Saving Energy in a Historic Home

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As fall rolls in, people move their focus indoors. Making your home as efficient as possible can improve your comfort in the winter and also save money on your electric bill. While replacing windows is one way to weatherize your home, there are many other opportunities – often less expensive – to create an efficient home. Here are my suggestions for improving the efficiency of a historic home without sacrificing its character.

1. **Have a professional auditor evaluate your home**. An energy auditor looks at your house as a system and uses the power of observation as well as diagnostic tools to find where heating/cooling loss is occurring. The auditor can also suggest opportunities for upgrades with your HVAC system, appliances and insulation and can pinpoint low-cost air-sealing opportunities (see number 2). If you don’t want to pay for an audit, you can conduct one yourself using a Department of Energy guide. ([DOE audit](http://energy.gov/energysaver/articles/do-it-yourself-home-energy-audits)). Local contractors offering professional audits include:
   * Chelan-Douglas Community Action Council  
     Rob Mosher  
     (509) 662-6156  
     Audits are free to eligible low-income customers; others are charged $75 per hour.
   * Jourdan HVAC/R Consulting, LLC  
     Greg Jourdan, Wenatchee  
     (509) 741-7105  
     [gjourdan@msn.com](mailto:gjourdan@msn.com)
   * AMS Inspection Services  
     Aaron Schreiner, Leavenworth  
     (509) 393-5829  
     <http://www.amsinspection.com/ams/>
2. **Look for opportunities for air-sealing**. Although a professional audit can identify even the smallest holes in your building envelope, there are obvious places homeowners can find to seal and fill cracks. Look around your windows, doors, entrance to your attic/crawlspace and plumbing and electrical penetrations into your home. Grab some caulk, a caulk gun, some sealant and get to work – it’s pretty easy. Chelan PUD has a helpful brochure on air sealing opportunities. The brochure and how-to videos are on the PUD website at <http://www.chelanpud.org/departments/energyServices/SealAirLeaks.pdf>
3. **Check your insulation levels**. Adding insulation is one of the most cost-effective measures a homeowner can take to save energy and improve comfort. If you have less than R-38 in your attic or less than R-25 in your crawlspace, you may qualify for a PUD rebate for insulation. Adding wall insulation also qualifies if you do not have any at all. Find insulation, window and door rebate information [here](http://chelanpud.org/Windows-Insulation.html).
4. **Look at your HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) system**. Become familiar with how you heat and cool your home. Take the first step in getting to know your air handler by replacing the filter. This can improve efficiency of the unit as well as increase the longevity of your heating and cooling system. Do you have ductwork outside of your conditioned living space? Check to see if you are heating/cooling your crawlspace or attic. Homes that have ductwork outside the conditioned airspace can lose as much as 30 percent of their heated/cooled air through leaky ducts. These leaks often occur at the joints. Using a product called mastic can reduce leakage by more than 50 percent. Chelan PUD offers a [rebate for sealing ducts](http://www.chelanpud.org/site-built-duct-sealing.html). . The PUD also offers rebates for upgrading to a new, efficient [heat pump](http://appliancerebates.chelanpud.org/2015/heat-pump-upgrade-and-conversion/) and for [ductless heat pumps](http://www.chelanpud.org/ductless.html).