

THE EFFICIENT HOME

My Zen Place

Finding your center is all about good energy inside you and your home.

Cool Gadgets Make Home More Enjoyable

Just how smart is your thermostat?



Does your HVAC work as hard as you?

Is your HVAC system just not performing at its best? Fear not. With the **HVAC Tune-up** from Delmarva Power, you can get your system back in shape—and maybe prevent a major breakdown in the process. As a Maryland customer, you can receive this service at **no additional cost**. So schedule your tune-up today and we'll have your system performing at its full potential.

Schedule your no-cost HVAC Tune-up today at delmarva.com/HVAC25.



Eligibility requirements apply. Visit delmarva.com/HVAC25 for more details. This program supports the EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act.

© Delmarva Power & Light Company, 2025



EmPOWER
MARYLAND

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



FINDING BETTER BALANCE

Practical steps to help you take greater control of your energy and your life.

I'm honored to be the editor of the first-ever edition of *The Efficient Home*. While knocking out our first feature article on finding a Zen place, I realized I needed to take my own advice. Truth be told, my home could have more balance. My life could have more balance—but I guess that's why we're all here.

We began creating the pages you are about to experience with one very pointed mindset: Let's get people from a good place to a better place. Eventually it evolved into the shorter, "Let's get people from good to better." It fit the mindset of Delmarva Power as a whole too. You don't have to be perfect. You can and should be grateful for where you are, and that thankful heart can be the launchpad for discovering new ways, both small and not-so-small, that get you the balance that always leads to better.

The road to a peaceful life is less expressway and more country road. And there is more than one way to get there. What works for me might not work for you. And that's OK.

Because, after all, balance is more journey than destination. It's a lifestyle, just like energy efficiency is a lifestyle. One that uses less energy, yes. But it's so much more than that, too. It saves you money doing everything you love at home. It makes rising costs

a bit more manageable. It provides much-needed relief to a warming planet. And it brings people together. (What else unites penny pinchers, technophiles, and tree huggers so harmoniously?)

Our goal is to give you a sly smile as you breeze through this little magazine. We want you to enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together. The writers, editors and designers wanted to put a little bit of better on every page. I think they've done a fantastic job, and I am thankful for all of their hard work.

I hope you'll find inspiration in these pages to seek out opportunities here and there in your own home to make the changes that make sense to you and how you live. And, I hope these changes get you closer to better in your life and bring you moments of peace in our wonderful, beautiful, continually changing world.

BRYAN CRAWFORD

**MANAGER
ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS
DELMARVA POWER**

CONTRIBUTORS



STACY C. JORDAN

**SENIOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY
PROGRAM MANAGER**

Stacy is a certified, licensed and insured chef and bartender. She loves to cook for friends and family—and this is before she goes to work for us. Her favorite energy efficiency tip? "Check your thermostat. That number on the dial can make a difference."



KAREN PARHAM

**SENIOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY
PROGRAM MANAGER**

Along with her official title, Karen is a certified BPI Building Analyst Professional. She relaxes her mind with puzzles, loves to read and relaxes her soul by getting out by the water. Her favorite energy efficiency tip? "Get a Quick Home Energy Check-up assessment—there's no additional cost to learn ways to save energy and money. Plus, you get energy-saving products that are installed, too."



Havre de Grace, Maryland

CONTENTS



6.
THAT TIME OF YEAR
DEEP CLEANING IS ALWAYS
IN SEASON



12.
THE TOY BOX
COOL GADGETS MAKE BEING
HOME MORE ENJOYABLE



18.
TREND WATCH
HOW SMART IS IT TO GET
A SMART THERMOSTAT?



24.
YOUR ENERGY. YOUR MONEY.
HIDDEN SAVINGS

WHO DID IT BEST? MIND ON HER MONEY	36.
YOU'VE GOT THIS LOWERING COSTS IS THE ULTIMATE CALM	40.



FEATURE
28. MY
ZEN PLACE



DEEP CLEANING

IS ALWAYS IN SEASON

**With a little planning,
you might actually enjoy
the new season.**

First off, let's be clear. There are levels of clean. There's just-getting-clutter-pickup clean. There's company-last-minute-just-throw-it-in-the-closet clean. Then there's the almost-reach-a-Zen-level-of-inner-peace clean.

**Deep cleaning is classic level three.
It's rarely a spur-of-the-moment event.
You plan. You buy supplies. You give up
sacred space on your calendar. Often,
family members are recruited—often
against their will.**

And this idea of an annual cleaning event isn't new. During the Persian Empire, the now century-old tradition of khaneh tekani, which literally translates to "shaking of the house," involved an annual cleaning that would make any compulsive tidier proud. Carpets, drapes and furniture were thoroughly cleaned and often a fresh coat of paint was involved. This was all done in preparation for Nowruz, or the Persian New Year, to entertain ancestors. So, apparently, doing this to impress your relatives isn't a new idea either—in-laws included.

The American tradition has its origins in the 19th century, in spring. But no matter the season or heritage, there's never a bad time to clean.



Cleaning Tips

TIP 1 Make a Plan

Write down what you are going to do, estimate the time it will take and give out assignments to the whole crew—yes, even if you’re the whole cast and crew. And if you get any static about all the attention to detail, give that naysayer a steely-eyed stare and say, “Hope is not a plan.” What does it mean exactly? Who knows. But it will confuse them enough to get back to work.

This was all done in preparation for Nowruz, or the Persian New Year, to entertain ancestors. So, apparently, doing this to impress your relatives isn’t a new idea either—in-laws included.

TIP 2 Gather Supplies

Deep cleaning is an event. And, unless you want to adjust your carefully planned schedule, having the right tools for every job will serve you well. In short, don’t put “wandering around a big-box retailer looking for the right cleaning caddy” on your schedule. Be prepared. An entire youth organization that has lasted for over a century uses it for their motto. You can, too.

HERE’S A QUICK LIST OF SUPPLIES:

- ▶ Cleaning Caddy
- ▶ Microfiber Cleaning Cloths
- ▶ Towels or Cotton Cleaning Cloths
- ▶ Wand Duster
- ▶ Vacuum Cleaner – with HEPA Filter
- ▶ Mop and Bucket
- ▶ Carpet Cleaner
- ▶ Blind Cleaner
- ▶ Scrub Brushes
- ▶ Window Squeegee
- ▶ Lint Roller
- ▶ Garbage Bags
- ▶ Dish Soap
- ▶ Hydrogen Peroxide
- ▶ All-Purpose Cleaning Spray
- ▶ Window/Glass Spray
- ▶ HVAC Filters

TIP 3 Declutter

Here’s a crazy thought: If you have less stuff, you have less stuff that needs to be cleaned. Yep. Very deep. But it’s valid, and there’s an entire movement called Swedish death cleaning. The idea is that if you declutter your world, your life (in this case, your cleaning) will run smoothly.

