

Federal Stimulus Money Put to Work Weatherizing Homes

Janice Bowles had no idea that just over a month after applying for the weatherization program she would have crews working throughout her home to make it more energy efficient. A senior surviving on social security, Janice is one of the beneficiaries of the massive weatherization stimulus project, part of the Federal Stimulus bill signed on February 17, 2009. Funds are made possible through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and the Transform Missouri initiative and are administered by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Energy Center (MDNR/EC).

Janice knows and appreciates the help provided by OACAC. Last Christmas she received a food basket from OACAC and currently receives Energy Assistance through LIHEAP. She was not however, familiar with the weatherization program until a friend gave her a phone call and encouraged her to apply.

When Janice retired from Zenith after 25 years on the job the first thing she did was to pay off the mortgage on her home. Now, at the age of 72, she lives on Social Security and after paying her bills has \$200 each month to purchase food, gas, clothing, and medications. Janice explains, "I can stretch a dollar further than most anyone you know. I also have learned to live one day at a time. It just gets too big if I look at the long term."

Janice had attempted to make her bungalow more airtight by installing front and back security doors and stuffing the windows and doors with foam. One year she put plastic on the inside of the windows because she could not reach the outside, but found the wind caused the plastic to slap against the glass.

Because her furnace needed maintenance, she used a ventless space heater as a primary heat source. Although they are good as a backup fuel source, she was potentially creating indoor pollution that was causing health issues.

Weatherization crews hired on with ARRA money were busy installing new sash locks that pull her windows together as well as wrapping all the duct work in the basement to make it airtight. The crew checked for insulation under the siding (it was present) and wrapped the water heater to help it conserve energy. Her existing furnace was cleaned and tuned, and every window and door was given a new application of caulking to make them as energy efficient as possible.

OACAC is expected to weatherize 1,030 homes in a 10-county Ozarks region over the 2 1/2 years, courtesy of stimulus money. For more information or to apply for the weatherization program please call 417-865-7797 or visit your county Neighborhood Center.



Wrapping the duct-work in Janice's basement will result in overall energy savings.