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Rebates Available to Reduce Energy Use

By Cathy Tyson



Jeffery Liang, Bay Area Energy Upgrade specialist at recent workshop at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Photo Cathy Tyson

This program is one of the many upshots of AB 32 - California's Global Warming Solutions Act passed in 2006. Specific requirements include a strategic goal of a 40% reduction in green house gas emissions in existing homes by 2020. Another component of this program, according to Liang, is federal stimulus money to get local contractors back to work.

A second public information meeting will be held at the Orinda Community Center on October 19, doors open at 6:00, the program starts at 6:30. For more information go to www.energyupgradeca.org or www.energyupgradecca.org for Contra Costa County specifics.

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Who doesn't want free money to make their home more comfortable - temperature wise? In a statewide program slated to last through March, Energy Upgrade California is offering significant rebates to property owners to improve the efficiency of their home. In addition, Contra Costa County is also offering rebates up to \$5000 for energy retrofit projects that result in at least 20% energy savings. It's possible for homeowners to double or even triple dip, taking advantage of Energy Upgrade California rebates and County rebates and P G & E incentives via their Advanced Retrofit Program.

At a recent workshop in Lafayette, Bay Area Energy Upgrade Specialist with Energy Upgrade California, Jeffery Liang outlined specifics about the programs, and answered audience questions. For residents considering basic upgrades like air sealing, attic insulation and duct sealing, especially relevant as the winter months approach, Liang suggested that taking advantage of the rebates can save energy and significantly lower P G & E bills.

"The average home leaks 30% from air ducts," said Liang. If water pipes are leaking 30%, you'd get that fixed, he explained. Because ductwork is usually in the attic or under the home, residents aren't aware of the problem beyond having drafty rooms that just never seem to warm up.

For homeowners already considering or in the midst of a remodel, Liang points out that their list of participating contractors will work with remodel personnel already on the job. He explains that if the walls of your home are already opened up it's a good time to consider wall insulation, energy efficient heating and air conditioning systems.