This is also the perfect time to rid yourself of that old, energy-guzzling fridge. You clean up your space all while decluttering your energy bill. Maryland residents can recycle that appliance and get a \$50 reward and free pickup, by visiting delmarva.com/Recycle25.

TIP 4 Give Mother Earth a Break

There are ways to clean up your home with a nod to the environment. When you declutter, recycle or donate your unwanted stuff. When you air out your home, open a window instead of buying chemical air fresheners. Clean with a little elbow grease instead of toxic chemicals. And when you replace a light bulb, replace it with an energy-efficient LED. We can help you out on this item with discounts on qualifying energy-efficient bulbs on our website; just visit delmarva.com/Lighting25.

TIP 5 Spiff Up Your Energy Use Behaviors

The final step in deep cleaning your home is to make sure you’re running it as efficiently as possible. With warmer temps, switch your ceiling fans to spin counterclockwise to create a cooling downdraft effect. You can do the opposite when the weather gets cold. And the easiest thing you can do to up your energy efficiency? As a Maryland customer, you can get a no-cost Quick Home Energy Check-up. Renter? Homeowner? It doesn’t matter. If you’re a customer, you don’t pay anything additionally. All the details are available at delmarva.com/QHEC25.



Oh Tidings of
Comfort and Clean

Let's be honest; no one will notice that your place is spic and span if they're huddled in the corner of a room with gloves and stocking caps on, shivering. Let's go from clean to comfortable in preparation for winter.

Air Sealing

Getting control of the air that leaks in and out of your home is a cost-effective way to cut heating and cooling costs. You'll also increase the comfort for you and your guests. **Caulking** and **weatherstripping** are two simple and effective practices that offer quick returns on investment. We're talking often one year or less, mostly because it's a very inexpensive approach, relatively speaking. This approach will also improve the durability of your HVAC system for both our relentlessly cruel summer temps as well as in the winter when after you shovel the driveway, you go shovel the driveway. Caulk is perfect for cracks around door and window frames. Weatherstripping, generally, is best for sealing components that move. Doors and windows are two great examples.



Insulation

It's your heat. Protect it. If you want to maintain a level of comfort, the heat lost from our winter temps must be replaced by your heating system. Properly insulating your home will decrease this heat flow by providing an effective resistance to the flow of heat. And yes, we are aware that we used the word "flow" a lot in that sentence, but that's what you really want.

To truly get control of the flow of your heat, your home should be properly insulated from roof to foundation. So let's start in the attic. If you have an unfinished attic, insulate between the floor joists. Next up? Move from your attic to adding insulation to your exterior walls. After that, move on to your ducts. You can then move on to insulating your floors above unfinished space like your garage. Lastly, you can properly insulate your basement, foundation and crawl spaces.

One or some of these insulating tactics can give you control of your temps. Wait, wait. More accurately, one or some of these insulating tactics can give you control of your flow. It's all about the flow.

Humidity Control

We're using "humidity" to avoid a word that, for so many, is the equivalent of fingernails on a chalkboard. It rhymes with hoist and begins with an "m," and it shall not be mentioned here. We will be using "humidity" moving forward as a public service. Controlling humidity can make your home more energy efficient, less costly to heat and cool, and more comfortable, and it can prevent mold growth. Managing your humidity will improve the effectiveness of your **air sealing** and **insulation** efforts. In turn, these efforts will help control dampness. Proper **ventilation** should also be part of your efforts to control humidity.

Lastly, are you looking for the easiest thing you can do to get your home ready for all of our crazy seasons? That's easy. As a Delmarva Power Maryland customer, you can uncover opportunities to reduce energy usage with a no-cost Quick Home Energy Check-up that includes no-cost and discounted products for your home.

All the details are available at delmarva.com/Assessment25. Following these tips could save you just enough to pay for next year's deep cleaning extravaganza. And maybe you can even splurge and upgrade your cleaning caddy. We know. Crazy, right?



Cool gadgets

MAKE
BEING HOME
MORE ENJOYABLE

What's better than a new gadget that makes your home life better? How about a new gadget that brings you a bit of comfort? Read on for five unexpectedly awesome gadgets that give you greater control of your domain, from how you kick back to how you tidy up.



If you use your
**voice-activated
assistant**
20 to 30 times a day.

If the phrase “Tech Head” has been used to describe you, these **smart, voice-activated lights** will warm up your home—emotionally speaking. A doorway to a world of ultimate lighting control, these gadgets transform your home into a sanctuary of light that will adjust to your every whim. And all you'll need is your voice to light the way.

SMART LIGHT BULB:
delmarva.com/Lightbulb25

If you enjoy a
**spontaneous
dance party.**

Are you an audiophile? A multitasker? A trivia hound? A smart speaker will be perfect, no matter your preferred title. This new generation of wireless models offers a long-lasting battery that sips energy, drastically reducing charging time. So you save energy while you work up a sweat rehearsing for your next viral dance video.



If you want to **reduce waste** one banana peel at a time.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency **reports** that food waste is the single largest contributor to everyday trash. Your family member with the green thumb reports that they need fertilizer for their plants. Fortunately, there's a solution for both—the home compost bin. Whether you go with a sleek countertop model for the kitchen or a 36-gallon behemoth in the backyard, the right compost bin will help you reduce waste while creating some nutrient-rich homemade fertilizer. That's a move that's good for your pocketbook and the planet.



If you have **tons of** **electronics** that spend most of their time in standby mode.

You have electronics. You have a lot of electronics. And like it or not, many of them are **energy vampires**. Now, imagine possessing the power to control all of these standby-energy-devouring devices via your smart hub. An advanced smart power strip gives you everything you need to slay these phantom power suckers, without having to emerge from the comfort of your blanket cocoon on the couch.

SMART POWER STRIP:
delmarva.com/Smartstrip25



If you see a
hot bath
as an inalienable right and
want to make the tub your
new home office.

