



CASE STUDY

HOME PERFORMANCE WITH ENERGY STAR®

Fixing Leaky Ducts in Austin

Austin, Texas

Michael Wright's job keeps him on the road much of the year, but when he returns to Austin he wants his home to be just as comfortable, energy efficient, and economical as it can be. "The electric bills from air-conditioning my house were outrageously high, and the house just wasn't staying cool enough," said Michael; "something had to be done for both the sake of our family's bank account and comfort."

Michael contacted AirTech Energy Systems, a home improvement contractor participating in the Southface Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program. AirTech assessed the Wright's house and found a lot of room for improvement. First, there were inadequate levels of insulation in the attic. Also, the air-conditioning equipment needed replacement, and the heating system needed a tune-up. Finally, the ductwork throughout the house was leaky, and a lot of conditioned air was lost to unfinished crawlspaces and the attic.

To counter these shortcomings, insulation was blown into the entire attic space, which increased the insulation value to R-30. The air-conditioners were replaced with higher efficiency models. Also, the already energy-efficient furnaces in the home were repaired and serviced.

The most dramatic improvement to the Wright's home was the replacement of leaky ductwork throughout the house with well fabricated, mastic sealed ducts. "Now, the new ducts in my home get conditioned air where it should go, with very few losses," reported Michael.

Other less involved, but no less important improvements included the installation of solar screens (a special type of exterior shade) on every window to keep out 60-70% of the Texas sun and heat, plus caulking and sealing throughout the home to cut down on the loss of conditioned air.

According to Michael, the result of all these improvements is a, "much more comfortable house with a 55% decrease in the monthly electric bill. The temperature throughout the house stays at its thermostat setting without the wild swings we used to experience. Even Franklin, our family dog, enjoys his new indoor environment!"

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

