

The Resource

A Publication of the City of North Augusta
Stormwater Management Department

Is your home leaking air, energy and money?



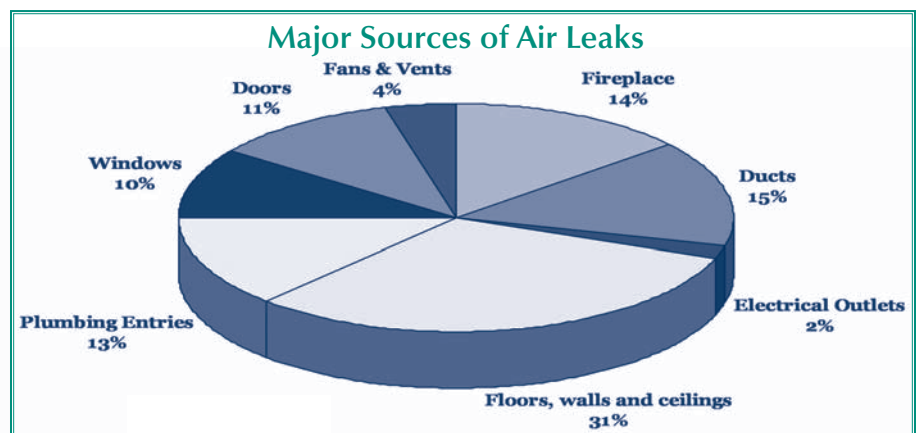
Experts contend that homeowners waste just about as much energy as they use from leaky windows or other unsealed openings. According to the United States Department of Energy (USDOE) there are many ways to lower utility bills for homes and businesses. The USDOE Energy Efficiency webpage has easy do-it-yourself energy audit instructions for both homes and businesses. By conducting an energy audit of your home, apartment or business, you can determine where you are losing energy and money. The information you gain from the audit can be used to create short or long term energy savings.

Why wait? Start now. Here are a few energy saving tips that could help you save money right away!

- ✓ Seal all leaks if you have drafty windows with caulking and inspect them regularly. Until sealed, you can cover them with heavy-duty clear plastic or install tight-fitting insulating drapes or shades. Once leaks are sealed, open blinds or curtains when the sun is shining into your home, close them once the sun passes to retain the heat.
- ✓ Adjust the temperature on the Thermostat 10-15° while sleeping or away from home (eight hours of adjusted thermostat per day saves 10% off your power bill per year)
- ✓ Locate and seal air leaks or gaps around plumbing fixtures, fireplaces, windows, doors, sockets, walls, baseboards, mail slots, window air conditioners and other areas inside and outside of your building or home. Seal with inexpensive caulking or weather stripping.
- ✓ Maintain your heating system – have systems checked annually, replace filters monthly or as necessary to save up to 10% annually. If your system is over 15 years old, consider replacing it with a new energy efficient model.
- ✓ Reduce heat loss from fireplaces – keep the damper closed when not in use. Leaving it open will allow warm air to flow right out through the chimney. If you never use your fireplace, plug and seal the chimney flue. If you do use the fireplace, install tempered glass doors and a heat air exchanger to blow warm air into the room.
- ✓ Determine if your home has proper insulation in the ceiling and walls. Some older homes may not have near the insulation required to prevent heat loss.
- ✓ Turn down the temperature of your water heater to 120° and wrap the unit with insulation (like a coat).

Tax Credits Available for Repairs Made in 2009

Are you planning to add new storm windows or doors, roofing or an energy efficient heating and cooling system in 2009? If so, don't forget to take tax credits when filing your federal income tax next year. The South Carolina Energy Office lists specific incentives available to residential homes (including manufactured homes) and businesses. Find links to all of this information and more at the stormwater web pages located at: www.northaugusta.net.



Species Profile: Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)

The beautiful Red-tailed Hawk is one of the most abundant hawks in North America. One of many birds of prey located in our area, the Red-tailed Hawk call is one of the most common sounds around. Many movies use the Red-tailed Hawks piercing call as the sound for all hawks and eagles in film since it can be heard from great distances. These magnificent birds are easily spotted during winter months soaring over fields or perched in leafless trees or on utility poles.

Red-tailed Hawks are very impressive birds due to their size, keen eyesight and hunting skills. They have a stocky body with a white colored breast speckled with brown patches like a belt across their stomach. Their back and wings are a brown mottled color. The distinctive rust colored tail feathers give them their name. A full grown hawk measures 18 to 26 inches long and can weigh from two to four pounds. With wings fully outstretched, they can measure up to four feet across. Females are 25 percent larger than males.

These hawks are monogamous birds and mate for life or until one dies and another mate is chosen. The male and female will work together to build a nest high up in a large tree using sticks and branches. They commonly reuse the same nest for several years. With the nest built, the female will lay five to six eggs. Both parents will take turns keeping the eggs warm for four to five weeks. Once hatched, the young hawks will be fed by both parents until they fledge the nest at six weeks. The average lifespan of Red-tailed hawks in the wild is 21 years.

Red-tailed Hawks feed on mice, squirrels, rabbits, reptiles, and other small prey. Their excellent eyesight makes them a fierce hunter capturing small animals in a flash. As they hunt, they sit or soar high above open fields or roadsides looking for the movement of small creatures. Once they spot their prey from the air, they can fold their wings close to their body and drop into a fast dive pulling up only seconds above the ground to grab it with long sharp talons.

It is important that waterways are protected from pollution since small prey sized creatures eating or drinking from them store the pollutants in their bodies. Once eaten by the hawks, the



Immature Red-tailed Hawk at Brick Pond Park

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contamination accumulates at higher levels and can cause long-term damage such as reducing the thickness of the egg wall causing future generations to fail to hatch properly.

Upcoming Events:

- Kids Earth Day – Saturday, April 18th (10 am – 2 pm) Lions Memorial Field
- North Augusta Electronics Recycling Event – Saturday March 14th at the new Kroger on Knox Avenue (9 am-12 pm)
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event – Saturday, May 16th at the new Kroger on Knox Avenue (10 am – 1 pm)

Science Education Pilot Project to begin at Brick Pond Park

Over the past few months Stormwater Department staff met with Area 5 Aiken County School Board member Ray Fleming and North Augusta Elementary Principal Dr. Angela Burkhalter and her staff to develop a pilot project utilizing Brick Pond Park as a nature classroom. Members of the project development team also include Clemson Extension and USC-Aiken faculty. The goal of the

project is to improve science and math education opportunities for area students and also to foster enthusiasm for our natural resources and science.

The pilot project will take place with fifth grade students from North Augusta Elementary over the next couple of months. The project will include focused lessons in environmental science, math,

stormwater management, introduction to laboratory equipment, computers, photography, creating brochures, preparing PowerPoint presentations and public speaking. Students will present their findings to their classmates. Based on the results of the pilot project, future projects will be developed to include other schools in the area.



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