

# HOMESENSE

Enjoy Lower  
Warm Weather  
Energy Bills  
(See page 3)

Smart and simple ways to enrich your home living.

Spring 2004

\$3.00

## MONEY WISE

### How To Save 17 Billion Pounds

**Y**ou think the Atkins diet does some “reducing”? How would you like to cut 17 billion pounds of pollution out of the air? Well, that’s what would happen if just 1 in 10 households invested in a certain type of heating and cooling equipment. Wow. That’s not all, though.

This same miracle product can whack 30% off your energy bills while it makes your home more comfortable *and* more valuable. This “mystery” equipment isn’t mysterious, and it’s so efficient, it’s backed by the US government.

It’s called *Energy Star*<sup>®</sup> and you’ve probably seen the label on many appliances. There are *no appliances* that use anywhere near the energy that your heating and cooling system does.

The *Energy Star*<sup>®</sup> program has a great checklist to help you determine *when* or *if* you should replace it. So be sure to give us a call for an on-site energy review, especially if...

■ **Your heat pump or air conditioner is more than 10 years old.**

At this age, it’s not really a question of “if” you’ll save, only how much. *Energy Star*<sup>®</sup> rated products typically save 20% more than new “standard” models.

■ **Your equipment needs frequent repairs and your energy bills are going up.**

You may need a simple tune-up... or a full replacement system! New equipment will also have a warranty, so forget the repair bills.

■ **Some of your rooms are too hot or cold.**

Improper equipment opera-

tion, duct problems or inadequate insulation could be the cause.

■ **No one is home for long periods**

of the day and you don’t have a programmable thermostat. Have us install an *Energy Star*<sup>®</sup> qualified programmable thermostat and instruct you on its use – to start saving energy and money while you’re away or even sleeping.

■ **Your home has humidity problems.**

The wrong humidity can seriously affect your comfort, split furniture, trigger sinus problems, itchiness, and breed mold.

■ **Your home has excessive dust.**

Leaky ducts pull particles in from attics, crawlspaces and basements and distribute them through the house.

■ **Your cooling system is noisy.**

You could have an undersized duct system or a problem with the indoor coil of your cooling equipment.

■ **Your score on the *Energy Star*<sup>®</sup>**

Home Energy Yardstick is below five. (Check it out at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) and click on “home improvement”.) That means you’re using more energy than most Americans.

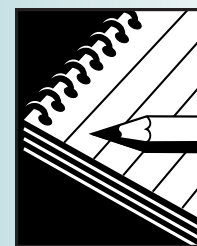
If you find that this checklist applies to you, we’d be delighted to share anything we can to help you cut back on energy and repairs. An on-site review will tell you how much you can save and how to solve those nagging comfort issues. Just call. We’re here for you.

## MY WORD

### Spring Being

By Glenn Pack

Hello Friends!



There’s a rumor going around that Spring is here. And we’re still catching our breath from Winter. Whoa.

My advancing age seems to spin this planet around quicker each year (have you noticed it too?) and my “to do” list isn’t shrinking either! As much as I love the “get it done” pace of this great country, every now and then I just like *being*.

You say, “Being what? Being quiet? Alone? Awake before everyone else? What is it?”

And my answer, as odd as it sounds is just “being”. That comes from author Rick Warren who wrote, “Although we may try to change it with activity, we aren’t called ‘human doings’ we’re ‘human beings’.”

He goes on to say how one of our main objectives in life is to “be” better people. Such as being a better friend, father, spouse, neighbor, or whatever. The advice is to simply “be” there for people by giving time, understanding, and listening.

Partly that’s what I feel this newsletter is about. We like sharing this with you in our sincerest effort to just be there for you. Hopefully with each issue, you learn something useful and can share it with others.

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HomeSense is published for friends of  
Pack-Timco, Inc.

Your Quik Call Comfort Hotline:

203-847-8781

## INSIDE...

- Easy Allergy Relief
- Save More, Spend Less
- Reduce Break-ins



## Easy Allergy Relief

**W**ith “spring cleaning” days upon us, don’t forget to apply your might to dust mites. These tiny bugs are major causes of allergies in the home. They also make asthma symptoms in children worse – or even cause children to get asthma. Reducing the dust mites in your home can help provide relief for spring flare-ups of allergies and asthma.

Because dust mites love warm, humid areas filled with dust, running your air conditioner and keeping the humidity low can make a huge difference.

You’ll also need to do something about the dust. Start your cleaning in the bedroom – the bed pillows, mattresses, carpets and furniture are also places where dust mites thrive, and cleaning the areas can reduce their number significantly. (Plus, who wants to sleep with a bunch of allergy-causing bugs?)

