

# Don't pass up this opportunity



By Rochelle Swanson and Jim Provenza

Most of us want to reduce our energy bills (and reduce greenhouse gas emissions) but don't know exactly what to do. Should we install energy-efficient windows or add insulation to the attic? Buy an energy-efficient refrigerator or upgrade the heating and air-conditioning system?

No two homes, or the families living in them, are exactly alike. Although there's plenty of information out there about how doing X could save Y amount of dollars, there are any number of variables that personalize whether doing X is actually worth it for any particular house or family.

What we really need is a front-to back and top-to-bottom assessment by a trained professional who comes to our house and figures out what measures are most effective in saving energy in our home and also meet our budgetary requirements. Of course, it also would be terrific if this assessment were free.

Well, it is free. No hidden charges. No obligation. Almost anyone who owns residential property in Yolo County who comes to the Davis Farmers Market on Wednesday between 4:30 and 8 p.m. can sign up for a free on-site home energy efficiency assessment. There will be several highly qualified contractors there to choose from. There are a very few restrictions on eligibility.

This may sound like one of those time-share deals where you're promised some big gift and all you have to do is come listen to a sales pitch. This is not that. We wouldn't be encouraging you to come if that were the case.

The truth is that this is the real deal, an opportunity that doesn't come along very often, a chance for any and all of us to find out exactly what would be best to do in our own homes to save money on our energy bills.

And, importantly, you don't have to do anything if you don't wish, but the contractor will identify for you a list of options and the cost of each.

This event is sponsored by the city of Davis, Yolo County, the Yolo Energy Watch, PG&E and Energy Upgrade California. The participating contractors are waiving the fee for a home energy assessment — normally as much as \$500.

But wait, it gets even better. Knowing what steps to take to increase our home's energy efficiency is one thing; paying for it is another. There is no free lunch, and making improvements to our homes will cost some money.

But right now — we're tempted to say “for a limited time only” but that, although true in this case, sounds sort of hucksterish — there are substantial financial incentives that can reduce the cost of any measures you decide to undertake.

Representatives from Energy Upgrade California will be there to explain the details, but in broad strokes everyone is eligible for up to \$4,000 in rebates and many (if not most) can qualify for a zero interest loan that requires no credit check or appraisal and be eligible for an outright-don't-have-to-pay-it-back grant of up to \$1,250.

The city of Davis and Yolo County take energy efficiency seriously, and we, along with our partner organizations listed above, have worked hard to bring you this opportunity.

All you have to do is show up at the Farmers Market on Wednesday between 4:30 and 8 p.m. Check in at the Hattie Weber Museum at 445 C St. in the northeast corner of Central Park.

— *Rochelle Swanson is mayor pro tem of Davis; Jim Provenza represents District 4 on the Yolo County Board of Supervisors.*