You go through bath bombs like potato chips. You have considered installing a TV in the bathroom and think prune is the natural state for your fingertips. Consider a heat pump water heater as your perfect upgrade. It can help a typical family of four save up to **\$550 a year** in energy costs compared to your traditional water heater. Just don't try to write off the upgrade on your taxes as a "business expense." We checked. It doesn't work.

HEAT PUMP WATER HEATER:
delmarva.com/HeatPump25

We hope these suggestions add a dash more joy (and perhaps some savings) to your hang time at home. You can brag about your energy-saving prowess or keep it to yourself. Your secret's safe with us.



For discounts on more energy-saving gadgets, visit delmarva.com/Marketplace25 or **scan the QR code** to learn more.

 **delmarva**
power[®]
AN EXELON COMPANY



Surprisingly, this may not be your
household's biggest **energy waster**.

Your old refrigerator can be the top energy sponge in your home. And, unlike a family member, we can help you with this problem. We can recycle your old, working fridge or freezer and offer you **\$50** in return. Yep, you get rid of your biggest energy guzzler and get paid to do it. Any other home energy consumers will need to be dealt with on your own.



Schedule your pickup at
delmarva.com/Recycle25.

Offer valid for Delmarva Power residential customers in Maryland only. Requirements and limits apply. Visit delmarva.com/Recycle25 for the details. This program supports the EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act.
© Delmarva Power & Light Company, 2025

EmPOWER
MARYLAND

A smart thermostat
will pay for itself in as
little as two years.



TREND WATCH

HOW SMART IS IT TO GET A SMART THERMOSTAT?

Some devices are just game changers. The DVR, for example, changed the way we watch TV. Some may shudder at the thought, but there was a time when, if you missed a show, you missed it. This probably explains all the tense looks in many photos from the 1970s and 1980s. Bottom line: The DVR changed our everyday lives. And, since then, we've waited for an invention to top it.

Until now.

The right smart thermostat can be a game changer for many reasons. First and foremost, it will change your bank account for the better. Here are five ways you can take advantage of a smart thermostat and the awesomeness it provides.



A recent study from Nest revealed that most households with a smart thermostat save 10–12% on heating and around 15% on cooling.

01.
IT WILL PAY FOR ITSELF.

Recent studies have shown that adjusting your thermostat 7° to 10° from its standard settings while you're away for extended times can save you 10% annually on your heating and cooling costs. Great news if you want to constantly tweak your thermostat based on your coming and going to save every kilowatt. Yeah, we don't want to do that either—but smart thermostats do. And that's where you get your savings.

02.
YOU WON'T LIFT A FINGER.

That's not exactly true. You will need to lift a finger, on your smartphone. With a swipe or two, you can adjust your thermostat from anywhere. And yes, anywhere includes your couch. Some thermostats even have sensors that detect movement and adjust the temperature when your home is empty.

03.
YOU CAN TRACK YOUR SPENDING.

Most smart thermostats allow you to track the amount you spend on energy. This can help you see how much you're saving and even help you create a more efficient energy usage plan. This sort of knowledge is vital when planning an annual budget or preparing for high-usage months. You can also use the data to justify a vacation. Look how much money you saved from your reduced energy costs the week you were away.

04.
YOU WON'T NEED TO DO ANY SCHEDULING.

Most learning thermostats do just that—track your patterns, learn your preferences and predict when you're home and when you're not. They can even monitor the weather to heat your home more when a cold snap is coming or cool it more when a heatwave is setting in.

Now, you might say, "That seems excessive. I can program a thermostat on my own, thank you very much." This may be true, but you'd be the exception. A **recent study** revealed that only 42% of the respondents had a programmable thermostat, and of those, a whopping 67% said they didn't know how to program their device. So, why not lean on technology and let it take one thing off your plate?

Source: www.washingtonpost.com



05.
YOU CAN PROBABLY INSTALL IT YOURSELF.

Sure, there are professionals who can install more complicated smart thermostats for more complicated HVAC systems, but chances are your needs can be met by a simple install. Finding out is pretty easy. By popping off your current thermostat cover, you can find the marked wires required to connect your new thermostat. Just make sure the device you are buying is compatible with your specific HVAC system. This is a booming industry that started with a few niche companies, but the larger manufacturers you're sure to recognize have jumped into the game, so you should be able to find the right match.

That being said, if you immediately got uncomfortable when you read the phrase, "popping off your current thermostat cover," get a pro involved. They have reasonable prices, and you'll quickly get to recouping your investment without the headache.

So, there you have it. It's not everything you need to know to get this money-saving device, but it's enough for you to get started. So, do just that. Get started and get saving.

Need one?

Save up to \$100 on a smart thermostat instantly when you visit delmarva.com/Therm25.

Master the art of **doing nothing** at all.

Imagine saving while someone else does all the work. That's our **Energy Wise Rewards™** program. When you enroll, you can have your thermostat automatically adjusted during peak demand to help ease the burden on our grid, save energy and **earn bill credits**—and you don't even need to leave the couch.

To start earning your rewards, visit
delmarva.com/EWR25.



Terms and conditions apply. Visit delmarva.com/EWR25 to learn more.
This program supports the EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act.



**MONEY-
SAVING TIP**

Burying a sandwich bag stuffed with cash in the backyard is not a recommended technique.

YOUR ENERGY. YOUR MONEY.

HIDDEN SAVINGS

**THERE'S MONEY IN YOUR HOME.
LET'S GO FIND IT.**

Shhhh.

Don't look now, but there's hidden money in your home. It's undercover, living its best life without any regard for you, or your need to leverage its power. The good news? It's closing time for your concealed cash. There are no free rides here. So let's do a little digging, find the loot and put it to work.



Get rewarded.

Maybe it's been on your list. Maybe others have sat silently, hoping you'd work this out on your own. But it's time. We're talking about that old refrigerator in the basement. You've gotta let this one go.

Sure, you've built a relationship with that fridge. When you had to binge-watch a certain medieval fantasy series that disappointed the whole world at the end, who was there for you? Your fridge.

When you had to host a colossal watch party during the big playoff run, who was there for you? Your fridge. And when your team had lost, and it was time to eat your feelings, who was there for you? Well, you know the answer.

Unfortunately, your fridge is worn out like a linebacker trying to stop the run in overtime. The humming, the rattling—those aren't symptoms of a fridge past its years. They're weary cries for help.

It doesn't matter how you rationalize issuing a "do not resuscitate" order for your trusty friend. Maybe you tell yourself it's going to a better place, like a fridge farm where it can run and play. Maybe you can envision a Viking funeral where you load that poor beast up in a boat and shoot one flaming arrow into the vessel as the sun—symbolically—sets. Or maybe you get a killer reward by recycling your fridge

and heal your pain by using the cash to order some takeout. Is that cruel? Yes. But the real cruelty would be to let that kitchen cohort go on chugging away, guzzling as much as \$100 a year in energy. And did we mention the reward? Fifty bucks, and as a Maryland customer, they'll even haul your old fridge away for you **at no-cost**.* Crazy, right?



Schedule a pickup at
delmarva.com/Recycle25.

*Offer valid for Delmarva Power residential customers in Maryland only. Requirements and limits apply. Visit <https://homeenergysavings.delmarva.com/md/residential/appliance-recycling-program/how-to-participate> for the details.



Bring in the savings pros.

We call it a Quick Home Energy Check-up (QHEC). You'll call it professional help without the professional price tag. That's right, as a Delmarva Power Maryland customer, all of this additional help comes without any cost. You just invest about an hour for the visit. And trust us, there's a big return on that investment.

A QHEC goes like this.

STEP 1
The Walk-Through

A certified Energy Analyst will conduct a walk-through of your home. They'll carefully inspect your:

- Insulation levels
- Air leakage
- Heating and cooling systems
- Windows and doors
- Lighting and appliances
- Water-heating equipment

STEP 2
The Upgrades

The certified Energy Analyst will install upgrades to many features of your home, with your permission, at no additional cost.* This hardware includes:

- LED light bulbs
- Faucet aerators
- Efficient-flow showerheads
- Water heater pipe insulation
- Smart power strips
- ShowerStart® showerhead adapter
- Smart thermostat
- Door sweeps
- Weatherstripping

STEP 3
The Report

The inspection and the energy-saving products might not be enough for most. In this case, they go one step further, with a full report on money-saving recommendations and details on what was installed during the inspection.

You can request an appointment at delmarva.com/QHEC25.

The QHEC Program customizes energy efficiency recommendations and measures to each individual's home. The energy-saving products offered apply to the specific needs of each house, and as a result, not every customer will receive every product. Visit delmarva.com/QHEC25 for the details.



Find help with
your **energy bill today.**

When it comes to your energy bill, Delmarva Power can help. From budget billing to payment plans, projected monthly bills to energy efficiency tips, we can help prevent surprises on your bill and create a plan that works for your budget.

Find the help you need at delmarva.com/BillSupport.



FINDING YOUR CENTER IS ALL ABOUT GOOD ENERGY—INSIDE YOU AND YOUR HOME

We all, on occasion, seek a state of Zen—a calmness where you are centered, at peace and free from distractions. And the ways to reach a state of Zen are as diverse as the people who want to be there. You can meditate. You can pray. You can do goat yoga. You do you as you reach your state of Zen.

IT’S REALLY NOT ABOUT HOW YOU GET THERE. VERY OFTEN, SIMPLY COMMITTING TO THE JOURNEY IS ALL IT TAKES TO SET YOU ON THE PATH TO REACHING YOUR STATE OF ZEN.

And if there was ever a time to take a break, it’s now. A **recent survey** reveals that more than half of Americans report they are addicted to their cell phones. The same survey found that we check our phones 144 times a day. Our screen time has increased by 30% in the past year. And we have gone on average from 2 hours and 54 minutes of screen time a day to 4 hours and 25 minutes. When we’re spending more time interacting with a screen than with the world around us, we’re due for a change.

OUR ATTENTION SPANS ARE NOT
IN A VERY ZEN-LIKE STATE

According to Gloria Mark, a professor of informatics at the University of California, Irvine, we're losing our ability to focus. In her book **"Attention Span: A Groundbreaking Way to Restore Balance, Happiness and Productivity,"** Mark says, "In 2004, we measured the average attention on a screen to be 2.5 minutes. Some years later, we found attention spans to be about 75 seconds. Now we find people can only pay attention to one screen for an average of 47 seconds." This only underscores the need for a vacation from our technology.

THROUGH MEDITATION,
ZEN GOES MAINSTREAM

One of the most popular paths to a state of Zen is meditation. **Over 40% of the U.S. population** meditates at least once a week—impressive for a Western country that relies mostly on Western approaches to health. Other research shows that the practice of meditation has **tripled since 2012**. The only other complementary health approach that is more popular is yoga, another path to reaching a state of Zen. As a culture, we have widely accepted the mind-body connection on our way to better health.

Now that you have a concept of Zen and the benefits of Zen, you just need a place. Begin with a place you can dedicate to finding some inner peace. It's a place where you can relax, de-stress and begin on a path to rejuvenation. It could be a room, a nook or even a central space you can temporarily marshal to serve your Zen-seeking purpose.



PUMP IRON ON YOUR ROAD TO ZEN

Regular physical activity can **prevent depression, reduce stress and lower blood pressure**. Now, working out often involves a lot of technology. Not here. You want your space to be quiet enough for you to hear your own breath and nothing else. You have many options for decking out your workout space as long as it's an unplugged workout. Think of a pull-up bar and some kettlebells. Just remember, the best workout is one that you enjoy and can do consistently.

It turns out there's a real connection between the environment you work out in and the quality of your workout. Yes, the right temperature, ventilation, carbon dioxide and oxygen levels can increase your workout performance. Enter an HVAC tune-up. It's the best way to ensure your home's heating and cooling equipment is doing its best to help you do your best. And, because it's available at no additional cost through Delmarva Power, it's easy to feel better about your health and the health of your HVAC system.

MEDITATING YOUR WAY TO ZEN

Consistent, focused meditation can help you manage stress, reduce negative emotions, increase your creativity and improve your sleep quality. Just remember that shouting "inner peace" is probably not the best way to achieve said peace.

When designing your meditation space, focus on natural light to increase serenity and openness. Incorporate natural elements like wood and stone to develop a oneness with nature. Lastly, create a central focal point with a small table, painting or mirror to help you stay present. This focal point can settle a listless, wandering mind.

And your air should be a vital aspect in creating the perfect mindfulness environment. Meditation is built on your breath, so air quality is key. Anything from cleaning products to candles to simply cooking can diminish the quality of the air you breathe.

