

# Window opens for energy savings

By Renee Nadeau / Herald Helper: How to beat hard times | Sunday, August 16, 2009 | <http://www.bostonherald.com> | **Hard Times**

The federal tax credit on energy-efficient windows and doors has proven less hot than the Cash for Clunkers program, but the savings can help make replacing drafty windows and doors a boon.

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, signed into law in February, homeowners can receive a tax break of 30 percent of the product cost - up to \$1,500 - on eligible windows and doors. And doing so can help cut their heating bills by a third.

Jeff Fisher, owner of ProWindows in Waltham, said interest in the program is high but many people are keeping their purse strings tight when it comes to windows.

"It has stimulated it to keep business going, but not to create more demand," Fisher said.

Matt Samson, vice president of marketing at Waltham-based Harvey Building Products, hopes publicity will lead to growth.

"It certainly doesn't have 100 percent awareness, but it has grown considerably over the last couple of months," he said, adding that the program lacked the "urgency" and advertising blitz that accompanied Cash for Clunkers.

A professional can help homeowners learn what products qualify.

The return on replacement windows and doors is longer-term than other energy-efficiency projects, said Lisa Capone, spokeswoman for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

Fisher said he has heard from customers who see no difference in energy bills, while others claim up to a 40 percent drop.

"The windows alone don't do it," said Maureen O'Callaghan of Watertown, who had 22 energy-efficient windows installed in 2002. Though she is happy with her replacement windows and would recommend them, there are other factors too, she said.

O'Callaghan discovered after having her new windows installed that her home did not have enough insulation, which prevented the energy-efficient windows from having much effect on her gas-heating bill until more insulation was added. "Have things been held back in terms of cost? Yes, I think so," she said. "It's hard to say - had we not put in the windows - what would have happened."

Fisher said that while 2008 was a banner year, this year's sales have decreased 30 percent. But the tax credit has helped carry installers through the downturn.

"We've seen a lot more homeowners willing to kind of jump in and do it now," said Samson.

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