

“Peace of mind” as single-income homeowner takes on \$40K retrofit in Kimberley, BC



Owner: Heather Gemmell

Heather Gemmell undertook a deep energy retrofit on her 90-year old home, reducing her energy use by 70 per cent in just six months.

Retrofit Assist helped make it all possible, ensuring Heather could access close to \$38,000 in rebates that covered more than 80 per cent of the costs, and maximizing advantages from income-qualified supports.

A Retrofit Assist team member helped Heather identify relevant rebates and then reviewed quotes and products provided by qualified contractors to ensure the rebate applications would be successful.

“There is a lot of peace of mind knowing someone is in my corner making sure everything looks right,” said Heather.

Now that colder temperatures are here, Heather and her two children are enjoying their cozier home.

“If your home is feeling cold and drafty, I highly recommend you sign up for Retrofit Assist. These rebates won’t be around forever!” — *Heather Gemmell*

Energy use

↘ **70%**

Air leakage

↘ **48%**

Carbon pollution

↘ **96%**

Rebates Received

\$37,900

Home Upgrades for comfort and energy savings

Since buying her house in 2013, Heather always found it cold in winter. She had to run space heaters in the bedrooms and kept the wood stove stoked all day. Every fall, she shrink-wrapped the basement's old single-pane windows to stop drafts, and she had a blanket hanging across the kitchen doorway.

Summer brought the opposite problem: "I had to go round closing all the curtains on a sunny day and run a window air conditioner because it got so hot upstairs. The basement was nice and cool but the windows didn't open so we could never get fresh air down there," she says.

Now, after a home energy retrofit, it's all different! Heather and her two children enjoyed a much more comfortable house in the summer and are cozy this winter. The post-renovation Energuide evaluation shows the 1,200 ft² house uses 70 per cent less energy, making it more energy-efficient than an average new-build of a similar size.

Key Upgrades

Feature

R-50 insulation



Increasing attic insulation beyond R-50 keeps the house warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

Feature

Triple-glaze windows

With two air gaps, these windows are quieter, save energy and are less prone to condensation.

Feature

24k^{Btu/h} capacity




A highly efficient 20 SEER heat pump provides heat and cooling. It can switch to a 96% efficient gas furnace if needed.



“Heather played a huge role, she educated herself and managed her own project. We were here to ensure she could take advantage of all the rebates available to her.” — *Natasha del Bosco, Retrofit Assist*

Heather’s Journey with Retrofit Assist

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|  Application | Looking to make her home more comfortable, Heather applied to Retrofit Assist after learning about the opportunity through the City of Kimberley newsletter. |
| Energy Assessment | Retrofit Assist arranged a subsidized EnerGuide evaluation by a designated Energy Advisor. It showed the home’s energy was primarily lost due to a barely insulated attic (14%), a leaky, bare foundation (21%), and old windows and doors (26%). |
| Income-qualified programs | As a single-income household, Heather qualified for some opportunities. Retrofit Assist ensured she could make the most of CleanBC Energy Savings Program offered enhanced rebates. FortisBC’s Energy Conservation Assistance Program arranged for attic insulation to be installed at no cost. |
| Contractor Quotes | After attic insulation, Heather moved forward finding contractors for other upgrades. Retrofit Assist reviewed quotes to ensure they were fair and would satisfy rebate requirements. |
| Work | In spring 2025, Tin Craft installed a dual fuel HVAC system (heat pump and backup gas furnace), Elite Mechanical installed a heat pump water heater, High R Expectations insulated the basement, back porch, crawlspace and walls, Sundance installed high-efficiency windows and doors, and Full Draw Electrical upgraded the electrical service from 100 to 200 amp. |
| Rebates | Heather received nearly \$38,000 in rebates, covering more than 80 per cent of the energy upgrades to her home. |

“Natasha at Retrofit Assist was so helpful, it was always a pleasure chatting with her. She always tried to answer my questions on the phone or she would always follow up afterward.”

— *Heather Gemmell, homeowner*