### Allergy Tips:

- Cover your mattress with an airtight plastic or polyurethane cover.
- Wash your sheets and blankets in very hot water.
- Hardwood, tile, or linoleum floors are easier to keep clean than carpet. Vacuum your carpets and upholstery every week. Vacuums with high-efficiency filters pick up more dust mites.
- Keep pets out of rooms where you spend most of your time, like the bedroom.
- Consider an allergen-reducing return air filter. We can put one in with your tune-up. Just call.
- Limit the number of indoor plants, which may grow molds.
- Stay indoors during early morning hours, when the most pollen is present.

## HOME WISE

# Simple Ways to Pile on the Savings

**F**or a lot of Americans, saving money is a top priority – right after paying monthly bills. And that’s the trouble. Like a lot of Americans, you may have “more month left at the end of the money.”

Is saving an impossible dream? Are you wondering where in the world you can find another 10 percent to set aside each month? Well, you’d be surprised how a few simple changes can get you that 10 percent – or more – each month.

**Pay off your entire credit card bill each month.** If not, what you’re paying in interest adds up quickly, and that cost can be endless if you don’t get back to the zero balance.

**Cut out unnecessary expenses.** Do you really need that cup of high-priced afternoon coffee? Are you really watching those premium movie channels? Are you dining out more than necessary?

**Save on cell phone rates.** Compare company rates and look for the most economical plan. With competition increasing in all areas, a “change of plans” could be just the savings you need. Also check rates on long distance, cable and satellite TV and internet services.

**Clever prescription savings.** If you pay for your own prescriptions, ask for generic brands if available. Those in managed care programs could save by purchasing a 90-day supply instead of a one-month supply – which means

just one co-payment rather than three.

**Compare auto, home, health and life insurance rates.** Eliminating insurance is *not* an advisable way to save money. But be alert to how your current rates stack up to rates other companies are offering.

**Enroll in online bill paying.** You’ll be able to avoid late fees and reduce the cost of postage.

**Shop wisely.** Watch for sales and clip coupons. When shopping for groceries, try store brands. They’re often about 25% cheaper than brand-name items. Avoid single-serving foods, which are far more expensive than the larger quantities. Buy in bulk. It may help to go in with a friend on bulk purchases.

**Cut utility bills.** These can nibble – or sometimes chomp – away at your money every month. (See article on Page 1). Change return air filters. Close your drapes to shade mid-day heat. Check insulation. Get your cooling system tuned. There’s a lot you can do, or just give us a call to make your cooling system behave!

**Keep your car longer.** Don’t rush into a new car loan. There’s no need to buy new when your car is “paid for” and still in good condition.

**Consider refinancing.** If you haven’t refinanced your mortgage since interest rates hit historic lows, you may be missing the easiest opportunity of all to save on monthly expenses.

## HEARD BY OUR EDITORS

# Don’t Over Water Those Plants!

**B**y watering your yard correctly you can reduce water bills, fungal diseases and maintenance requirements. Remember, the more you water, the faster your lawn grows right along with the need to be mowed. So, be aware...

- Water lawn and landscape only when they begin to wilt.
- Not all plants need to be watered once a week.
- Install a rain shut-off device for in-ground irrigations systems.
- Make sure irrigation systems water lawn areas separate from plant areas.
- Design a landscape that can thrive predominately on rainfall. (Major bonus!)
- Mow lawn high enough to encourage a deeper root system.

# Enjoy Lower Warm Weather Energy Bills... Starting Now!

We're lucky with lower Spring energy bills. But keeping them lower in Summer requires a few smart moves, such as...

- **Clean** the filters monthly and replace as necessary to save energy and reduce dust and pollen in the air. (Ask us about filter upgrades.)
- **Raise** the temperature setting when you go out to reduce operating costs. Better yet, we've got simple-to-use programmable thermostats. Set it and forget it!
- **Shade** your air conditioner from direct sun. This will reduce its workload. Often planting a simple tree or shrub can do the trick, but don't let it restrict airflow.
- **Tune Up** your heat pump or air conditioner since maintenance is the number one factor in system inefficiency and failure. This is fast, painless, and can save big.
- **Install** ceiling fans. The air circulation promotes cooling in the summer and heating efficiency in the winter.
- **Close** drapes to keep out the hot daytime sun, especially on south and west-facing windows. Sunny windows make air conditioners work 2 to 3 times harder.
- **Position** your refrigerator away from sunny windows, hot water heaters, warm air from heating ducts, radiators, stoves and other heat sources. The heat makes cooling harder for your refrigerator.
- **Close** fireplace dampers or glass doors. Going up the chimney with a bound may serve as a dramatic exit

for Santa, but don't allow your cooled air to use that same escape hatch.