SCORE A DISCOUNT ON
YOUR AIR PURIFIER ON US.

An air purifier can filter out odors, dust and other airborne distractions to create a more meditative environment. Choose a qualifying energy-saving model and get it at a great instant discount at **delmarva.com/Purifier25**.

CRAFTING YOUR WAY TO ZEN

Crafting can improve your **mood, improve your self-confidence, improve your mental agility and decrease stress**. What type of craft? Well, that's the good news. It doesn't matter. Choose something you enjoy, and you'll reap the benefits. Just keep the crafting in the craft space. You can't just call your dirty car "distressed" now that you make crafts. That being said, you can allow your crafting sanctuary to be a little cluttered. This isn't about cleanliness. It's about expressing yourself, so anything outside of a full craft apocalypse should be considered part of the process.

Your craft space can be basic or next-level. If you want to keep it simple, just pick up a secondhand table that will welcome spilled paint, glue and, yes, glitter if need be. Grab a couple stackable bins to store your supplies conveniently under your table, and you're done.



READING YOUR WAY TO ZEN

Reading regularly can lead to **decreased depression, increased empathy and improved cognitive ability**. And having your own library is a 100% foolproof way to rediscover your love of books. They're portable, entertaining and never ever need batteries. Just know that reading books that eventually become movies will ruin those movies for the rest of your life. Yes, we know that character's hair should be brown,

but standing up and screaming that in a crowded theater isn't going to change anything.

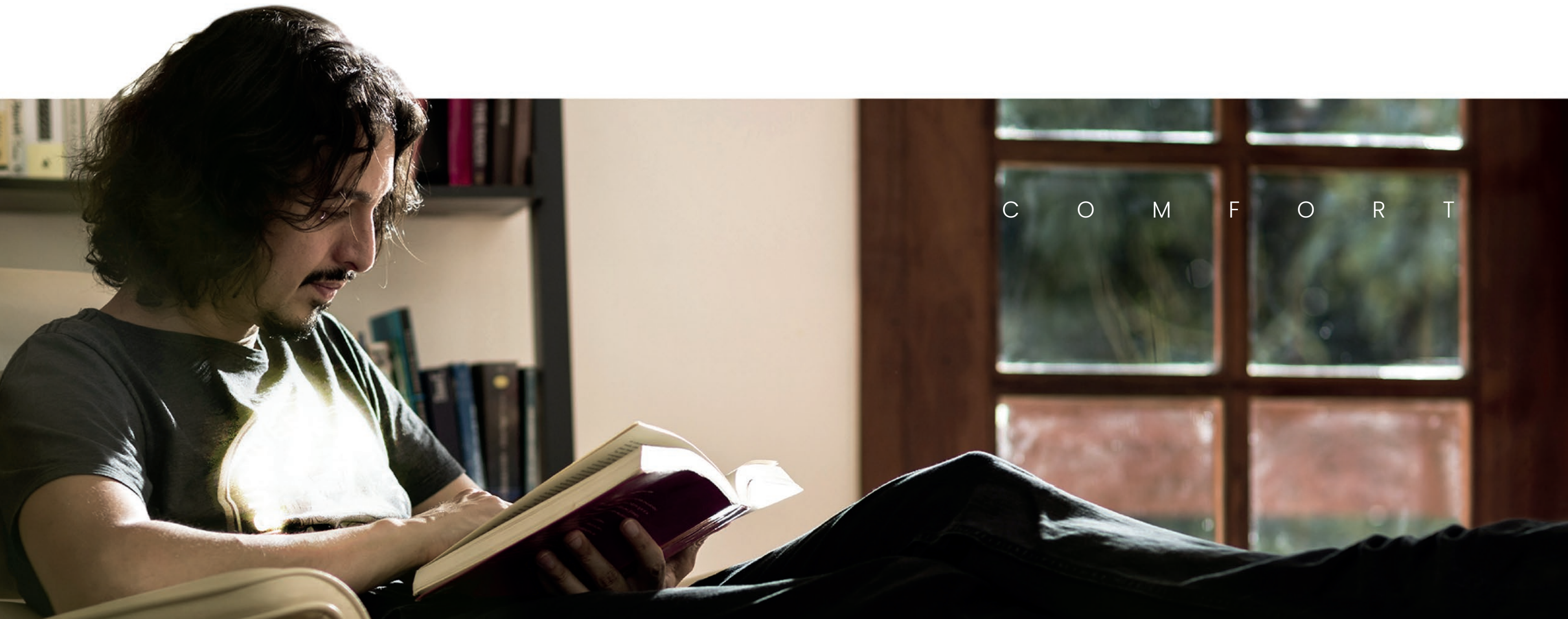
Make the most of your space with bookshelves that are floor-to-ceiling. If you have the room, a rolling library ladder is a feature that is not only practical but also impressive and fun. A comfortable reading chair should be the focal point of your space. And since good, functional lighting is key to any reading marathon, outfitting your Zen reading nook with LED bulbs will save both your eyes and your energy budget. You can even step up your

reading game by choosing the LED bulbs that are most conducive to reading. Look for bluer white light (yes, that sounds like a contradiction, but that's the term). Bulbs that are 5,000K to 6,500K are best for your eyes as you enjoy a good book.

Finally, add accessories to your library shelves, like houseplants, vases and other decorative pieces. This mixed approach to filling your shelves will allow your library to evolve with time as you add more titles to your collection. And don't forget to participate in those free libraries popping up

in front yards and public spaces. Most have the "Take a penny. Leave a penny." approach to book exchanges—allowing you to keep your reading shelf fresh and to donate titles you've read to the greater good.

No matter how you choose to transform your Zen space, one thing should be consistent when it comes to the result. It should be a welcoming escape—a place to shut out the world and focus on yourself. When you use your new destination that way, it will become more than a guest/workout/craft/storage/meditation space. It will be the most cherished place in your home.



C O M F O R T

WHO DID IT BEST?

Mind on Her Money

Sandra Sheahen has a story to tell and numbers to crunch.



Warm and welcoming, Sandra Sheahen **knows** a thing or two about restoring older homes. She and her husband Ed recently purchased their home in Chestertown and **learned** a thing or two about energy efficiency. We sat down with her to chat about old homes, relatives and home energy assessments.



You bought an older home. When you moved in, you wanted to take control of your energy. Sounds like you were incredibly proactive with that.

