

YOUR MONEY

Heat have your energy bill beat? Some see savings with windows

By Staci Dennis
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NORFOLK

Windows offer a view to the outside while keeping heat and air inside.

At least, that's how it is supposed to work.

For Douglas Burdett, his 1908 home in Norfolk offered endless character and charm set on waterfront property and nestled among trees. But it also came with an old heating and air system, and plenty of drafty windows.

"I had an energy audit done on the home and the results were eye-opening," the 50-year-old said. "The audit showed I had an equivalent of a 2½-by-2½-foot window open at all times."

Burdett immediately replaced the air-conditioning unit and furnace. But when it came time to update the windows, he

was at a loss. He didn't want to custom build all 33 oversized windows in his Winona home.

"These old homes are in need of a solution that doesn't take away from the character of the house," said David Niles, owner of Norfolk-based Raven Contractors. "Some of these homeowners are desperate to find an answer."

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, replacing single-pane windows could save a homeowner \$126 to \$465 in annual energy bills, depending on climate zone. Energy-efficient windows lower solar gain – the heat that enters a home through a window – and are better insulated so a home stays cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

"Vinyl windows were out of the question for a house like this," Burdett said. "I didn't want to lose the look of the hand-blown glass in the orig-

inal windows."

But Burdett had to do something. In the winter, sitting by a window meant a draft, and in the summer, some rooms turned into saunas.

With some research, Burdett found Environmental Window Solutions in Minnesota, which makes Climate Seal. The product is similar to an exterior storm window, except it goes on the inside. The magnetic seal formed between the window frame, and Plexiglas is similar to how a refrigerator door seal keeps in cool air.

The U.S. Department of Energy says if you can't replace your windows, caulking window seals or adding storm windows can reduce air leakage and heat and cooling loss. Storm windows are available with low-E glass for additional insulation.

"This is a great product for older or historic homes because the interior window in-

sert can be retrofitted to almost any size," said Matthew Petit, owner of Environmental Windows Solutions. "They are easily removed and can be re-attached."

Burdett worked with Petit to buy the magnetic insulated frame and contracted with Niles to complete the job.

"This is a great alternative for people who don't want to spend upward of \$1,000 per window in these older homes," he said. "They fit in so nicely, you don't even know they are there."

Burdett, who has lived in his historic home since 1997, installed the new interior storm windows this spring. He said he could tell an immediate difference.

"I just got my July electricity bill and noticed the (kilowatt usage) went from 4192 (July 2009) to 3327 (July 2010), a decrease of 20.63 percent," Burdett said.

Burdett spent about \$10,000 to install 33 custom-made window inserts. Petit said the average is \$12 to \$16 per square foot, or \$180 to \$230 for a 3-by-5-foot window.

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STACI DENNIS PHOTOS



Burdett

Douglas Burdett of Norfolk outfitted his home with interior storm windows. The units have reduced noise and energy consumption, he said. His home's kilowatt usage is down 20 percent now.

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