tool to help remove pesky malware on your computer

Deleting temporary files is another great step to give your computer a little speed boost. Also, make sure to keep your computer as dust free as possible. If you have a desktop, open the tower case and clean it out with compressed air.

If you are experiencing slowness primarily while you are online, then you will need more bandwidth. Bandwidth is the speed of your Internet connection. Multiple people online at the same time or high demand services such as Netflix, will cause your internet to be slow.

It is important to remember the more programs you have running, the slower your computer's processing speed. If you find your computer lagging a lot when opening programs and files, more often than not this is due too many programs open or not enough memory. Upgrading the memory will improve your computer's performance drastically.

If your PC has Windows Vista, you may look into upgrading it to Windows 7. Windows 7 is a very much improved operating system compared to Windows Vista. The list at the top of the page has some great links to improve your computer's performance.

Upgrading your PC's hardware and operating system is easier and cheaper than ever. There are many online tutorials on how to properly install new hardware yourself. Over the past five years, computer prices have come way down.

For more information on improving your computer's performance visit us at www.e-co-op.com. If you are an IRTC Internet user and would like to increase your bandwidth, we can do it over the phone. Give us a call at 1-800-468-4732.

IRTC Internet

Try 2 months of 2 meg free, then upgrade or go back to your old speed!

Do-It-Yourself Energy Audit

The first thing to do when performing your own home energy audit is to make a list of any existing problems, such as condensation and uncomfortable or drafty rooms. The next thing is to look for air leaks. They are common around electrical outlets, switch plates, window frames, baseboards, weather stripping, fireplace dampers, attic hatches, and wall or window-mounted air conditioners. When inspecting windows and doors for air leaks, if you can see daylight around the door or window frame, that is where the leak exists.

When looking at the outside of your home, examine areas where two different building materials meet. This includes exterior corners, areas where siding and chimneys meet, and places where the foundation and the bottom of the exterior brick or siding meet. Make sure to plug and caulk holes or penetrations for faucets, pipes, electric outlets, and wiring. Also, look for cracks and holes in the mortar, foundation and siding of your home and seal them with the appropriate material. Finally, check the exterior caulking around doors and windows to see if they are sealed tightly.

When performing your own home audit, make sure to examine the ceilings and walls. If these two areas are not properly insulated, you risk heat loss in the winter and cool-air loss in the summer. Check to see that the attic hatch is as heavily insulated, as well as weather-stripped and closed tightly. In the attic, determine if openings for items such as pipes, ductwork and chimneys are sealed. If you see any gaps, seal them with expanding foam caulk or another permanent sealant.

If you would like to conduct a free online energy audit, visit us at www.e-co-op.com!

(mini) Home Energy Audit

Clip this list and check each area of your home to see if you're using energy efficiently. Every nook and cranny holds potential inefficiencies, so it pays to be thorough! Visit www.energysavers.gov for more information on what's listed below.



INSULATION and DUCTWORK



Attic

- ☐ Insulation spread evenly
- ☐ Insulation in good condition
- ☐ Attic vents are unblocked by insulation
- ☐ Attic access doors properly insulated and sealed

Walls and floors

- ☐ Minimum R-value of 19 for perimeter walls
- ☐ Minimum R-value of 25 for under-floor insulation

Basement

- ☐ Ductwork insulated and sealed
- ☐ Hot water pipes insulated
- ☐ Water heater insulated, if in unconditioned space

R-Value indicates an insulation's resistance to heat flow (the higher the better). Insulation should meet R-values recommended for your specific climate.

HEATING and COOLING



- ☐ Air supply vents are unblocked by furniture or curtains
- ☐ Return air registers are unblocked by furniture
- ☐ Return air handler filters are clean
- ☐ HVAC system has had annual maintenance check-up
- ☐ Programmable thermostat installed and programmed

AIR INFILTRATION



Windows and Doors

- ☐ Windows close and lock properly
- ☐ Window gaskets in good condition
- ☐ Window trim sealed and painted
- ☐ Doors properly weather stripped
- ☐ Doors close and latch properly

Exterior Penetrations

- Plumbing and wire openings sealed:
- ☐ Kitchen cabinets
 - ☐ Bathroom cabinets
 - ☐ Utility room
 - ☐ Fireplace damper sealed tightly

APPLIANCES and LIGHTING



- ☐ Refrigerator condenser coils clean
- ☐ Refrigerator door gasket tight
- ☐ Unused refrigerators and freezers unplugged
- ☐ Water heater set to 120 degrees or below
- ☐ Dishwasher energy-saving feature turned on
- ☐ Washing machine loads run with cold water when possible



Well Pump

- ☐ Operating properly
- ☐ Good pressure
- ☐ No leaks

Lighting

- ☐ Compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) used
- ☐ Outdoor lighting automatically triggered by motion or dark

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Insulating Your Attic: More Is Better

Is there enough insulation in your attic? By adding insulation, you can improve your home's energy efficiency and save money. Here's a tip that can help reduce your energy consumption—and your electric bills.

With adequate attic insulation, your home's heating/cooling system will operate more efficiently. It will keep you cooler in the summer and warmer in winter—and it will keep more money in your wallet. As TogetherWeSave.com has shown, adding insulation to your attic can save you \$240 a year.

Older homes tend to have less attic insulation than newer ones. An energy audit can indicate whether additional insulation is needed.

Before adding insulation to your attic, determine how much insulation is already installed, what kind it is, and how thick it is. Next, you'll need to know the R-value—which indicates the insulation's resistance to heat—of existing attic insulation. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating effectiveness. Once you know the R-value, you can determine how much insulation to add by using the U.S. Department of Energy's Zip Code Insulation Program.

Now you're ready to decide what kind of insulation to install: loose-fill or blanket (batt and roll) insulation. Loose-fill insulation consists of small particles of fiber, foam, or other materials. Blanket insulation, the most common and widely available type of insulation, comes in the form of batts and rolls made from mineral wool, plastic fibers, and natural fibers. Loose-fill insulation is usually less expensive to install than batt insulation. And when installed properly, loose-fill insulation can provide better coverage.

For more tips on how to save energy — and money—visit www.energysavers.gov or www.togetherwesave.com, or our website at www.e-co-op.com.



"Adding insulation to your attic can save you \$240 a year."

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