



## More Energy Saving Resources for “Do it yourselfers”

This week is another installment for do-it-yourselfers, this time featuring some “best of” energy links. As pointed out in a previous article, by doing things yourself you assume all responsibility for the results. There are a number of important reasons to hire an experienced professional instead of taking things into your own hands. Because some folks have assumed that, because I’m writing these articles every week, I should be available to answer their questions over the phone, I’ll remind everyone again that I do this sort of thing for a living. Being an on-call, no-cost “answer-man” and running a business just aren’t compatible activities. Please either email me your question or ask me on The Union’s Sustainable Living Blog if you’d like a question answered for free. Otherwise, please DO call if you’d like to hire me or my company to help with an energy project.

### **For a Home Energy Audit**

A really sharp guy I know that works at Lawrence Berkeley National Lab is the developer behind one of the best – if not the absolute best - online energy audit tools available. See and use the results of his team’s efforts here:

<http://hes.lbl.gov/>

Compared to PG&E’s home energy auditing tool this one is more “robust” as we say in the engineering world. It can account for more building features than PG&E’s tool so, as a result, it will take more time to complete but be more accurate.

### **For Renewable Energy Projects**

This site is sort of like the BuildItSolar.com web site I talked about previously only it has more background information on a number of technologies. It covers solar, wind, micro-hydro and even transportation alternatives.

<http://www.discoversolarenergy.com>

### **For Energy Efficiency and Other Home Repairs**

This site is a bit more commercial (marketing oriented) than most I’d recommend, but if you don’t mind wading past advertising it has quite a bit of useful information.

<http://www.doityourself.com>

For example, it has a section on how to find and fix leaky ducts, a subject that’s more common and more typically problematic out there than most people realize. Leaky ducts are often responsible for off-the-map heating or cooling bills. For example, the average duct system leaks about one third of the air moved by the furnace fan. The things I find during an energy audit never cease to amaze me.

A very quality built, upper end home I recently audited off Banner Lava Cap Road had several “classic”

problems. One problem was that – in two different duct runs from the furnace – the installer came up a little short on the length of flexible duct he needed to reach a floor register. He needed to add a short section of duct to reach it. But instead of using a sheet metal sleeve to connect the two ducts together properly, he simply stuffed one into the other and put a single revolution of duct tape around it. The tape started coming off at some point and, when I got there, the duct was hanging down, open at the bottom and still (barely) connected at the top. Warm air was streaming out of the bottom of the open connection into the crawlspace. A fair amount of the fiberglass insulation around the duct stuffed inside the other one had blown off into the duct leading to the register and, I'm sure, into the home itself. This was one reason (of several) the homeowner wasn't getting enough heat at one end of the home.

Finding and fixing leaky ducts can be hard and very unpleasant. Attics and crawlspaces aren't most people's favorite places to "hang out" for good reason. But they're great places to find common problems associated with high energy waste. Keep in mind we have several companies locally that can find and repair not only your leaky ducts but leaky home as well. To see my energy-related links of local providers go here –

[www.theenergyguy.com/NCprodServ.html](http://www.theenergyguy.com/NCprodServ.html)

On a related topic, if you're building a new home or having a system replaced on an existing home, strive for a quality-oriented bid rather than the cheapest. Whether it's the installation of insulation or a heating and cooling system, quality beats lowest price in the long run!



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