ISSUE ONE

2026

THE EFFICIENT HOME



Start Small. Win Big.

Tons of easy wins to make productivity a habit.

Pro Secrets Revealed

Learn how to save at home.

SMART LIFESTYLE, CURATED FOR YOU BY PEPCO AND EMPOWER MARYLAND

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



HOW I GOT IN THE HABIT OF BETTER HABITS

It started with one little change.

I'm honored to be the first-ever editor of the first-ever edition of *The Efficient Home* magazine from Pepco. We're happy to have you here. Inside these pages you'll find new ways of making your home more comfortable by staying on top of monthly expenses and making things a little better every day.

I'm in the DMV too. And I've felt the burden of rising costs and hectic days. Fortunately, I've learned that change for the better doesn't have to come with a hefty price tag. Instead, it can start small by replacing your HVAC filter or using a smart thermostat, or even just using an advanced power strip.

That's what this issue is all about. From the Beltway to our backyards, people are finding practical ways to lower energy use, reduce bills and take some pressure off the day-to-day. Let's get customers from a good place to a better place.

Energy efficiency and affordability aren't just buzzwords anymore—they're essential. From the steps I've taken in my own home, I've learned that getting prepared doesn't mean you have to do everything at once; it just means starting somewhere and knowing you aren't in it alone.

Since this is our first issue, we wanted these pages to do more than just give you facts. We want to show you that there's practical help available right now—help designed for real homes, real budgets and real lives. Even small tweaks can lead to real comfort and relief over time.

I hope this magazine leaves you feeling supported and ready to take that first step toward meaningful savings.

JULIANNY TATE

MANAGER
ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS
PEPCO

CONTENTS



FEATURE

2. START SMALL. WIN BIG.
TONS OF EASY WINS TO MAKE PRODUCTIVITY A HABIT



6.
THAT TIME OF YEAR
TIME, ENERGY (AND SANITY) SAVING RECIPES



9.
WHO DID IT BEST?
PRO SECRETS REVEALED



12.
THE TOY BOX
GO ELECTRIC

Start Small. Win big.

From the self-stirring mug to mop slippers to the pillow tie, we see proof all around us that "easy" wins. We've gone collectively from "No pain, no gain" to just "No pain. I will now clap twice to turn out the lights." And frankly, we're here for all of it. Here's why.

Easy builds on itself. Do one thing quickly, and you get a quick dopamine reward for accomplishing something. That little thing leads to another and another. Before you know it, savings becomes a habit. Some believe this starts with making your bed each morning. Emotionally? We totally get it. It builds momentum. Practically? We wouldn't recommend it. Basically, for the same reason some don't retie their shoes after taking them off. With that in mind, let's take a look at some practical, tactical, easy wins for your home and your life.



Create a cleaning schedule.

To keep cleaning from feeling overwhelming, take it one task at a time. A cleaning calendar prevents chores from building up by assigning specific jobs to specific days. This steady approach eliminates that Saturday morning dread of realizing your entire home is a wreck, allowing you to stay on schedule without losing your whole weekend.



Automate household tasks.

Consider using automated devices like a smart doorbell, robotic vacuums and a smart thermostat to lighten your load. That's what technology should do: Improve your life. And, like the invention of the remote control, increase the time you can spend on the couch.



Batch cooking and meal prepping.

Preparing your meals for the week in one sitting saves significant time. Instead of planning and cooking daily, use that extra time for things you actually enjoy. Use energy-efficient tools like air fryers and slow cookers to make the process even easier. Both lighten your workload while reducing your home's energy consumption.



Use a smart thermostat.

The magic of these devices is their learning capability. Because the thermostat monitors itself, you no longer have to manually program temperature shifts for when you're away or asleep. This automation settles the "Thermostat Wars" in your home once and for all, saving you both time and energy.



Don’t replace your windows. Seal them.

We’ve all heard a family member yell, “Shut the door! Are you trying to cool the whole neighborhood?” While it sounds like a frugal cliché, they were onto something. Pay attention to gaps around your windows and doors. Every time you let outside air sneak in, you’re essentially paying to climate-control your driveway.

