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### Military vets may be unaware of benefits

By Cara Host, Staff writer

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WAYNESBURG - Soaring energy prices and the threat of global warming may prompt many homeowners to think about how to conserve, and a new regional program unveiled Friday aims to help people do just that.

West Penn Power Sustainable Energy Fund announced the PA Home Energy program at a conference at Waynesburg College. The program will offer financial incentives to homeowners who make their houses energy efficient and it will compile a list of contractors who are qualified to do the work.

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"This is an honor for Waynesburg and Greene County to be the place where this new program is launched," said Helen Perrine, executive director of Affordable Comfort Inc. in Waynesburg. "It's not often that we hear good news about energy."

Affordable Comfort is one of the partners that helped develop the program. Allegheny Power, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Star program and Performance Systems Development Inc. are also involved. Representatives from those groups signed a partnership agreement

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Friday.

PA Home Energy will be available to Allegheny Power's customers in Pennsylvania, which includes 23 counties and 710,000 residential customers. Homeowners who successfully complete the program can qualify for incentives between \$200 and \$1,000, depending on the percentage of energy savings. This incentive is in addition to the savings homeowners will see in lower energy bills.

"It's a simple concept," said David Flitman, president of Allegheny Power. "A kilowatt of energy that has been conserved is a kilowatt that our customer didn't have to pay for. It's a kilowatt with no environmental footprint, and it's a kilowatt that can help maintain a reliable supply."

Some of the ways to conserve are relatively inexpensive, such as installing compact florescent lights instead of traditional incandescent ones and adding insulation, said David Lee of the EPA.

"This is not high-tech stuff. This is windows, HVAC systems, insulation. These are off the shelf items that you can put into your home," said Lee, who leads the Energy Star program for new and existing homes.

The Energy Star logo is commonplace on energy efficient products such as washing machines, water heaters and furnaces. The label now will be used to designate homes in the region that meet certain standards for energy efficiency.

New homes can be built to Energy Star standards rather easily, Lee said. To participate in the PA Home Energy program, home builders will submit the plans and the house will be inspected during construction.

Making an existing home Energy Star compliant is a bit more difficult, Lee said. A contractor will test the energy performance of the whole house and recommend repairs to make the structure consume less energy. To qualify for the PA Home Energy incentive, utility bills will be submitted to the program to demonstrate the house's energy efficiency.

Businesses will undergo a certification process to be designated qualified contractors or builders and then they can be listed on the PA Home Energy Web site to assist people interested in finding contractors who can inspect homes and install energy-saving items.

Conserving energy will not only save homeowners' money, but it could help save the planet by reducing carbon dioxide emissions, Lee said.

He discussed the planet Venus to illustrate his point. Based on the planet's distance from the sun, Venus' expected temperature is 122 degrees Fahrenheit, but because the planet's atmosphere is 96 percent carbon dioxide, the actual temperature is about 900 degrees, Lee said.

"We are here at the beginning to help the country find the best ways to solve global warming," he said.

For more information, go to [www.pahomeenergy.com](http://www.pahomeenergy.com) or call 1-800-PHE-1408.



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