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CALENDAR

January is Radon Action Month. Pick up a free radon test kit to test your home for radon. Test kits are available at the Aspen Environmental Health and Sustainability Department located on second floor of City Hall.

Tue. Jan. 6, 8 - 11 am
Birding with ACES: January ACES Hallam Lake, Aspen
Join naturalist Rebecca Weiss on the first Tuesday of the month from October through April for Morning Birding at Hallam Lake. Please note times for each outing as they change with the seasons. Bring your binoculars or borrow a pair of ACES's, grab your guidebook, and dress warmly: coat, gloves, hat, and appropriate footwear especially when snow's on the ground. Members \$20, Non Members \$30.00. [Register here](#) or call 970.925.5756 for more



Heating

WHILE SAVING MONEY & ENERGY

'Tis the season to make resolutions for the year, and one of yours may be to save money. This month ZGreen talked to Marty Treadway, CORE's Energy Smart Program Manager, to better understand home heating systems and properly adjusting thermostats to stop wasting money and save energy.

ZGreen: What is the number one thing we can do with our heating systems to save money on our heating bills this winter?

Marty: This is not a simple question to answer. For many people, properly adjusting your thermostat to setback a few degrees when you are sleeping, or not at home will have the biggest impact. Some households may not even have a programmable thermostat that is working properly, so we would start there. Many older homes need proper air sealing which can be a big energy saver.

It's best to visit the home and perform our Energy Smart Home Energy Assessment (\$100 co-pay) to see what the biggest opportunities are for each individual. While we're there, we will install up to \$100 worth of free energy efficiency measures like programmable thermostats, LED light bulbs and more to get people started down the right track.

ZGreen: What is a typical heating issue you've seen in homes in

information.

Thu. Jan. 8, 7:30 pm
Aspen Historical Society's
Mad Hatter's Ball
Wheeler Opera House,
Aspen

Kick off the Winterskol weekend with Aspen History 101 and a Mad Hatter's Ball. The no-credit, fun college of the Rockies, also known as the Aspen State Teachers College, hosts a crash course in local lore, featuring actors, actresses, song, dance and even Klaus Obermeyer. All attendees to AH101 will receive a Student ID, good for a \$2 Aspen Brewing Co. beer at the Mad Hatter's Ball. Afterward, put on your craziest hat contraption for the Mad Hatter's Ball. Free admission. [Click here](#) or call 970.925.3721 for more information.

Sat. Jan. 10, 10 am - 2 pm
Winterskol's Fat Cycle
Challenge

Rio Grande Park, Aspen
Fat Bikes return to Winterskol! This is your chance to compete, cruise around our custom course, and check out the hottest fat bike trends. Rio Grande Park will host the Second Annual Fat Cycle Challenge with a race, demo village, beer garden and more! [Click here](#) or call 970.925.1940 for more information.

Wed. Jan. 28, 7 pm
Potbelly Perspectives:
Exploring Israel by Bicycle
ACES Hallam Lake, Aspen

Learn how two intrepid Aspen cyclists, Graeme Means and Paul Andersen, rode from near the Syrian border to the Red Sea touring the hills, valleys and deserts of a landscape where the ancient footsteps of man still mark the land. Tea, from Two Leaves and A Bud and Paradise Bakery cookies will be offered during lecture. Members Free and Non-Members \$5. [Click here](#) or call

the Valley?

Marty: In older homes, the heating system can get neglected over the years. We see everything from dirty air filters and plugged make up air vents to improper storage of items in mechanical rooms. I'd say the biggest thing is that most heating systems are working harder than they need to keep the house warm. When we visit a home, we test the heating system to see if it's performing properly, safely and efficiently, and recommend when it's necessary to bring in a qualified HVAC technician.

ZGreen: Are there some basics everyone should know about using thermostats?

Marty: First, everyone needs to have programmable thermostats. Otherwise, it's like having a car with the accelerator always on. People can save as much as 10 percent on heating bills just by making this simple upgrade. Each day most of us leave the house, and hopefully all of us go to sleep - these are times when heating systems can rest too. Even with radiant floor heat, homes can cool down a bit overnight - not as much as the 7-8 degrees F drop for traditional heating systems (like baseboards), but it can come down a few degrees. This keeps the equipment from firing once or twice during the night, leading to energy savings.

A lot is being talked about lately with learning thermostats like the Nest. We really like the concept of more intelligently controlled heating based on our habits. Using occupancy sensors, these thermostats know when people are home, learn schedules, and can help to achieve energy savings. These devices are great too, because they send a report each month to let people know how they are doing, and how much all of these devices are estimated to be saving the planet! Fun stuff.

ZGreen: We've heard that ceiling fans can be useful during the heating season. How does that work?

