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Put these home improvements on your calendar

(NC)—With the deepfreeze factor at its annual high, the potential benefits of making energy saving improvements really hit home. Yet saving energy and money and adding comfort to your home should always be in season. Industry experts at Icynene (icynene.com) recommend you put these home improvement tips on your 2012 calendar:

- Winter**
- Install affordable plastic window-sealing kits, especially where you feel drafts.
 - Install foam gaskets behind electrical outlets and switches to reduce air leakage.
 - Close the fireplace damper tightly when it's not in use. If you use your fireplace regularly, consider adding a well-designed insert.
 - Replace or clean furnace filters at least once every three months.

- Spring**
- Consider larger home improvements like replacing windows that are best completed when the weather is nice. Consider adding spray foam insulation (like innovative Icynene) to your attic or in other areas of your home where the summer heat can infiltrate. You can start saving up to 50 per cent in energy costs all year long.
 - Is your air conditioner old or on its last legs? Before things heat up, consider investing in an energy efficient Energy Star-rated unit. Consult an expert to ensure the size of the unit is properly matched to the needs of your home.
- Summer**
- Add window coverings to block sunlight during the day, so your air conditioner doesn't have to work as hard.
 - Replace inefficient incandescent lighting with more efficient compact fluorescent or LED lighting that also

- produce less heat.
- Check your hot water tank. If it's warm to the touch it might need some extra insulation. Check your home improvement store for inexpensive pre-cut tank jackets or blankets.
- Fall**
- Check insulation levels where you can, like the attic or the floor of a room over the garage. If you didn't get to it in the spring, install spray foam insulation to seal around openings and penetrations that let air flow in and out of your home.
 - Use caulking, sealant and weatherstripping to create a barrier against air and water around doorframes, windows and baseboards. Choose the right caulking for the surface.
 - Insulate your hot water pipes to reduce heat loss. It may enable you to reduce the temperature setting on your hot water tank.

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