



**Ken
Field**

*Owner of Slate
Belt Energy
Services*

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

Your House is Leaking Money

If you've ever slept in a tent in the winter you know how difficult it is to make it warm inside. That's because there is no insulating qualities to nylon and air leaks through it constantly.

What if you insulated it and still left air run through constantly? Obviously that would be a waste of good insulation. It would probably look weird too and be tough to setup. As a heating contractor and energy auditor I have seen homes that are about as good as the tent. Mobile homes are very difficult to improve as far as energy usage goes. The walls are very thin, there is a lot of metal which is a very poor insulator and the roof and floor is also thin and exposed to outside temperatures. So if you have a wood framed home you already have a great start at making an energy efficient shelter. But without controlling air leakage it is only slightly better than a tent. Even if the thought of having your house 'too tight' crosses your mind, just forget about that right away. I would challenge anyone, even a contractor to take a house that is already completed and weatherseal it to a leakage rate below the safe standard. That standard is just a tiny amount over 1/3 air exchange per hour. So if your house is 30 x 50 feet and has 2 floors and 8 foot ceilings there is 24,000 cu. ft. of air inside it not including the basement. Typical leakage is at least twice that so we might measure 50,000 cu. ft. of leakage. There go your heating dollars right out the roof. If it could be sealed below 8400 cu. ft. per hour you may need some additional ventilation. But that would never happen unless you spent a huge amount of money on sealing. But if you could get it to 1 air change per hour or .75 that would be an enormous improvement and probably save 40% on your heating bills. The improvement will come from some tedious labor, someone who has experience finding and fixing air infiltration, and the use of the best materials for both insulating and stopping air. I can tell you now that fiberglass won't be used if anyone is serious about saving energy. But I see advertisements all the time and I go to homes that are full of fiberglass insulation and they are horribly leaky. Only a very few companies who offer improvements will measure the leakage of your home prior to working on it and then again at the end. That's what should be done to prove your money was well spent.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com

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