Marty: Using a ceiling fan in reverse during the winter will drive the warmer air that is trapped up at the ceiling down into the space where we actually live. This de-stratification effect is more dramatic in high ceiling spaces, but the idea is to help keep the temperature more consistent in those spaces. This means people can lower thermostats a degree or two and perceive the same level of comfort.

ZGreen: When thinking about replacing an old heating system, what are some things to take into consideration?

Marty: The biggest opportunity when replacing a heating system is upgrading to what is called a condensing boiler or furnace. Condensing systems actually recover heat lost during the combustion process to pre-heat the cold fluid coming back into the unit. Most of the boilers installed in our homes prior to 1980 had efficiency ratings of around 65 percent. Modern condensing boilers now reach upwards of 95 percent. That's a savings of up to 30 percent every time the boiler kicks on!

One thing to consider when looking at upgrading an old system is that these units utilize a sealed combustion chamber, which is great for health and safety reasons, but requires additional supply air directly from the outdoors. Some older flue pipes will not be large enough to handle the new supply and return vents. These are the kinds of things we look at when we perform our Home Energy Assessment.

970.925.5756 for more information.

**Sat. Jan. 31, 9 am - 1 pm
Free Residential Electronic
Recycling Event**

Rio Grande Park, Aspen
Free electronic drop off for Aspen residents. For more information, [click here](#) or call 970.429.1831.

**Through January
Holiday Light Recycling
drop-off**

Remove all the tinsel and ornaments from the light strand before going to the recycling center. Take the light strands to a collection site, Either Rio Grande Recycling Center in Aspen or Pitkin County Solid Waste Center(landfill). Place into the collection bins marked "Christmas Lights." For more information, please contact Liz O'Connell with the City of Aspen Environmental Health and Sustainability Department at 970.429.1831.

**Through mid-January
Christmas Tree Recycling**

Be sure to remove ALL items including lights, tinsel and ornaments from the tree before going to the recycling center. Take the empty tree to the Rio Grande Recycling Center in Aspen or Pitkin County Solid Waste Center (landfill) and place onto the collection site marked "Christmas Trees." For more information, please contact Liz O'Connell with the City of Aspen Environmental Health and Sustainability Department at 970.429.1831.

When you are ready to make upgrades, CORE has rebates available; typically 25 percent of your project cost up to \$500. [Visit online](#) or give us a call at 970.925.9775. We're here to help!

ZGreen: Thanks Marty!

CITY SPOTLIGHT:

Wheeler Opera House



This month ZGreen shines the spotlight on the most performance-focused, crowd-pleasing department of the City: the Wheeler Opera House. Since 1889, the Wheeler has been the number one place to go in Aspen for live music, shows, movies, presentations and performances, and this City department is also known for its commitment to the environment.

As a patron, you may have noticed the Wheeler no longer sells bottled water. Instead visitors can fill up at the Aspen Tap stations in the building using recyclable cups. The opera house staff is always looking for ways to reduce energy consumption and has made big changes in the last few years to reduce the Wheeler's energy footprint. Lighting in the theater is now high efficiency LED, all controlled by a state of the art system that optimizes energy use. The Wheeler heating, cooling and ventilation system is optimized to use outside air to heat and cool the building most effectively.

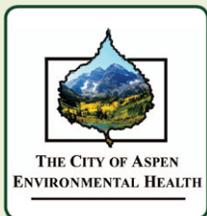
To see pictures of the historic Wheeler Opera House or learn about upcoming events, visit the [Wheeler's website](#) for more information.

ZGreen Programs
LINKS & INFO



WHAT'S IN A NAME:

Sustainability Dashboard



The City of Aspen's Sustainability Dashboard is a tool that was developed to define what the City means when it uses the term "environmental sustainability" and how the organization and community are doing in regards to being environmentally sustainable. The document was developed in response to a council request to define the term that is frequently used in discussions about projects, programs, city values, and budgets to name a few.

Without a clear definition it was challenging to put into context how well a particular program was actually performing or how the city was doing as an organization in protecting our environment for a sustainable future.

Enter the Environmental Sustainability Dashboard. The dashboard document was developed by City staff and a group of outside subject matter experts who developed a set of categories and specific measures within those categories that would define what success would look like for our community regarding environmental sustainability.

The dashboard measures five categories: Air Quality, Water, Energy, Waste, and Parks, Trails and Open Space. Within each of the five areas there are several specific measures with set targets to identify specifically what success looks like in relation to that measure. The document is meant to be a living document that can change over time as the City strives to a higher standard or as new measures prove to be important in achieving environmental sustainability.

The dashboard will be used in a number of ways by the City. At the staff level the document can be used in writing memos to council and explaining how a request for budget or program direction can move the needle on one or many of the dashboard measures. It can be used by departments to evaluate work planning ideas and setting priorities. Finally the document can be used by Council when evaluating annual top ten goals, assessing staff requests, and communicating with the public about the City's environmental focus.

To see the current dashboard with identified categories and specific measures, [click here](#).



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