This fix is easy. Load your caulk gun with a high-quality sealant, steady the gun at a 45-degree angle and pull the trigger with hushed intensity to apply a continuous bead along the gaps. Use a damp finger or a smoothing tool to press the caulk into the crack, ensuring a tight, professional seal that stops your money from “bleeding” outside.

Have someone else do the work.

This may be the easiest win ever. With a Quick Home Energy Check-up, a certified Energy Analyst visits your home at no additional cost to scout out your vitals, like insulation levels and air leaks. You may receive no-cost energy-saving items—like door sweeps, weather stripping and even a smart thermostat—and the expert can install them for you. It’s a one-hour wellness retreat for your living space and the greatest thing for “easy” since the microwave burrito.

Grab a smart power strip.

“Vampire power” occurs when electronics in standby mode quietly drain energy. The solution? A smart power strip that detects standby mode and cuts power automatically. Stop shimmying under your desk to unplug the printer you rarely use. You save time and money without the mess.

When you stack these wins, you’re performing an invisible renovation. You are transforming a drafty space into a high-performance home without a massive budget or contractor. Whether you’re closing blinds to block the sun or changing a filter to save your HVAC motor, these shifts turn you from a passive resident into an energy boss.

Start now so you can get back to doing nothing on your couch. Now isn’t that easy?

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Your Home Has Secrets

If you notice air escaping, you’ve spotted a hidden energy leak. There could be more, and we know how to find them.

Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® uncovers what’s going wrong and helps fix it, so you can reduce your energy use by up to 20%.*

Because some secrets are worth revealing.

Some hidden issues come with built-in solutions. **Up to $10,000** in rebates and **0% financing** can help.

See what your home’s hiding at **pepco.com/HPwES26**.

*Source: energystar.gov

Offer valid for Pepco residential customers in Maryland only. EmPOWER Maryland programs are funded by a charge on your energy bill. EmPOWER Maryland programs can help you reduce your energy consumption and save you money. To learn more about EmPOWER Maryland and how you can participate, go to pepco.com/SaveEnergy.

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EmPOWER MARYLAND

TIME, ENERGY *(and sanity)* SAVING RECIPES

You have errands to run and dogs to walk. You have batteries to buy and split ends to unsplit. What you don't have is time. That's where these recipes come in. Somewhere between smoking a brisket and serving cold cuts, these recipes deliver maximum scrumptiousness with minimum time, energy and effort. So enjoy these options that are both time and energy efficient.

Sun-Dried Tomato and Herb Baked Eggs

Perfect for breakfast, a time when you rarely have a lot of time, these delicious eggs will upgrade your cooking game. You'll just need one ramekin per person. No ramekins? You can use any oven-safe bowl.

Ingredients



1 tablespoon sun-dried tomatoes



Kosher salt to taste



1 teaspoon olive oil



2 eggs



1/2 teaspoon fresh parsley

Instructions

Step 1. Preheat toaster oven to 350°F.

Step 2. Coat the inside of one ramekin or oven-safe dish with olive oil.

Step 3. Line the bottom of the dish with sun-dried tomatoes and break two eggs on top. Sprinkle with fresh herbs.

Step 4. Bake uncovered for 15–20 minutes until egg whites are firm. Serve immediately.



A Local Mainstay Crab Dip for Summer



Nothing says a Maryland weekend like a table full of friends and a warm bowl of crab dip. Whether you're fueling up after a Saturday spent in the garden or cooling down after a few "weekend wins" around the house, this recipe is the ultimate way to return the favor to the family and home you love. It's a grounded, practical crowd-pleaser that turns any afternoon into a celebration of the Old Line State.

Ingredients



1 pound crab meat



1 cup mayonnaise



1 teaspoon mustard



1/4 teaspoon hot sauce



1/8 teaspoon lemon juice



2 tablespoons beer

Instructions

Step 1. Combine mayo, mustard, hot sauce and lemon juice.

Step 2. Stir in beer, slowly.