Yes. Well, I had a lot of help. I really did. And I had some limited knowledge of what it was going to take, you know, for an older home. Because when we did our Victorian house, Ed and I were much younger. We did everything ourselves. We painted, we wallpapered.

We took walls down. We rebuilt. We put sheetrock—all that we did ourselves. We knew we weren't going to be able to do that this time.

The Sheahens recently renovated their home, with the help of family and Home Performance participating contractor Energy Wise.

(Left) Sandra Sheahen's brother-in-law and nephew work on renovations.

Well, that's a young person's job, right?

That's right. But this time we knew we could not do that. We just were not going to be physically able. And we discussed [that] numerous times. It's like, "Oh my gosh, what if somebody had bought this house and just moved in and not done any exploring?"

Right. You maintain your car. You get oil changes for your car. You do tune-ups for your car.

You realize that your car is something that you can't just buy and use. And you had that same approach with your house.

You're right. Yeah, and not everybody can do that. Not everybody is financially able to do that. You might have to do you know, certain things like save the bathroom floor because of a leak. You've got to do that.

You kind of saw it as a "pay now or pay later" mentality. Was that kind of how you approach it?

Oh, yeah. Everything was going to be done before we ever moved in.

I was like, we're gonna find the trouble spots now. We're not going to move in and then go, "Oh my gosh, the floor is not right now." We wanted to make sure everything was done before we ever set foot in it.

This is a fantastic story. What advice would you give to a person considering this home energy assessment?

Oh, I have been promoting this big time. I have a nephew who actually bought my mom's house. He was over here yesterday, and we were talking and I gave him the information for Energy Wise. I said, "You need to do this. You need to get this house done," because we knew the insulation was bad.

Of course, we're like, "Oh, my gosh, this attic. This insulation is just no good," and I said, "You need to get this company in, I'm telling you."

You're a bit of a number cruncher. That's awesome.

Yeah. I'm a bookkeeper.



Before and after images of the Sheahen's living room. The room was previously wood paneled. The Sheahens completely renovated the space, ensuring it was energy efficient.



WHO DID IT BEST?

You did all the number crunching and you saw the value of the home energy assessment, so you went forward with it because the numbers made sense to you.

Yes. And our mechanic was our HVAC person. And he recommended Energy Wise as well. He said, “You really need to get them in here.” And I was like, “OK. Give me the number.” He had it right in his phone, so I think he must recommend them as well.

If you had a chance to do it all over again, would you definitely do this? I mean, if you’re recommending this to relatives...

Oh yeah. I’m gonna make use of every rebate I can. The money we spent on this house really added up. And so yeah, that was a big plus—having a program.

As long as we have programs out there, I think everybody should make use of them.

Is there anything that we missed?
No, I think I’ve probably praised them as much as I can. The people were lovely to work with, which is always a good thing. Somebody who’s personable, who comes in and explains things. You know, he had his

iPad. He could show me things that were happening while he was doing testing.

It was all fascinating. And I was like, “Wow, that’s where we’re losing a lot of energy.” The fans, the existing fans in the bathroom and the range were all going in the attic. They weren’t going outside the house. So that was a huge thing.

We really appreciate your story and love that you had such a great experience with this that you’ve become some sort of energy assessment Pied Piper.

Yeah, I’m an advocate for sure.

What sort of advice would you give to a person who’s looking at an older home?

I don’t think that the purchase price is what you’re going to be spending. I mean, if you’re thinking about getting a kitchen remodel? You certainly need to talk to somebody before you purchase the house, and we were lucky enough to have that ability.

So you know that you’ve got to get that into your budget. And I think that is one of the things that most people don’t consider. Even if you do it yourself, paint’s not cheap anymore. In fact, I was shocked.



The Sheahens completely renovated their home’s kitchen and bathrooms, making use of a home energy assessment to get rebates.



When the cost for the gallon of paint came in at \$60, I was like, “Holy cow.” So, I think that’s the biggest thing for someone coming into a home that they want to make some changes. They need to be really, really educated about what things cost.

Was the energy assessment your first step in finding out what things were actually gonna cost?

Did you go with every recommendation that they threw out, or did you kind of choose a couple?

Yes, we went with everything. Another contractor did the encapsulation and when the HVAC people came to put in the new ductwork they pointed out that the crawl space could use some foam spray. So they came in and made it right. So the crawl space needed to be done correctly—so [our contractor, Energy Wise] used foam spray. The plumbing and HVAC ductwork, wasn’t foamed around. So they addressed that. We, of course, got a new HVAC. So they were happy with that. And then when they went in the attic, of course they found that the insulation was, you

know, no longer doing its job. So they were pulling everything out. And then did the blown-in insulation up there. They fixed around the chimney.

We have a wood fireplace and that needed to be addressed. A dam built around it. They built a dam around the attic. In the garage, they built a dam around that to keep the installation from coming down every time you open the door.

They did ventilation from the soffit. We had new exhaust fans put in the bathroom and the range hood and so we have a whole-house ventilation system now up there, which works automatically to keep the attic space at a certain temperature.

So those were the things recommended. Those were the things that we went with.

You kind of wanted to future-proof your own home. And future-proof your billing and your fixed income.

Yes and yes. You know, making sure the house was buttoned up is what my feeling was. I wanted it to be as energy efficient as possible.

And what were the results? When you got that first energy bill, was it a bill that you were more comfortable with or understood a little bit better because of the process that you went through?

Oh sure, well, we did. So we did see a little drop in our bill after the installation was done, from the month before to the current month, we’ve seen a little drop there and it’s been cold.

Right. So, you saw a return on investment, but you also saw that?

Yes.

And how’d that feel?
Wow, we’re in our 70s. So, we’re thinking if we want to be here in our old age, we need to know what our budget is and what we’re going to be spending. That was our main goal.

Sandra Sheahen was able to save on her renovations and energy use by scheduling a home energy assessment, you can too. Learn more at delmarva.com/Performance25.

YOU'VE GOT THIS

LOWERING COSTS IS THE ULTIMATE

CALM

Let's lower our blood pressure while lowering that bill

Sure you could sign up for a barre class, take up knitting or meditate to find your calm place, but you can't meditate away a high bill. So instead, let's keep the peace of mind that comes with taking control.

And even if you want to exercise to find your sense of calm, we wouldn't recommend a barre class. It's really shared agony disguised as physical activity.

