

# Facing — and fixing — the cold, hard facts of energy waste



Since the day the Coopers moved into their 1830s farmhouse in Spencer, NY, they knew it was only a matter of time before an energy-related issue caused a major problem. **“Nobody was thinking about air sealing in the 19th century,”** Matthew Cooper explained. “Homes back then were built to last, not to heat evenly.”

**For seven long winters, the Coopers put up with drafty rooms, ice damming, and freezing pipes.** On a cold, windy night in

January 2011, the couple’s worst fears came true. A radiator pipe in their main

floor bathroom froze and burst, forcing them to turn off the house’s water and boiler. When

the boiler failed the next day, the Coopers had to

call a contractor for help.

Before installing a new boiler, the contractor performed a free comprehensive home energy assessment, investigating the Cooper home’s energy inefficiencies. After agreeing upon needed improvements **the Coopers chose to fix the issues**

**for good, taking advantage of the Assisted Home**

**Performance with ENERGY STAR® program and low-**

**interest financing** offered by The New York State Energy

Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA). “I regret that

I didn’t do this the day we moved in,” Matthew said. “Wasting energy is something we all can avoid.”

*Turn over for more*



**Losing dollars up the chimney.** After a burst radiator pipe and the failure of their boiler in the dead of winter, Matthew Cooper and his wife Minnie Jardine had to take immediate action. They called in a contractor to fix the problem. Rather than simply replacing what had broken, their contractor performed a comprehensive home energy assessment, confirming Matthew's suspicions: **His home had been wasting a serious amount of energy, causing year-round discomfort and pushing energy costs through the roof.**

Matthew and Minnie's 19th century home was built using plank framing, leaving no cavities for insulation. To make matters worse, heated air would rise and escape through cracks and holes in the second floor and attic. When it did, new colder air would enter the house the same way in the lower level, creating what's known as the "stack" effect.

**Sealing the whole house.** After the free home assessment was completed, the couple's participating Home Performance with ENERGY STAR contractor walked them through an energy upgrade plan, detailing recommended improvements. **A \$5,000 grant from NYSERDA's Assisted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program and low-interest financing** helped Matthew and Minnie afford a full package of energy efficiency upgrades.

The couple added insulation to their attic, roof cavity, basement and main heated areas. They also insulated their hot water pipes and installed an ENERGY STAR qualified boiler system. This allows the couple to heat their home more efficiently, cutting energy costs and reducing their impact on the environment.

**Enjoying comfort and savings.** During the winter months, Matthew and Minnie can now sit comfortably in their living room without feeling a cold wind move across the floor. Instead of burning five cords of wood and a lot of

costly propane to heat their home, they know they'll be cutting their energy bills. Summer is more pleasant, too, with cooler temperatures upstairs.

The savings, Matthew is happy to say, are greater than the cost of the loan. With the project complete, his only regret is not doing the work sooner. "The assessment is free, and with plenty of options for financing, homeowners can tackle what they can afford to do," Matthew said. "If I had known about these programs earlier, I wouldn't have waited until my pipes burst to improve my house."

**Situation**

- Solid wood walls with no cavities for insulation
- Porous stone foundation
- Cold, drafty rooms
- Freezing pipes
- Ice damming
- High energy costs

**Solutions**

- New high-efficiency propane boiler
- Expandable foam insulation in basement and crawl space areas
- Insulation in attic and roof cavity
- Hot water pipe insulation
- Vapor barrier in crawlspace

**Benefits**

- Increased comfort—home is warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer
- Lower energy bills
- Reduced need for heating energy, whether wood or propane
- Received \$5,000 grant from NYSERDA's Assisted Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program
- Received low-cost financing for energy upgrades through Green Jobs – Green NY

*The sooner you do energy efficiency upgrades, the sooner you can start saving money.*  
 —Matthew Cooper, Spencer, NY

**▶ Opportunity's knocking!**

Call 1-866-NYSERDA or visit [nyserda.ny.gov/home-performance](http://nyserda.ny.gov/home-performance)



**About NYSERDA's Home Performance with ENERGY STAR®**

NYSERDA's Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program offers homeowners a comprehensive, whole-house approach to improving energy efficiency and home comfort while saving money. Energy assessments and upgrades are conducted by a participating Home Performance contractor accredited by the Building Performance Institute (BPI). Income-qualified homeowners are eligible for additional incentives to make energy improvements.



Participate in Home Performance with ENERGY STAR and take advantage of funding for comprehensive home energy assessments and low-cost financing for energy upgrades through Green Jobs – Green NY. Green Jobs – Green NY is a statewide effort to strengthen our communities through energy efficiency. It enables New Yorkers to make a significant difference in our homes, businesses and neighborhoods—making them more comfortable, more sustainable, and more economically sound. Green Jobs – Green NY is administered by NYSERDA and made available by the Green Jobs – Green New York Act of 2009.

