

Homeowners Can Cut Energy Costs Considerably By Consulting The Professionals At WellHome

BY PETER MILLER

In May, WellHome, a subsidiary of Masco Home Services, opened in Saratoga Springs with a focus on saving money for existing homeowners. Given that two-thirds of the more than 100 million single-family homes in America were built before modern energy codes, there is a pressing need for the services that WellHome offers, according to General Manager Michael Ascoli.

"WellHome provides an all-in-one solution for the homeowner," said Ascoli. "We'll assess your home's energy efficiency, recommend options for improving its performance, and handle the installations you select. Then, we'll guarantee your first-year's energy savings with our Whole Home Energy Savings Limited Guarantee. It couldn't be easier."

Installations may be performed by WellHome or by one of the qualified contractors they select.

WellHome is part of a national network of energy-improvement offices set up by the Masco Corporation, a Fortune 500 company. Each office and every WellHome advisor is certified by the Building Performance Institute (BPI) to assure compliance with the highest standards of building science. These advisors complete rigorous training in building performance, in order to evaluate and manage the dynamics of all components in the entire home system.

Ascoli explained, "We study all aspects of your home, including heating and cooling systems, air and duct sealing, insulation, windows, doors and lighting. Our software then generates a report on your home's energy consumption, and we recom-

mend improvements that can save you money on energy and make your home more comfortable. The report shows the approximate cost of each upgrade, factors in any tax credits or rebates available, estimates the savings you'll realize with each improvement, and shows your return on investment, or payback period."

"Our initial home assessment is very comprehensive," said Ascoli. "We use infrared cameras to pinpoint heat loss, and we perform a blower-door test to find where outside cold air infiltration can occur. We also test for gas leaks and other safety issues. In fact, Masco has found that more than 50 percent of homes evaluated have gas leaks. Those can often be fixed for free by the gas provider, so there's an immediate fuel savings available there."

"We recently found a major gas leak in the propane tank outside of a house that was only five years old, and that will likely save them about half of their heating cost next winter," he said. "Lead paint and asbestos risks are also part of our home evaluation process."

Ascoli said he was attracted to the WellHome business when he learned that Masco was expanding into energy upgrades for existing homes.

"The process and the software system they developed is very straightforward and really makes it easy to understand for the customer. Through BPI, we are now approved by NYSERDA (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority), so our work qualifies for tax credits," he said.

"This was a start-up opportunity for me, but now I want to work here until I'm ready to retire,"



Michael Ascoli's team of professionals provide services that can significantly reduce a homeowner's energy bills.

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he said. "The corporate support that I have is absolutely amazing."

The local WellHome team consists of six people at present, and Ascoli expects to see the firm grow as more homeowners learn of their capabilities. He pointed out that the WellHome office is co-located

with ACO Property Advisors in Saratoga Springs, and they are already finding opportunities to collaborate on business development.

Interested homeowners are encouraged to call 928-0091 for more information, or visit www.well-home.com/locations/new_york/saratoga-springs. □