

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY:

Nearly one-half of your energy budget is spent on heating and cooling so consider the following:

- Replace your air/furnace filter every month during the heating season to maintain the safe and efficient operation of your heating equipment.
- For safety, comfort and energy efficiency, schedule an appointment to have a qualified, licensed natural gas contractor perform a thorough inspection of your heating system, including the furnace, water heater, all pilot and burner chambers, venting systems and thermostats. Remember that heating contractors get busier as the weather gets cooler, so call today.
- Use the *Low* or *Warm* settings on your water heater – never turning it above 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will improve efficiency and prevent scalding accidents. If you have an automatic dishwasher and the manufacturer recommends a *normal* temperature setting for your water heater, ask your plumber about anti-scald devices for shower and sink taps.
- Caulk, weather-strip and insulate openings where air infiltrates your home. The most common places where air escapes include doors, attics, windows, plumbing penetrations and electrical outlets.
- Taking showers instead of baths, washing full loads of dishes and using cold water for full loads of laundry can help to reduce hot water use.
- If you are replacing appliances, look for the *ENERGY STAR* label for efficiency ratings.

## IMPORTANT WINTER SAFETY TIPS:

- Never use your oven or range top to heat your home. Using the oven to heat a room or apartment during winter is dangerous – for two reasons. First, leaving burner flames on and unwatched is a fire hazard. Second, oven burners operating continuously can use up indoor oxygen and lead to the production of deadly carbon monoxide.
- Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless and toxic gas. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends putting CO detecting alarms outside the bedrooms in each separate sleeping area of your home. Replace batteries at least twice each year and change the batteries in your smoke alarms too