Step 3. Fold crab meat in gently.

Step 4. Transfer to an oven-safe dish and bake at 350°F for 20–25 minutes, or until hot and bubbly.

Step 5. Serve warm with crackers, tortilla chips or veggies and enjoy with family and friends.

Buffalo Chicken Wings

You can't go wrong with wings. They're crispy, they're delicious and they require no utensils to enjoy. That last one is big if you have kids in your family. So, embrace your carnivore messiness and dig into these crowd-pleasers.



Ingredients



2 pounds chicken wings



4 tablespoons unsalted butter



Kosher salt to taste



Black pepper to taste



1/2 cup hot sauce



Ranch or blue cheese dressing, for serving

Instructions

Step 1. Pat the chicken wings dry and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Place the wings in the air fryer basket so they are not touching.

Step 2. Set the air fryer to 360°F and cook for 12 minutes, then flip the wings with tongs and cook for 12 minutes more.

Step 3. Melt the butter in a microwave-safe bowl for one minute. Whisk in the hot sauce.

Step 4. Toss the wings with the sauce in a large bowl. Serve with dressing on the side.

WHO DID IT BEST?

PRO SECRETS REVEALED

We talk to an energy efficiency pro about how to save at home.

For Kwante Young of EcoMize USA, a business specializing in energy efficiency located in Cockeysville, the transition from the restaurant industry to energy efficiency wasn't as big a leap as one might think. A Maryland native born in Baltimore, Young views every home as a castle and views himself as a problem-solver who can find solutions in every home he visits.



KWANTE YOUNG WITH ECOMIZE USA

How'd you get into this?

My path to energy efficiency wasn't a traditional one. Most of my life, I worked in sales, including a position at Deltek back in 2017. I also spent a significant amount of time working in restaurants. It wasn't until around 2022 that my brother, who was already working for a contractor in the energy efficiency sector, told me about the program. Once I learned about the impact we could have, I just had to hop on board, earning five national Building Performance Institute certifications. I view it as an incredible opportunity to truly help people by getting inside their castles and solving the issues that affect their daily comfort.

Being in the service industry and having those soft skills, how did that differ from some of your peers?

In a restaurant, you learn that while everyone is different, everyone deserves to be treated with the same respect. Those soft skills are vital because they teach you how to listen. When I walk into a home, I might identify structural issues, attic types or HVAC conditions before I even say hello.

Do you feel like you've found your calling?

Absolutely. This is what I plan to do for the rest of my life. I'm in a great position where I can learn from highly experienced people, like my manager who has been doing this since the '90s. I love the challenge of problem-solving. If there's something I don't know, I'm the guy at home at 10 p.m. doing research so I can be more knowledgeable for the next customer. People can tell when you genuinely care. They appreciate it when you spend that extra time looking for the things that are truly important to their sanctuary.

KWANTE YOUNG, SEEN HERE DOING WHAT HE DOES BEST. HELPING OTHERS.



You have these really cool diagnostic tools. When does a tool become a toy?

The blower door fan is a great example. I often ask homeowners, "Do you want to walk around with me and take a field trip around your home?" It's a cool experience because they get to see their space from a completely different perspective. I'll have them put their hand up near a leak so they can actually feel the air coming in. Customers love it because it quantifies what we're doing—it provides proof that we are fixing their home the right way.

What have been some of the biggest "solves" in your career?

A common issue is finding disconnected or uninsulated ducts in the attic. I have to explain to the homeowner that their cold air is traveling through the attic and losing its value before it ever reaches the room it's intended for. This causes the system to run longer and harder, driving up bills.

Another major discovery is the uninsulated attic entrance. Even if the rest of the attic has a decent amount of insulation, that one opening allows heat to radiate down, making a hallway toasty and tricking the thermostat. Identifying these "invisible" holes is what makes a Quick Home Energy Check-up so valuable; people can see the proof for themselves rather than just taking my word for it.



I ALWAYS TELL PEOPLE IF I WAS LIVING HERE, THIS IS WHAT I WOULD DO.

What advice would you give someone getting ready for a check-up?

