Home Tip of the Month

Here are some things you can do during National Radon Action Month

1. Test your home:

EPA and the U.S. Surgeon General recommend that all homes in the U.S. be tested for radon. Testing is easy and inexpensive. Learn more about testing your home, including how to obtain an easy-to-use test kit.

2. Spread the Word!

3. Spend time during National Radon Action Month encouraging others to learn about radon and test their homes:

Tell your family and friends about the health risks of radon. Encourage them to test their homes.

4. Find and Seal Leaks - Add caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.

5. Buy a radon-resistant home:

If you are considering buying a new home, look for builders who use radon-resistant new construction.

Read more about radon on the EPA Website and check out our Monthly Tip on the sidebar.

January is National Radon Action Month

January is National Radon Action Month. What is radon? Radon is a radioactive gas produced when uranium in soil decays. Radon can be harmful-it is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States. Radon gas moves up through the ground into your home through cracks and holes in the foundation, becoming trapped inside. The EPA estimates that about one out of every 15 homes has elevated radon levels. You can't see, smell, or taste radon. While radon can be found all over the United States, Pennsylvania has one of the most serious Radon problems with approximately 40% of homes have levels above the EPA action guidelines.

Winter is a good time to test your home for radon. When windows and doors are sealed tightly, radon levels inside your home can rise. If you find high levels of radon in your home, the problem can be fixed! Some radon reduction systems can reduce levels in your home by up to 99%. Read more about radon on the EPA Website and check out our Monthly Tip on the sidebar.
resistant new construction, "Building Radon Out: A Step-by-Step Guide to Build Radon-Resistant Homes".

Read about more tips here!

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**Pittsburgh Post Gazette's "12 Women to Meet in 2019"**

Congratulations to Dr. Karen Hacker, Joylette Portlock and all of these amazing Pittsburgh leaders!

"At no time in Pittsburgh history have so many women overseen so many cultural, health and public service institutions - agencies that essentially bolster the livability of the region."

Check out the article now!

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**Home Energy Burdens for Low-Income Consumers in Pennsylvania**

Last week, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PA PUC) released a report on "home energy burdens for low income Pennsylvanians." A key factor of this report examines Pennsylvanians' "energy burden," --the percentage of their household income that is dedicated to paying energy-related utility bills.

"The energy burden for low-income customers in Pennsylvania is higher than most comparable states," said Vice Chairman David W. Sweet, who issued a statement at the Commission's public meeting. "We now need to determine if there is sufficient funding for assistance programs and also whether there needs to be more efficient oversight of them."

Even when customers' bills were discounted through Customer Assistance Programs (CAP), these households faced higher energy burdens as compared to Non-CAP residential customers. Read the report here.

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**HPC Joins the Real Estate Standards Organization (RESO)**

The Home Performance Coalition announces:

"HPC has joined the Real Estate Standards Organization (RESO) as a member. RESO is a

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**Report Finds 18,500 Households Starting Winter Without Heat in PA, Down 4% From Last Year**

On December 27, the Public Utility Commission
nonprofit organization that develops, promotes and maintains, through an open process, voluntary electronic commerce standards for the real estate industry.

Membership will enable HPC to participate in the standards development process. The RESO data dictionary contains a number of energy efficiency related fields that a growing number of multiple listing services (MLS) are choosing to include in their systems."

This will help in furthering the use of HPXML, the open data standard for the residential energy efficiency industry.

released the results of its annual Cold Weather Survey showing more than 18,500 Pennsylvania households had utility service terminated during the calendar year.

While this figure of how many householders are starting the winter without heat is approximately 4 percent lower than last year (754 fewer households), and 16 percent lower than the winter of 2016 (3,484 fewer households), it remains concerning that thousands of households will struggle to stay warm and safe during winter.

"As part of the annual "Prepare Now" campaign, the Commission continues its appeal to utilities to increase their efforts to educate consumers about resources that may be available, such as grants under the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)-- which is administered by the Department of Human Services- with information available through local County Assistance Offices or via the LIHEAP hotline at 1-866-857-7095." Read more here.

There is STILL TIME to sign up for some of CCI's upcoming training courses!

PA Residential Code Updates Lunch and Learn - January 30

Building Analyst Course - February 11 - 15

Healthy Home Evaluator Course - March 5, 6, 7

Building Science Principles - March 19 and 20

Be sure to keep a look

How a Pennsylvania Affordable Housing Agency is Making Ultra-Efficient Buildings Mainstream

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency is a state-affiliated agency that decides which projects in Pennsylvania earn coveted federal low-income housing tax credits. Five years ago, PHFA changed their competition criteria to favor the adoption of the Passive House standards, awarding 10 points out of a possible 130 for developers whose affordable housing projects were built to this standard.
Upcoming Events

Pittsburgh Cancer and the Environment Symposium
January 29

Public Climate Forum On A Zero Carbon Future
January 29

PA Residential Code Update Lunch and Learn
January 30

Inspire Speakers Series Presents: Inspirational Stories about a Vibrant and Just Region
January 31

BPI Building Analyst Training Course
February 11 - 15

PRC True Zero Waste Symposium
February 21

LIHEAP Action Day
February 27 and 28

Health Care Industry Forum on Energy Efficiency
March 5 and 6

BPI Healthy Homes Evaluator Training Course
March 5 - 7

Grounded GIS Class
March 28 - May 21

Out for these classes as we will be posting more about them moving forward.

According to an article in the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, "within two years, Pennsylvania went from having just a handful of passive house residential units to having nearly 900 in the works - more than any other state at the time. Since then, 14 other states' housing finance agencies have followed the PHFA's model and added passive house to their tax-credit competition. About 16 more are considering it."

Read more about PHFA and Passive House [here](#).
CCI is a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit organization founded in 1978 that helps families create healthier homes and "get energy smarter."

The High Cost of Utilities: How to Save Money

According to a recent study done by move.org on State utility costs, Pennsylvania is in the top 20 most expensive. An article written by The Patriot Ledger in Massachusetts talks a bit about some options you have that can lower some of those costs. "Becoming more energy efficient is the single-most important step a homeowner or renter can take to gain control of their energy use and energy costs," said Bill Stack, energy efficiency manager for Eversource, one of the state's largest utility companies.

Stated in this article, the first step in creating a more energy efficient home is scheduling an energy audit. It is important to understand more about your home and identify ways in which you can create money saving solutions. Read up on state utility costs here.