

KUNI Radio Series “Unplugged”
Show #24: New windows

From the Center for Energy & Environmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa, this is Pat Higby with a series of programs on KUNI to help you save energy.

If your house is hard to heat in the **winter**, it will be even harder to **cool** during the summer! In the winter we can caulk and install plastic film over old windows, but in the summer we need to open them when the weather is moderate. When we **do** close up the house and turn on the air conditioning, those leaky windows let in the **heat**, and drive up your air conditioning costs. If you need new windows, don't wait until the fall to get them installed. Replacing them in the spring will save energy and money during the summer, too!

Almost half of U.S. homes have older single-pane windows. Replacing them with double pane windows with a low emissivity coating is your best energy saving option. The lower the U-value, the better the insulation. In Iowa a U-value of **0.35** or less is best. Air leakage is another consideration, select windows with ratings of 0.3 cubic feet per minute or less. Because of our warm Iowa summers, you will also want a window with a low solar heat gain coefficient, or SHGC rating. If this all seems too confusing, look for the Energy Star and a rating by the National Fenestration Rating Council.

Even the **best** window won't perform well unless it is properly installed. To ensure yours are well caulked with correctly placed flashings, look for a reputable, qualified installer. You can increase your windows' performance by using white shades, blinds, or lined drapes to reflect heat away during the day. Planting deciduous trees or adding awnings on south and west-facing windows will also lower your home's heat gain.

The 2005 Energy Policy Act allows tax incentives for Energy Star windows. Many utility providers offer rebates. If you also plan to replace your furnace or air conditioner, a smaller, less expensive unit may be needed after you upgrade your windows. Are you saying you still can't afford to replace your windows, even with these incentives? Unfortunately you're also spending money if you do nothing. You'll be **paying** for the extra heating and cooling energy as long as you live in a home with **old windows**!

I'm Pat Higby, Energy Educator at the Center for Energy and Environmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa.