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Mainard & Sanders Heating & Air

The Bear Cares Newsletter

~~R-22~~ Phaseout

How will it affect you?

As the EPA continues to regulate the phase out of production & use of ozone-depleting R-22 refrigerant, it appears that prices for the refrigerant will continue to rise until all supplies of the older R-22 refrigerant are depleted. This is already resulting in a basic "supply & demand" situation that is driving the old refrigerant pricing higher & higher. There are newer (less ozone-damaging) replacement versions of R-22 on the market that will probably fill the void once existing supplies of the older R-22 are depleted. It appears, however that refrigerant R-410A is going to be the best alternative for homeowners both now & in the future. Converting to R-410A refrigerant will typically require replacing your outdoor a/c unit and indoor cooling coil. You should always select a reputable dealer that employs service technicians who are EPA-certified to handle refrigerants. For more information about converting to R-410A, call Mainard & Sanders at 636-1983.

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Energy Star Provides Homeowners With Advice

(Source: ACHR News)

The Energy Star program is encouraging Americans to prepare their homes for summer and educating them about the benefits of servicing their cooling equipment. Energy Star, a government-sponsored program designed to help businesses and individuals protect the environment through energy efficiency, is a joint venture whose backers include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Energy (DOE).

In a new public relations campaign, the program suggests that homeowners have their cooling systems evaluated to determine if it is time for an energy-efficient upgrade. By waiting until an air conditioning system breaks down to replace it, Energy Star maintains, homeowners may find themselves without time to make an educated decision, and be forced to spend more money than necessary.

Energy Star suggests that an HVACR contractor inspect a home's cooling equipment before it gets hot outside. This can prevent future problems and unwanted costs at the height of summer, when product demand is high and supply is low. Inspecting the equipment before the cooling season starts will also help ensure that homeowners have convenient access to a qualified HVACR technician, the program states.

Energy Star's Web site (www.energystar.gov) notes that if a home's central air conditioner is 10 years old or older, it may be time for a more efficient replacement. "A more energy-efficient home costs less to heat and cool and can improve both its comfort and value," Energy Star states. The program also points out that with less energy use, homes are responsible for less air pollution. For example, if one household in 10 bought Energy Star-qualified heating and cooling equipment, the organization states, the change would prevent more than 17 billion pounds of air pollution.

According to the program, Energy Star-rated heating and cooling equipment, sized and installed correctly with a properly sealed duct system supporting it, can save consumers as much as 20 percent of their annual energy costs.

Earning The Energy Star

- Central air conditioners:** Energy Star-qualified central air conditioners are 25 percent more energy-efficient than standard equipment. Central air conditioners that have earned the Energy Star have a higher SEER rating than standard models. Since sizing and proper installation of a central air conditioning system are critical to energy efficiency, the program notes that it is important for homeowners to hire a qualified HVACR professional. Even the most energy-efficient unit will not perform well if it's too large for the home or installed incorrectly.

- Air-source and geothermal heat pumps:** Air-source heat pumps must be at least 20 percent more efficient than standard models to earn an Energy Star rating. Geothermal heat pumps must be at least 30 percent more efficient than comparable equipment.

- Programmable thermostats:** Energy Star-qualified programmable thermostats allow homeowners to set the temperature settings for weekdays and weekends. According to the DOE, an Energy Star programmable thermostat will save the average homeowner about \$100 each year when used properly.

Bear's Easy-Fixin' Recipes

Easy Spinach Quiche

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 (10 ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 5 eggs, beaten
- 3 cups shredded feta cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease a 9 inch pie pan.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are soft. Stir in spinach and continue cooking until excess moisture has evaporated.
3. In a large bowl, combine eggs, cheese, salt and pepper. Add spinach mixture and stir to blend. Scoop mixture into a pre-made pie crust & place in pre-greased pie pan.
4. Bake in preheated oven about 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

Easy Chicken Pot Pie

Ingredients:

- 2 cans white chicken (chunks)
- 1 large or 2 small cans cream-of-chicken soup
- 2 large cans Veg-All ® mixed vegetables

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients into large mixing bowl & mix together thoroughly.
2. Pour mixture into 2 pre-made pie crusts. Place additional pie crusts on top of mixture and mold around edges of pie pan.
3. Place pie crusts onto large baking sheet.
4. Place baking sheet on center rack in oven & bake at 350 until crust is golden brown.
5. Remove baking sheet from oven & let pot pies cool on stovetop for 10 minutes before serving.

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