



State Rep. Alfred Camillo (R-151), top, and home-builder Pete Fusaro are gearing up to help people make their houses more energy efficient. At left, a process for pin-pointing leaks in action.

Presentations aim to show how to **Save 'green' by going green**

By Ken Borsuk, Staff Reporter

For anyone who has ever looked with anguish at their home energy bill and wondered how it can possibly be so expensive, help is on the way.

Local home builder Pete Fusaro and State Rep. Alfred Camillo (R-151) are teaming up for a three-part series designed to advise people how to live a greener lifestyle while simultaneously seeing significant cost savings on their home energy bills. The first meeting in the free series will take place this morning, Aug. 19, with the next two scheduled for Aug. 26 and Sept. 2. They will all be held at the Greenwich Senior Center from 10 to 11:30 and are open to the public.

"I feel like I'm giving back to the community by doing this," said Mr. Fusaro, a Riverside resident and certified green builder who owns Preferred Builders/Green Built Connecticut with his son.

Mr. Camillo, who serves on the Environment Committee in the state House, was approached by Mr. Fusaro, a friend of his, after they had successfully worked together on a program helping people get rid of electronic waste like computers and appliances. He said he feels this is useful information for residents.

"They're going to see things and hear things from an expert on this," Mr. Camillo said. "It won't just be reading it in an article or in a booklet. They're going to be able to see with their own eyes all the ways they can help themselves with just some simple steps."

The vice president of the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Fairfield County, Mr. Fusaro said that he will have a lot of information people will be surprised about. He said simple things like replacing older appliances may lead to reduced costs.

"A lot of people have old refrigerators, for example, that are just burning energy," Mr. Fusaro said. "Replacing a refrigerator that's 15

years old, saves 35% on your electric bill."

Mr. Fusaro said he also wants people to know that they may be eligible for rebates under the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund for replacing old, inefficient appliances. Rebates are also available for improving insulation. Mr. Fusaro's company uses infra-red cameras to spot leaks in insulation.

This morning's presentation entitled "Air Leaks Waste Energy" will detail where those leaks occur and their impact on costs. Because of air leaks, Mr. Fusaro said energy bills may be 25 to 40% higher than they should be and at his company he is able to do computerized blow door tests to determine where leaks exist.

"A lot of these homes have ducts in the attic, which is an unconditioned space for air," Mr. Fusaro said. "And if you have a leak in those ducts then a lot of heat and cool air blow into the attic before it even gets into the house. You're wasting energy and you don't even know it."

Mr. Fusaro said he isn't doing this to try and convince homeowners they need his company's services.

"I'm not here to sell anyone anything," Mr. Fusaro said. "That's not the reason this program was developed. I'm here to give tips that won't even cost them money. We have 101 ways to save people money through these tips and they can use them without having to spend anything."

The tips include washing the lint screen on dryer every few weeks. Also, those who have spider webs in their basement should see it as a sign that their might be an air leak because spiders build their webs in places where air flows to catch insects coming in.

The Aug. 26 presentation will be on indoor air quality and efficiency. Mr. Fusaro will discuss how outside conditions may negatively impact the inside of your home. With leaks on the outside of your home bringing air in, Mr. Fusaro

said you are vulnerable to rain, mosquitos and mold.

The final presentation on Sept. 2, will be called "Will building green cost me more?" The short-term answer remains that it will, but the long-term cost savings more than make up for it. Mr. Fusaro said he will make sure homeowners get detailed answers about the long-term benefits and the impact this can have on not only reducing bills, but in increasing a home's resale value.

"It's a whole process that needs to be explained and we will go through the pros and cons of building green," Mr. Fusaro said. "We will have the statistics of different prices and what results this will have on the value of homes that have been certified as green as well as talk about the benefits of living in a home like that."

While the senior center usually has programs dedicated entirely to senior issues, this will be for homeowners of any age and Mr. Fusaro is hoping for a big audience.

"We are doing this to educate everyone," Mr. Fusaro said. "We want to get a whole mix of people. But certainly seniors who own their homes will have a lot of chances to benefit from this, save money on their energy costs and find rebates they never even knew they were eligible for."

Considering how important it is to not only be more green as a society but save money in tough economic times, Mr. Camillo is hoping many people turn out to hear these presentations.

"Even when it's not a bad economy, seniors are often the ones paying attention to things like this, and now in this economy you have more middle age and younger people looking to save money, too," Mr. Camillo said. "This is all very doable. It's not overly complex. This is a great way for people to save money."