

Capitol Connection

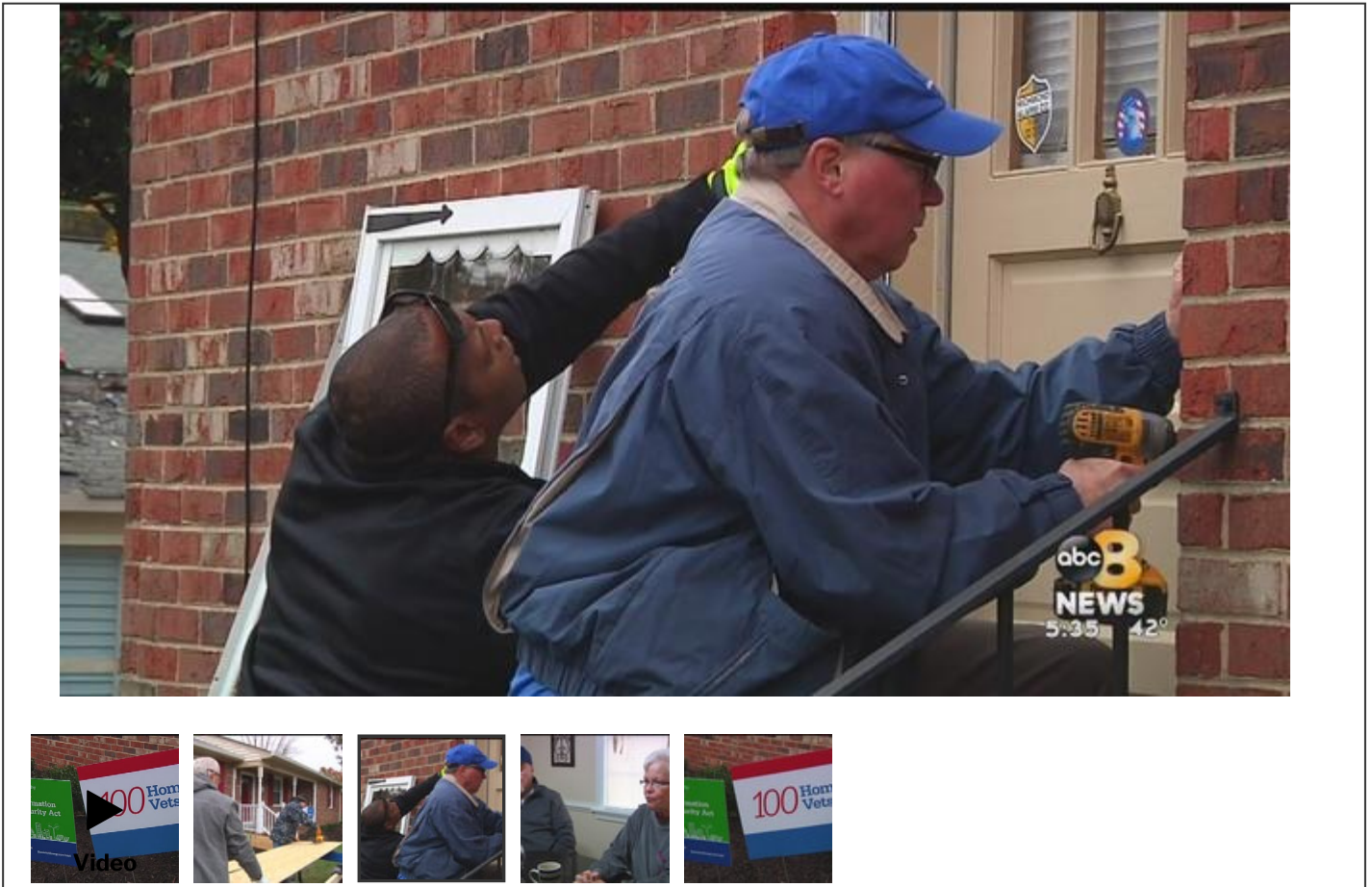
'It's just unbelievable:' New project helps veterans prepare for winter, reduce energy bills

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CHESTERFIELD COUNTY -- Last winter's bone-chilling cold is a feeling Van and Pat Parker won't forget anytime soon.

"We were sitting in the den with blankets and the heater on, it was so cold," Van Par

"We had electric bills that were sometimes \$500, \$600. Sometimes more," Pat Par

Van, known as "Bird" to his friends, served in the Navy back in the 60's. Pat has been...
The couple has been together for nearly 50 years.

Many things have changed since then. Van has trouble getting around sometimes in his wheelchair. Pat is



his caretaker. They moved back to Virginia from Florida to be closer to family, and Pat says they lost everything because the moving truck caught fire.

The Parker's couldn't afford to make changes to the home, given the high energy costs during the cold months.

"[Van is] always playing with his little phone, you know exploring avenues to help us," Pat said, recalling how her husband came across a link to apply for "100 Homes for 100 Veterans."

"It's just unbelievable that this is happening to us," Van Parker said.

About a dozen helping hands came to the Parker's home Thursday as part of the new initiative being launched by the Department of Veterans Services, Dominion Energy and Project HOMES.

"It's a weatherization initiative which will provide free energy upgrades to at least 100 homes of veterans by Veterans day of 2019," Mark Webb, the Dominion Energy Senior Vice President, said.

The weatherization projects are part of the EnergyShare initiative, which has assisted more than 825,000 families and individuals since 1982. Some of the projects include insulating pipes and sealing air leaks in the attic, as well as replacing light bulbs with energy efficient ones.

The Parker's also had their shed for the generator reshingled. Projects may also include other home repairs and special needs to improve safety and comfort in the veteran's home. The hope is to do these home improvement projects to cut down the energy bill.

"Obviously having just celebrated Veterans Day, Virginia has over 730,000 veterans," the Commissioner of the Dept. of Veterans Services John L. Newby II said. "We'll continue to look for ways to help our Veterans and to partner with great companies."

Thankful does not begin to describe how the Parker's feel, knowing their loved ones will be warm this winter.

"It's truly a God sent this has been for us," Pat Parker said.

If you're interested in applying, Dominion Energy officials say you should give 211 a call. Veterans need to be Dominion Energy customers to apply.

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