



## CASE STUDY

# HOME PERFORMANCE WITH ENERGY STAR®

## Energy Overhaul in Ithaca

*Ithaca, New York*

When Simon St. Laurent and Tracey Cranston bought their 1930-era colonial home, they knew they had a project on their hands. One thing they hadn't counted on was the very high cost to heat the home through the long cold upstate winters. Despite the money they were paying to heat the house, it was still cold and drafty; and because they both work at home, their comfort problems were a round-the-clock issue. When they heard about the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program offered in New York, they decided the time was right to modernize their heating system, lower their heating bills, and improve their comfort.

The couple called Performance Systems Contracting (PSC), a company participating in New York's Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program. Home Performance with ENERGY STAR is an innovative whole house approach to improving the comfort and energy efficiency of existing homes. Qualified contractors provide a complete home assessment and recommend ways to improve its energy efficiency. They can even do the work. Contractors use equipment such as blower doors and infrared cameras to pinpoint air leaks and insulation gaps and to verify that heating and cooling equipment is working efficiently and safely. The goal is to improve the overall performance of the home rather than simply fixing one item that may be only part of the problem.

Jon Harrod of PSC came on a cold winter day to provide the initial evaluation and set up a blower door to begin his diagnostics. All of the leaks pulled an amazing amount of cold air into the house. And an infrared camera verified that the house was in serious need of insulation. The old furnace tested at 53% efficient, which means that almost half of the heat produced was going directly up the chimney and never reaching the rooms in the house. Having found a lot of room for improvement, Jon put together a comprehensive plan to improve the house, and Simon and Tracey agreed to proceed with the work.

Performance Systems removed the old gravity furnace and replaced it with a high efficiency model. The contractors did a lot of air-sealing in the attic and basement to help hold the warm air in. And they added insulation to the walls and attic. They also educated Simon and Tracey about ways to further reduce their electricity consumption, such as choosing ENERGY STAR qualified lighting, home electronics, and appliances when replacing these items.

After the improvements were finished, the couple's heating bills were as much as two-thirds lower, saving more than 60 cents on every dollar they used to spend. Simon added "On comfort, there's a double bonus. Not only are we spared the cold drafts in the winter, the house stays cooler for longer in the summer. It's been an excellent improvement on all levels." As he points out, "There's no good reason even an old house shouldn't be energy efficient."

The Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program currently is available in 12 states. Benefits of the program include:

- ▶ Up to 30% Savings on Energy Bills
- ▶ A Quieter, More Comfortable Living Environment
- ▶ Improved Air Quality
- ▶ Greater Home Durability with Lower Maintenance

To learn more about the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program, visit:  
[www.energystar.gov/homeperformance](http://www.energystar.gov/homeperformance)

