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Draft resistance

The economics of insulation

BY JIM GORDON

Malcarne Contracting of Staatsburg has recently become a Zerodraft Approved Applicator, one of only five contractors in the Hudson Valley authorized to install advanced air-sealing and weather-stripping products manufactured by Ontario-based Zerodraft.

Says Joseph Malcarne, the company CEO, the effort is part of a growing awareness that saving energy through insulation helps both the environment and one's economic situation, all while making a home more comfortable. "It's a win, win, win situation," said Malcarne.

Those three w's arise from the process of assessment, recommendations and relief, said Malcarne, who said that most homeowners who invest about \$3,000 in the Zerodraft system would feel more comfortable immediately and based on current energy costs, would see their investment begin to show returns in five years.

In explaining his business model, Malcarne calls on American business history. "Henry Ford said his goal was to democratize the automobile, which he was very successful at doing," said Malcarne. "In a similar way, we are trying to democratize the energy-efficient home, and make it available to everybody. Fundamentally, I find that is best done with educating the people.

"We take a look at the home and let them know what it is we can do and explain the process of zero drafting their house and certainly recommend insulation measures," said Malcarne. He said that in general, most homes can save 15 percent to 30 percent in electricity and heating costs, saying that range represents "the low hanging fruit" of potential savings.

The Zerodraft is a continuous air barrier that an applicator must be certified by the Ontario, Canada-based company to install. "It is the best system I have found so far," said Malcarne, who is president of the new Energy Conservation Group of the Hudson Valley.

"The product line is great and they offer excellent training."

He said experience has shown that temperatures within a house can vary room to room or floor to floor by as much as 15 degrees. "Where you get vast temperature differentials and that is a sign that it is a leaky house," said Malcarne. "People don't know how to seal up their house."

He said a well-sealed house should not have temperature variations that extreme and said his own home has only a two-degree difference between warmest and coolest spots.

To promote awareness that buttoning a house up tighter is both possible and profitable for a household's bottom line, Malcarne said that an educated consumer is more likely to be a customer.

"In this day and age, people are concerned primarily about two things: saving money and reducing their impact on the environment," Malcarne said. "If you are reducing the amount of heat you are losing from your building, you are reducing the amount of fuel you need to heat the house, thus reducing the amount of pollutants. So when customers become educated about what needs to be done, they demand that of their contractor." For more information go to [Malcarnecontracting.com](#)

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