For example, let's look at something as simple as a push up. With normal, human exercise, you drop to the floor and knock one out. At a barre class, you're asked to begin a push up, but they stop you at your half push up mark and just have you sit there, muscles trembling, as they play a five-minute-long, new-age, sitar-laden song out of a boombox.

So yeah, finding ways around the house to save money is probably your better option. Let's get started with tips that cover multiple seasons.

Cover your ... self

Did you ever use a magnifying glass to burn a piece of paper? Well, imagine your window is the magnifying glass and the paper is your home. A recent **study** found that 75% of window coverings remain in the same position daily. Don't let this happen to you, be the other 25%. That direct sunlight magnified through glass can really heat up a home. Keeping any window covering closed during the summer is a great opportunity to save with things you already have in your home.

Better yet, instead of blocking the sun, you could harness its power through solar panels—an effective way to generate electricity during the sunny summer months and year-round, too. Also, you can score up to a 30% tax credit for installing qualifying solar panels.*

irs.gov/credits-deductions/residential-clean-energy-credit



Thermostat? Or energy efficiency secret weapon?

When the leaves turn and the air gets crisp, you can embrace tactics to reduce your energy usage and increase your energy resilience. Managing your thermostat is a simple way to gain an advantage. During the day, set the thermostat as low as your personal comfort will allow—don't be a hero on this one. Dropping just a few degrees can make a difference so no one needs to be walking around in parkas or anything.

Another timely trick is sealing air leaks in your home. Gaps in your windows, chimney and recessed lights can be your three main culprits. One simple trick is to use a very high-tech leak detection device—tissue paper. Simply hold the tissue paper near potential air leaks. If the tissue moves or flaps, you've got a gap to be filled. Once you find one, seal that sneaky airflow with caulk and weatherstripping.

If you want to step up your air loss detection game, you can schedule a Quick Home Energy Check-up. A pro will walk through your home to check for air leaks and much more.

Don't look now, but your home is leaking

Our friends at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimate that 15% of your heating costs are lost to improper air sealing and insulation. The truth is, if you add up all the leaks in the average home, it would be equal to having a window of your home open every day of the year. Morning, noon and night—spring, summer, winter and fall—you are losing money.

So, when the temps begin to climb, it's the perfect time to step up your calm-inducing energy-saving game. Let's start with insulation. Adding insulation will do more than cool your

15% of heating costs are lost to improper air sealing and insulation.

home. It'll warm your heart. You'd think it was the love of family and friends, but you'd be sadly mistaken. It's insulation. It's always insulation.

We can also talk about strategically planting deciduous trees on the south-facing side of your home. A quick trick to determine which side of your home is facing south is to use the map application on your smartphone. Planting trees on that side can provide shade in the summer and let the sun better heat your home in winter. But again, you have an entire (figurative) open window right now. Go fix that first.

It's your air. Control it.

Spring is nature's season of rebirth. Green shoots of what will soon be grass begin to pop out of the ground, and we get the return of pollen season.

Spring is the perfect time to manage the air, and more specifically, the airflow in your home. You can turn off ceiling fans when you leave the room—they are there to cool you, not the room.

So, if you're not in the room, there's no need for the ceiling fan to be on. Use the bathroom fan when showering or taking a bath to remove excess heat and humidity from your home.

The biggest difference you can make when better managing your air during these months is with your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (or HVAC) system. When it's working at its best, you can save energy and money. Generally speaking, about 43% of your bill goes to heating and cooling.

One great way to manage this factor of your energy resilience is to schedule an HVAC Tune-up. The Tune-up can not only make your home more energy efficient, but your air quality can also improve—see pollen season to the left—and your overall comfort can increase. And, if you were digging the idea of getting your hands on a smart thermostat, booking an HVAC Tune-up through Delmarva Power is another great way to do just that. Oh, and as a Delmarva Power customer, your Tune-up and the smart thermostat are available at no additional cost.

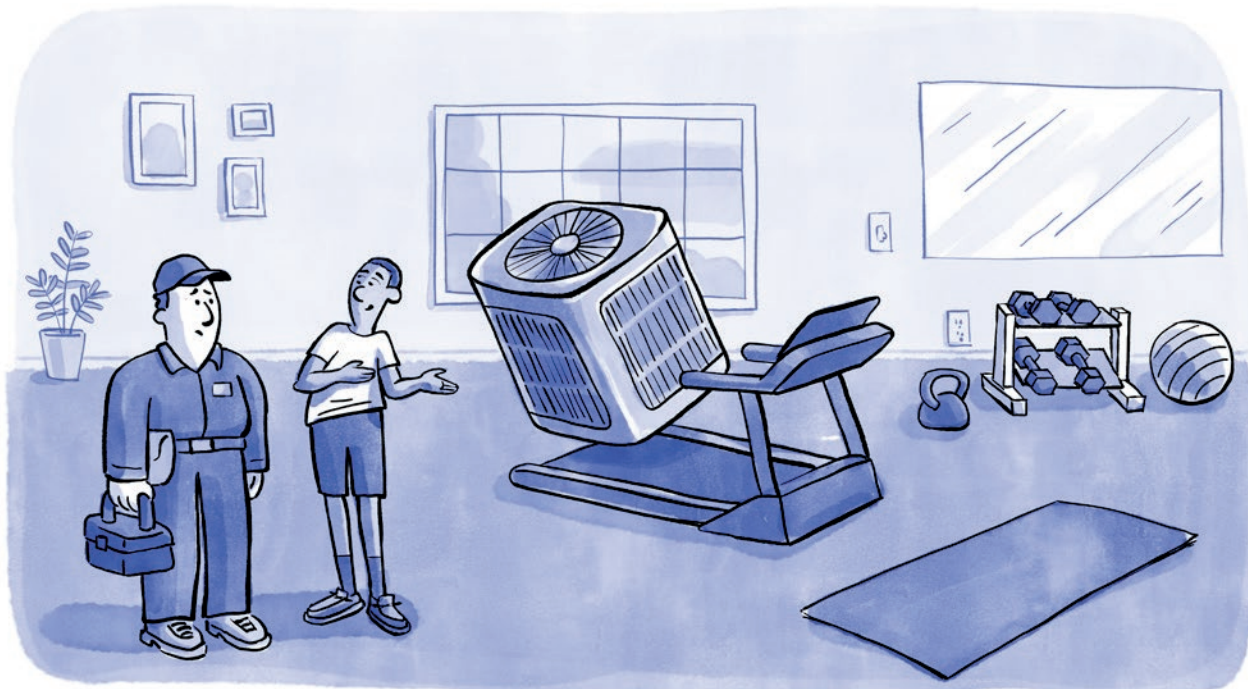
In fact, an HVAC Tune-up can help you identify up to 95% of costly breakdowns before they happen. Talk about improving resiliency. So, you're catching 95% of potential issues while saving 100% of the cost of finding 95% of those issues.

