

# Supporting Our Troops by Lowering Energy Costs in South Carolina

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On Memorial Day, we salute our servicemen and women for their heroic work to protect the values of this country that we all hold so dear. To return the favor, the [USGBC South Carolina Chapter](#) has teamed up with the South Carolina Department of Veterans Affairs to develop the Energy Efficient Homes for Heroes program.

Through past grant support from Wells Fargo and the [USGBC Chapters Impact Grant program](#), the Energy Efficient Homes for Heroes Program boosts energy efficiency, reduces operational costs and improves indoor air quality in veterans' homes. The program is committed to providing a lasting product that will garner lasting benefits for the resident.

On June 2, 2012, a group of volunteers from the Midlands Branch of the USGBC South Carolina Chapter devoted their Saturday afternoon to weatherizing the home of retired Sergeant First Class James White. Members of Efficiency First, LLC, a local home performance contractor, conducted a home energy audit and found several common household issues contributing to Mr. White's high energy costs and comfort issues. The auditors discovered faulty HVAC ductwork, substantial drafts in living areas known as "air leakage," and poor insulation in the home's crawlspaces and attic.

It was not glamorous work, but the chapter's dedicated volunteers spent their day repairing the ductwork and draft issues, and adding new sustainable insulation to the home. Matt Ryan, a building technician for Efficiency First, noted, "Mr. White had a classic case of issues we see in existing homes that have high utility bills and poor comfort...but we're talking about a group of volunteers that cut the leakage in the ductwork by 30%, reduced air leakage by 10%, added and replaced missing insulation, and draft-stopped the entire house in a day."

Mr. White's appreciation made the hard work worthwhile when the auditors were able to report an anticipated energy savings of up to \$200 per month.

Since that day, the chapter has weatherized an additional four veterans' homes, with average energy savings of 20%. In a country where the work of servicemen and woman impacts the daily lives of citizens, the chapter is fortunate to have the ability to support a program that allows us to give back to our veterans who gave so much to secure our freedom.

For more information about this program and how you can help, please email [execdir@usgbcsc.org](mailto:execdir@usgbcsc.org). And be sure to [watch USGBC's video](#) featuring several USGBC Chapter programs, including an interview with Mr. White.

*The USGBC South Carolina Chapter would also like to extend a special thank you to Habitat for Humanity, Home Depot, Sustainability Institute, Efficiency First, EarthFare and TRANE for their time and contributions to this project.*

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