

Investing in our Neighbors Improving Lives Strengthening Communities

Autumn 2022

SENCA Weatherization Focuses on Energy Savings throughout SE Nebraska

SENCA hosted an Open House on Tuesday, November 8th at the Cass County SENCA Office in Plattsmouth. The event was held from 10:00 a.m. until noon and focused on Energy Savings. In addition to SENCA Weatherization staff, representatives from Black Hills Energy, Nebraska Public Power District and Omaha Public Power District were available to provide helpful information and answer questions.

Josh Nincehelser, SENCA's Quality Control Inspector and Radon Mitigation Specialist, led a demonstration of how an energy audit is conducted on the residence of a homeowner, or renter, who has applied for Weatherization assistance. Kyle Carnahan, SENCA Housing Inspector, assisted with the blower door demonstration, a process performed during a home energy audit to identify areas of air leakage in a home. An energy audit helps determine the appropriate weatherization and safety measures required to reduce energy costs and help improve the overall health and safety of the home. This can include insulation, caulking, light bulbs, smoke/carbon monoxide detectors and door replacement. Water heater and furnace checks are also performed during the audit.

Irene Ropp, a Plattsmouth resident, attended the Open House and shared how weatherization has helped improve her homes energy efficiency. "I am happy with the work that was completed and would definitely recommend the program to others," shared Irene. "I set my thermostat at 67 and the furnace runs less, before my home was weatherized it ran all the time." Irene stated that prior to SENCA weatherizing her home a few months ago her electric bills were more than \$400 every month.

After SENCA completed weatherization of Irene's home, her October electric bill was \$93, a considerable reduction in utility costs, and especially helpful for households living on limited or fixed incomes. According to Gin Christiansen, SENCA Weatherization Director, on average, most households who receive weatherization assistance will experience around an 18 to 19% reduction in utility costs. This is a significant savings for low-income households already struggling to meet their basic needs.

The energy saving measures made to Irene's home included: pipe, attic, sill and foundation insulation; installation of a new exterior door; sealing of all accessible ductwork; and furnace filter replacement. Irene also qualified to have her old refrigerator replaced with a new more energy efficient unit, thereby saving her the out-of-pocket expense of trying to stretch her budget to purchase one on her own.

Some of the preliminary qualifications for the SENCA Weatherization program include residents with household incomes at 200% or below of the Federal Poverty Guidelines who reside within the agency's seven county service area of Cass, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson and Sarpy. The program is available to qualifying renters as well as homeowners, including those who reside in mobile homes.

However, the best way to know if you, and your home, qualify for SENCA Weatherization is to contact SENCA at 402-862-2411 (1-888-313-5608) and speak with Gin Christiansen, extension #110. Applications can also be found on SENCA's user-friendly web site, www.senca.org.

For those who were unable to attend the event, Dan Swanson, News Director, News Channel Nebraska, was on site to cover the event. To read his article, that includes video interviews with SENCA staff and utility representatives, please visit:

<https://rivercountry.newschannelnebraska.com/story/47657370/senca-hosts-weatherization-open-house>.

SENCA's Energy Savings Open House



Eddie Clark, OPPD



Black Hills Energy Staff



**Irene Ropp, Cass County
Weatherization Client**



**Cory Fuehrer
NPPD**



**Lyn Belitz
Plattsmouth SCC**



SENCA's Weatherization Team
**Kyle Carnahan, Gin Christiansen
and Josh Nincehelser**

The Impact of SENCA Weatherization Assistance in 2022

During fiscal year 2021-2022, SENCA provided Weatherization services and energy conservation education to 45 adults in 20 households throughout Cass, Johnson, Nemaha, Otoe, Pawnee, Richardson, and Sarpy counties. Funding through this program has supported 3.8 full-time employment opportunities and generated construction related income of approximately \$216,846. The investment of funds into these 20 homes has the potential of creating long-term direct energy savings of about \$557,464 and approximately \$7,440 in annual reduction of utility costs. Another \$767,789 in non-energy related savings may also be realized over the long-term. This program has produced both long-term and one-time benefits resulting in a 5 to 1 return on investment.

