



## CASE STUDY

# HOME PERFORMANCE WITH ENERGY STAR®

## Delivering Comfort in Colorado

*Aurora, Colorado*

When Kirk and Cheryl Stuart bought their home 2 years ago, they thought everything was in order. “The house was only about 6 years old when we bought it,” Kirk said. “We had the furnace certified as part of the purchase contract. We thought the system worked fine.” They soon discovered, however, that a correctly working furnace wasn’t enough to guarantee comfort. Large parts of the home were just too cold in the winter. It didn’t matter if they kept the heat turned up; some rooms were just always cold. And the finished basement was practically unusable. Kirk pointed out, “We’d have the thermostat set at 70 degrees, but the basement would be in the low 50’s.” Cheryl would wear bulky sweatshirts to stay warm at the same time they were paying \$600 per month to heat their home.

The Stuarts really wanted to do something about their comfort issues, but they didn’t think a new furnace was the answer. Kirk found Dan dePontbriand of Mountain Air in Castle Rock to help. Mountain Air is participating in the recently launched Home Performance with ENERGY STAR through the Colorado Springs Utilities. 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.

Kirk was impressed. “In talking with Dan, I sensed that he was the first contractor I’d come across who was interested in finding and fixing the real problem.” Rather than just looking at the furnace, Dan looked at the whole

house using a variety of different tools and the diagnostic skills he’d acquired. He found a variety of problems that added up to some major comfort issues. The furnace was too large, and the ducts were too small and poorly installed. They just couldn’t move enough air. There were also some significant air leaks and not enough insulation in the attic and around some bay windows. Dan put together a plan to resolve the issues.

First, he changed some of the duct work so that air could actually be delivered to parts of the house. He also did some air-sealing and added insulation, especially in the attic. And he added heating zones to the system and rebalanced it.

The comfort results were immediately noticeable. “They gave me part of my house back!” Kirk also pointed out that his wife didn’t need to be bundled up when inside. “It’s great if I can save some money on my energy bills, but the important thing is that my house is comfortable.”

The Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program is currently 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)

