

insights

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INSPECTION INFORMATION FROM ALBAN INSPECTIONS



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FROM JOE DEMPSEY, ASHI ASSOCIATE INSPECTOR & ALBAN CHIEF HOME ENERGY AUDITOR

GO ULTRA HIGH TECH- SPEND TO SAVE

It's a unique idea, but can save thousands off your utility bill. New products for energy efficiency are being introduced every day. While in Kansas City at the Affordable Comfort Institute annual conference, we saw some great new products. One of the worst offenders in a house is the attic access panel. Heating and air conditioning costs stream around the edges of almost every wood or drywall attic cover. McCoy Building Products from Olathe, Kansas has devised an inexpensive insulated attic cover and a pull down stair cover that are Energy Star efficient. Another supplier has a chimney balloon, which inflates and air stops your chimney.

Everyone knows to replace incandescent light bulbs with CFLs. But Leviton takes your room lighting to the next level with its IPP15 light switch which is a "manual-on" switch but turns the lighting circuit off when you leave

the room, for a double savings. Do you turn the shower on in the morning and leave the room to wait for hot water? The Evolve low flow Showerhead automatically reduces the flow to a trickle as soon as the shower water is hot. Turn the knob when you're ready to shower and you're in business.

The number one utility waster in every house is that old refrigerator. If not Energy Star approved, it's a loser. Go buy the new Miele KF 1811. It far exceeds Energy Star minimum rating for energy efficiency. Next time you need to replace your natural gas furnace, look into the Trane XV95, or by then, other manufacturers will catch up. Condensing furnaces were originally rated at 90% efficient, but Trane XV95 converts 96.7% of fuel into heat.

I'm having so much fun with this, turn over for more ideas.

FROM THE DESK OF ARTHUR S. LAZEROW

AT THE BOTTOM, OR MOVING UP?

An argument can be made that we are past the real estate bottom and have begun moving upward. There are signs of optimism. Peoples' states of mind are more positive than six months ago. At least in the Washington metropolitan area, if you have a job, chances are that your job is now secure.

I had the opportunity to speak this week with my former radio co-host whose company has listed for sale the dog of my neighborhood (in my humble opinion). After almost a year on the market, it's been properly priced, staged, repainted and brought up to its best possible appearance. As a result, there have been serious offers and a ratified contract. The point is that homes properly priced and positioned in its neighborhood market can receive attention.

With our historically low interest rates and products galore on the market, a qualified buyer has a wonderful opportunity to find the home of their dreams. NAR and local realtor associations should be pushing the media into broadcasting good news. Just as bad news created more bad results, good news can help move our industry into positive results. Spread the word!

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...More High Tech Goodies

Last month's newsletter talked about programmable thermostats. Did you replace your old thermostat yet? Nexpest way to save the most. Look at the Carrier Edge for a really sleek design.

Tankless water heaters create hot water only when needed, not at night while you are sleeping. The Bosch tankless model can keep up with demand of a household who showers and runs the dishwasher and clothes washer all at the same time. Also, although solar panels are very expensive, Heliodyne has a system that pays for itself in about five years for solar hot-water. Take your choice, tankless or solar, but the savings are there.

This last item is for the true techie. Behavioral research has proven that

information changes behavior. Check out BlueLineInnovations.com for the latest in energy monitors. This gadget attaches to your electrical meter and broadcasts consumption data in kilowatt hours and dollars to a base station. Cool! With some guidance, you can adjust your energy usage patterns and save up to 20%, they claim.

Energy efficiency research centers have constructed homes that produce and use about the same amount of energy, making the home energy neutral. This is partly due to construction methods, partly due to solar panels, and lastly due to energy efficient equipment. The products discussed here are some of the latest and greatest. Enjoy the savings.

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