

Consumers may get hot over winter heating bills

BY DARYL LYNN CARLSON
Staff Writer

If the price of gas at the pumps isn't enough to send tempers soaring, perhaps this winter's home heating bills will.

The average home heating bill is expected to rise an average 20 per cent because of high world prices for crude oil.

In England, drivers have taken to the streets to protest high fuel prices, while in Ontario most people complain but accept prices.

Also in Ontario, high prices haven't spurred an increase in sales of hybrid, fuel-efficient cars such as the Honda Insight, which travels as far as 1,000 km on one tank of gas, according to local auto dealers.

"We haven't had more interest just because of gas prices," said one Honda sales manager. Sales of the Insight have been slow to take off because the car is still a novelty, he added.

People's attitudes could change when the winter chill sets in and heating bills push the envelope of affordability.

The average home heating bill is expected to rise an average 20 per cent because of high world prices for crude oil.

"Traditionally, people won't panic yet," noted Barbara Mullally Pauly of the EnerGuide for Houses Program, administered by Natural Resources Canada. "But when they get their first heating bill, then the calls come in."

The EnerGuide program provides information and low-cost assessments of people's homes for energy efficiency.

A program technician will conduct an energy audit for \$50 to \$150, depending on the size and age of the home, said Pauly. An audit involves a visual and mechanic check of a home's energy consumption and efficiency.

The technician will recommend improvements to the home to conserve heat and ultimately save on energy bills.

The cost of improvements is borne by the homeowner, although Pauly said immediate savings on energy bills quickly offset the investment.

Savings range depending on the size and age of the home, but can ring in as high as 20 per cent.

"We know that once people have an audit done, more than 70 per cent go on to do the recommendations," she said.

Officials who oversee local services, meanwhile, took a cue from last year's fuel cost increase to prepare for the next fiscal year.

York Region, for instance, has budgeted \$79,000 for gas and oil to provide services over 2001, an increase from \$55,000 in the fiscal year 2000, said spokesman Sean Hertel.

Similarly, \$135,000 is earmarked by the region to cover diesel fuel in 2001, compared to \$95,000 in 2000, he said.

"It's not breaking the bank yet," he said, noting that an increase in popula-

tion, while putting pressure on services, brings more tax dollars.

York Regional Police are also preparing for a long, costly winter, after increased gas prices cost the depart-

ment \$50,000 beyond its budgeted \$250,000.

For free information about home energy conservation, call EnerGuide at 1-800-387-2000.

FREE INFORMATION TENANT PROTECTION ACT CALL 713-2696

Housing Help Centre

This message brought to you as a courtesy service of The Economist/Tribune

Sears Travel Presents

Sun for Sale

Book Now. Travel. Pay Later.*

No money down. No interest. No payments until you return.

EARN VALUABLE SEARS CLUB POINTS

Sunquest

Punta Cana

RIU Bambu
November 25, December 2, 9
Hotel room, 7 nights
All-inclusive **\$1149⁰⁰**

Varadero

Turquesa, 7 nights
December 10
All-inclusive, Hotel room **\$1049⁰⁰**
Complimentary meals and stay for one child under the age of 12!

San Andres

Royal Decameron Aquarium, 7 nights
January 9 & 16
All-inclusive, Hotel room **\$1199⁰⁰**

Barbados

Southern Palms Beach Resort, 7 nights
November 27, December 4 & 11
Hotel room **\$1069⁰⁰**
Complimentary stay for one child under the age of 15!

AIR CANADA

vacations

Hawaii

Miramar at Waikiki, 1 week
November 4 - December 14
Superior Room **\$1439⁰⁰**
Daily departures to Honolulu
Add \$50 for Sat & Sun. Departures

Aston Waikiki Banyan, 1 week
November 4 - December 14
1 Bedroom **\$1549⁰⁰**
Daily departures to Honolulu
Add \$50 for Sat & Sun. Departures

Las Vegas

Flamingo Hilton, 3 nights
November 30, December 7 & 14
Hotel Room **\$779⁰⁰**
Daily departures

Jamaica

Sunset Beach Resort & Spa, 1 week
January 8 - 31, All-inclusive
Gardenview room **\$1659⁰⁰**
Daily departures
Add \$40 for Sat. & Sun. departures

Encore CRUISES

Holland America
A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

Luxury Cruising

Caribbean

7 day Western Caribbean Cruise
Return Ft. Lauderdale
December 9, 2000
aboard Ryndam **\$1079⁰⁰**
Port charges are included, cat. M

10 day Southern Caribbean Cruise
Return Ft. Lauderdale
January 16, 2001
aboard Zaandam **\$2329⁰⁰**
Port charges are included, cat. M

Panama Canal

10 day Panama Canal Cruise
Costa Rica to Ft. Lauderdale
January 28, 2001
aboard Amsterdam **\$2799⁰⁰**
Port charges are included, cat. L

Booking Extras - \$50 US
shipboard credit per stateroom and more.

Advertised cruise only prices are per person, double occupancy in Canadian dollars, the lowest available at press time for specific 2001 sailings and will vary dependent upon ship, departure, duration and category. Bookings are in contact with cruise is extra. Prices and space are subject to availability and can change or be withdrawn at any time. Certain restrictions apply. Ship Registry: Netherlands. All offers are valid on new individual bookings made with Encore Cruises. Offers are not combinable with any other discounts or promotions.

SEARS Travel Service

WE GIVE YOU THE WORLD™

Three Ways to Shop!

Markville Centre, Markham
946-8077

All locations open Sundays and extended hours on weekdays.

By Phone.
1-800-799-6466

In Person.
98 locations nationwide

On Line.
www.sears.ca

Furnace/Fireplace SALE
Save up to \$500*

Install now, pay later
with low monthly payments




SHERIDAN
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING
Call 471-4222
On selected models till Oct. 15/2000

*See Sears Travel for details, terms and conditions. Offer valid from September 16 to November 12, 2000. Departures are from Toronto, unless otherwise specified. Prices and space are subject to availability and can change or be withdrawn at any time. Prices are Cdn. dollars, per person, double occupancy, subject to availability, does not include any applicable taxes, port charges, surcharges or insurance unless otherwise stated. **Certain conditions apply, see: Sears Travel for details. For specific inclusions, terms and conditions refer to travel brochures available at Sears Travel Service. ©2000 Sears Canada Inc. d.b.a. Sears Travel Service. Ont. Reg #2264141