



Maryse Furlotte and Family

Lower Cloverdale,
New Brunswick

Estimated annual savings:
\$2,040

Success story

EnerGuide rating for 70-year-old house goes way up, energy costs go way down

“... our total heating bill for the year was \$960 – a long way from the \$3,000 we paid the year before.”

When Maryse Furlotte, her husband and two children moved into their 1940s home on the edge of the rural community of Lower Cloverdale, New Brunswick, they were delighted to escape the bustle of the nearby city of Moncton. What was less pleasant was the \$3,000 a year they were paying to heat the house.

“In Moncton, we lived in a bungalow,” says Maryse. “This was a bigger house – two storeys – so we thought it was just a case of bigger house, bigger heating bills.”

But even \$3,000 a year could not warm the house. “It was freezing,” says Maryse. “We had the furnace set at 20°C, and it ran almost constantly, even after we put an insert in the fireplace to provide more heat. Some nights I would go to bed wearing a toque, gloves, sweat pants and sweatshirt, wool socks and then five blankets on top of me, and it was still cold!”

Maryse says watching television in the living room, she could feel her hair blowing in the breeze. “I thought it was the windows,” she says, “I caulked them all, inside and out, but it didn’t make any difference.”

When a buildup of ice caused a major leak in their roof in the winter of 2010, the family discovered the real issue.

The repair contractor had to open some walls and found, well, nothing. The house had practically no insulation at all. “Well, there was a bit of insulation in the basement,” Maryse laughs. “A previous owner had stuffed a bunch of old T-shirts along the top of the walls.”

The contractor suggested they look into having an EnerGuide home evaluation. With an evaluation, the Furlottes would be eligible for incentive programs in place at the time that

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could help them pay for upgrades to make the house more energy-efficient.

The evaluation was an eye-opener. The EnerGuide rating for the house was just 18, barely half the average rating for a house of that size and age in New Brunswick. “The advisor said the house had so many air leaks, it was like having a hole more than 2 feet (70 centimetres) in diameter in the wall,” says Maryse.

The insulation contractor went to work – insulating the basement walls and some of the above-grade walls with spray foam and using blown-in insulation in other walls and in the attic.

After the retrofit, a follow-up EnerGuide evaluation gave the house a rating of 69, putting the Furlotte home in the top 5 percent for energy efficiency compared with homes of a similar age in Canada.

While the improvement in the rating number is impressive, for the Furlottes, the most impressive number is on their heating bills – not even one third of what they had been before the upgrades. “The winter of 2013–2014 was much colder than usual,” says Maryse. “And our total heating bill for the year was \$960 – a long way from the \$3,000 we paid the year before.”

Maryse says her hair does not blow in the breeze while she is watching television anymore. “There’s just no comparison,” she says. “We do most of our heating with the wood insert we put in the fireplace – the furnace hardly ever comes on.”

Because they are using far less energy to heat their home, the Furlottes have also reduced their home’s greenhouse gas emissions by about 16 tonnes a year. “That’s made us a lot more conscious of the environmental impacts of our energy use,” says Maryse. “We’re always thinking about other things we could do to save money and help the planet at the same time.”

More than a million Canadian homeowners have had an EnerGuide home evaluation, which provides expert, unbiased advice delivered by independent energy advisors, who work through licensed service organizations. “The evaluation was really important,” says Maryse. “It told us exactly what we could do to reduce our energy bills and make our home comfortable. And without it, we would not have qualified for the rebates that helped us pay for the improvements.”

The EnerGuide home rating system is recognized across Canada. An evaluation is required to qualify for many of the energy efficiency promotions and incentive programs offered in different parts of Canada.

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