First, talk to your family members about which areas of the home are actually uncomfortable. Gathering that information is very helpful for the technician. Second, try to have your attic entrance cleared. If it's in a closet, move the clothes and toys so we can get up there. Similarly, make sure we have access to the basement and the HVAC system.

What is the biggest impact you can have?

It's about letting people know something about their home they never knew before. Even with new homes, an inspector might miss things that I can find with a focus on comfort and efficiency. We can provide "goodies" like LED bulbs and smart thermostats, but the real value is the thorough evaluation. These are the things that matter because people are going to be in these homes for a long time.

Is there anything you want to make sure people know?

Whether you are a new homeowner or have been in your house for decades, you should take advantage of a Quick Home Energy Check-up. It allows a professional to pinpoint things you might never have thought about. Many people are afraid to go into their own attics because they worry about animals or just don't like the space. If you aren't comfortable going up there, have a professional do it for you to see what is really going on. It is very important that everyone takes advantage of this service to protect their home and their family.

Get your own energy expert.

You can schedule an appointment with your own local energy expert to find energy-saving opportunities in your home with a **Quick Home Energy Check-up**.

Visit **pepco.com/QHEC26** to learn more.

Go Electric, No Matter the Season

When Bob Dylan went electric in 1965, it sent shock waves through pop culture. Don't stress: You won't cause nearly as much fuss electrifying the everyday things that make your life easier.



Your Battery-Powered Summer Superstar

The first time behind the controls of a battery-powered lawn mower feels strange. They look and feel like toys—until you flip them over. Razor-sharp, high-carbon steel blades prove these machines mean business. Single- and twin-engine models run over an hour on one charge, and some even mow via an app. Best of all, fewer parts—no spark plugs, filters or belts—means less to break. Looking for an affordable workhorse instead of a toy? You can get discounts on electric push mowers at **pepco.com/Lawn26**.

Bottom Line

Don't just take our word for it. (Although that would be easier.) Hop online and see what others think of these electrified wonders. We think they'll agree: These reliable devices can put a little more comfort in your everyday life.

And don't forget: You can always find savings on devices like electric lawn equipment and water heaters at **pepco.com/Rebates26**.

Turning Science Fiction Into Science Fact

Water heaters use about 18% of your home's energy—more than your fridge, washer, dryer and dishwasher combined. Consider a sleek electric heat pump water heater. They transfer heat from the surrounding air into the water, a process so efficient the DOE classifies them as "super-efficient." ENERGY STAR® certified models can save a household of four approximately $550 a year, totaling over $5,600 over the unit's lifespan. Plus, Pepco makes upgrading to electric achievable with up to $15,000 in rebates for eligible upgrades through the Home Performance with ENERGY STAR program.

Find out more at **pepco.com/HPwES26**.



In a World of White, Go Green

The electric snow blower starts the first time, every time, even in February. No pull cords, gas cans or 6:00 a.m. wrestling matches. A modern battery-powered model clears a standard driveway on one charge and runs quietly. This gives you back the time you used to spend fussing with a gas engine. These reliable devices put more comfort in your daily life while lowering your carbon footprint.



The Only Roommate Who Actually Listens

Think of your smart thermostat as the live-in energy coach your home has been waiting for. It's the one who notices your coming and your going. It's the one who adjusts to your needs and learns the perfect temp for your life.

It doesn't judge when you sleep in or remind you about the load of laundry you've left in the dryer for the past 48 hours. Instead of shouting "internet tips" at you, it offers a confident, quiet nudge toward efficiency and makes the practical, common-sense moves to save energy without you ever having to ask. It's a high-performance relationship designed to return the favor to the home you love.



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Even the Best Performers Need a Tune-up

Like any high-performance machine, your heating and cooling system performs best with regular maintenance.

A no-cost HVAC tune-up gets your system back on track. It helps prevent breakdowns and improve comfort, and it could even come with a smart thermostat to give you more flexibility. It's a simple step to keep your system going the distance.



Keep your system running at its best.
pepco.com/HVAC26

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