So to sum it all up, give these and other tips a try. You will be saving energy—and breathing easier—in no time.



COMIC CONVERSATION

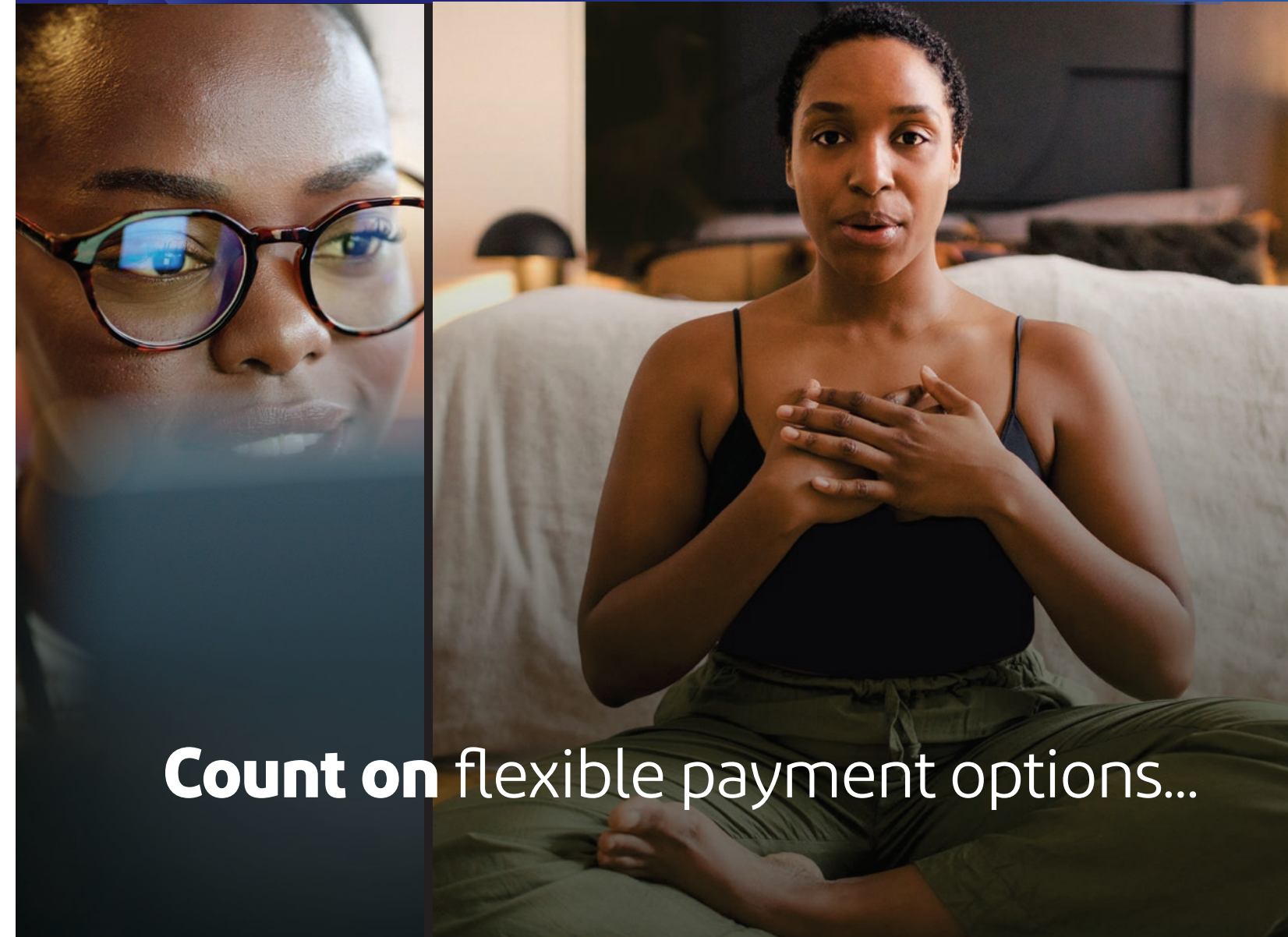
CAPTION THIS!



Please use the provided QR code or email **DPLEfficientHome@icf.com** to submit your caption for the cartoon above. The best one will appear in our next edition.

By submitting a caption, you give permission to Delmarva Power, at its option, to publish or otherwise use your name and your submitted caption, without compensation.

Delmarva Power assumes no liability for the use of the information contained in this document. This document does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation. Delmarva Power does not endorse products or manufacturers. Trademarks or manufacturers' names appear in this document only because they are considered essential to the objective of the document; they are included for informational purposes only and are not intended to reflect a preference, approval or endorsement of any one product or entity. Product and service offerings, as well as rebate and discount amounts, are accurate as of the date of publication and are subject to change or cancellation. Please visit our website, **delmarva.com**, for the most up-to-date information.



Count on flexible payment options...

...and breathing a little easier. We offer a variety of tools and programs to help you manage your energy bill and find financial assistance. In 2024, Delmarva Power helped more than 23,000 customers secure nearly \$23 million in energy assistance.

See all the ways you can count on us at delmarva.com/CountOnUs.

Helping you save **before you save.**

At the Marketplace, you can enjoy
instant discounts on items that will
save you energy and money.



SMART
THERMOSTAT

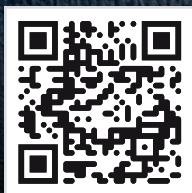
\$1*

A19 LED
LIGHT BULB

\$4*



For more bargains visit
delmarva.com/Marketplace25.



*Limited time, promotional pricing

Discounts and rebates are available while supplies last. Offer valid for Delmarva Power residential customers only. Please log in to your My Account to see the discounts and rebates available to you.

This program supports the EmPOWER Maryland Energy Efficiency Act.

© Delmarva Power & Light Company, 2025

EmPOWER
MARYLAND