- **Upgrade** appliances. Consider replacing old appliances with new energy-efficient models. Look for the Energy Star label. Upgrades will pay for themselves over time through savings on your utility bills.

**"Sunny windows make air conditioners work 2 to 3 times harder."**

- **Weather-strip** windows and exterior doors. If air is leaking, you are throwing money out the window. Roughly 40% of the unwanted heat that builds up in

your home comes in through windows.

## And remember to insulate...

Make sure you seal and insulate leaky ducts to ensure your ductwork delivers all the energy you're paying for!

Poor insulation can be a drain on your budget – and a waste of good climate control.

## Simple Insulation Test:

Place one thermometer in the middle of a room.

Tape a second thermometer to an exterior wall. If the difference in temperature between these two thermometers is more than five degrees, your home may need more insulation. Call us for more information.

## "Quotable."

*If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in.*

– Rachel Louise Carson



## How To...

### Reduce the Risk of Break-ins with Common Sense

One could argue that burglars are burglars because they don't like hard work. They look for easy marks, and many homeowners seem willing to accommodate them.

Only one in four home burglaries involves forced entry. Unlocked doors and windows make entry simple even for inexperienced burglars, so look to four key areas:

#### Landscaping

In order to minimize hiding places for burglars, keep a clear view of your home from the road or from your neighbors' homes. Keep your hedges, shrubs and tree branches trimmed.

#### Lighting

Make sure all potential entry points to your house are well-lit, including doors, main-floor windows and basement windows. Install motion-sensitive lights in the front and at the rear of your home. Keep lights on when you are not at home.

#### Doors

Burglar-proof sliding glass doors by placing a rod in the track or install a shim in the track above the door.

Check and secure other exterior doors too. Solid-wood or metal doors offer more security than hollow wood doors. Also, install reinforced hinges, and make sure your deadbolts project at least one full inch into the door frames.

#### Windows

Though some will work only when the window is completely closed, other types of window locks can be mounted on the corners or sides to give security when windows are partially opened. Whatever you choose, make sure family members can open the windows easily in case of an emergency.

## MY WORD (...from page 1)

(If you'll call us, we can put your friends on the mailing list too.) That way, you can "be" a little something extra to them.

One thing to share with you is that it IS Springtime, which means that it's time to get your cooling system tuned for Summer. Just like your car, your cooling system needs regular

maintenance unless you enjoy over-paying for energy! *Plus* it makes your system last much longer. Now that's a huge savings.

So give a quick call now, while you're thinking about it so we can make sure you save the most and maintain your home's systems in peak condition. That's what we're here for. You could say, it's our reason for being.

Thanks for Being a Customer,

Glenn

Glenn Pack

P. S. I'm not kidding about adding your friends and family members names to our mailing list for free. We don't bug 'em to death; we're just sharing useful info. Check out this issue for great tips, ideas, and savings! Call if we can help you or your friends in any way.

### HomePoints

Sealing leaky ductwork saves money. Most houses lose 10-30 % of their heating and cooling dollars through leaks in the ductwork.

## Get Comfortable Now in One Phone Call

- **24-hour Service, 7 Days a Week.** Why wait when you don't have to?
- **Your Brand and Your System** fixed *right* by neat, skilled techs.
- **Up Front Pricing.** Know the price before we start. No surprises!
- **Finance terms** to suit your needs. Let us help you.
- **Over 37 solid years** of caring service. Let us solve your problem.

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203-847-8781

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## Just set it, then forget it!

With a programmable thermostat, you program your "ideal" temperature for comfort and savings.

Then let it adjust the temperature while you're away. When you're home. When you're asleep. Silently and efficiently.

It saves time, energy and trouble. Don't you wish everything could be this simple? Call today and tell us you want to "forget it!"

That's Pack-Timco, Inc. at 203-847-8781.

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## How about a nice check every month... ...from the utility company?

That would be nice wouldn't it?

Basically, this is the same thing—instead of paying them 20% too much, you could pocket those savings with a new, whisper quiet system. When you add in your repair bills to keep your "old wheezer" running, you may actually save more than a new system would cost!

This is the marvel of high technology and the skill of our installa-

tion techniques. You can even find out for free with a quick call to 203-847-8781. We'll come out, evaluate the situation, share some comfort tips, and tell you how much a new system really can save you. And this info won't cost you a penny, but it could be like getting a nice check each month.

You won't know until you call to find out!

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