

MARCH 2024



# REPORTER

Inspection News and Views from the American Society of Home Inspectors, Inc.

## pros & cons OF BEING A HOME INSPECTOR

p. 6

Stand Out in a Stagnant Market p. 10

Code Conundrums:  
Foundation Anchorage p. 22





A low-angle shot of a person in a blue shirt and khaki pants climbing a silver extension ladder against the side of a house. The house has a stone foundation and a window with white trim. Lush green trees are visible in the background against a clear blue sky.

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# CONTENTS

## Managing Risk

- 6** **Is Home Inspecting a Good Career?**  
*Pros and cons of being a home inspector: Part 1*  
BY STEPHANIE JAYNES



## Marketing Minute

- 10** **Stand Out in a Stagnant Market**  
*Leveraging continuing education for home inspection success*  
BY MEGAN L. STEVENSON

## Inspector Spotlight

- 12** **Giving Back**  
*Hollis Brown is awarded the 2023 ASHI John E. Cox Award.*  
BY LAURA ROTE



## Inspector Spotlight

- 16** **From ASHI to Aerospace**  
*Bill Loden has always assessed risks, from houses to, well, rockets.*  
BY LAURA ROTE



## Inspector Resources

- 22** **Code Conundrums: Foundation Anchorage**  
*Four case studies*  
BY JOHN WEIBURG, ACI

## IN EVERY ISSUE

- 28** **New Members and Member Anniversaries**  
**30** **Postcards from the Field**



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Byrnes Mill, MO | [president@ashi.org](mailto:president@ashi.org)

**Scott Johnson** President-Elect  
Marietta, GA | [whpis@me.com](mailto:whpis@me.com)

**Kyle Rodgers** Secretary  
Siloam Springs, AR | [kyle@aplus-inspection.com](mailto:kyle@aplus-inspection.com)

**Vince Tecce** Treasurer  
Yardley, PA | [bioavince@gmail.com](mailto:bioavince@gmail.com)

**Lisa Alajajian Giroux** Immediate Past President  
Milford, MA | [homequest1@comcast.net](mailto:homequest1@comcast.net)

### DIRECTORS

**Rod Beacham** 2023-2025  
Kenmore, WA | [rod@206inspect.com](mailto:rod@206inspect.com)

**Rod Berning** 2024-2026  
Pickerton, OH | [bkhi@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bkhi@sbcglobal.net)

**John Cordell** 2023-2025  
Cincinnati, OH | [inspectionplus.john@gmail.com](mailto:inspectionplus.john@gmail.com)

**Charles Gifford** 2023-2025  
Jacksonville, FL | [amerispec@bellsouth.net](mailto:amerispec@bellsouth.net)

**Robert Guyer** 2022-2024  
Eagle, ID | [guyerinspections@icloud.com](mailto:guyerinspections@icloud.com)

**Roger Herdt** 2023-2025  
Florence, SC | [herdtworks@msn.com](mailto:herdtworks@msn.com)

**Harry Morell** 2024-2026  
St. Charles, MO | [harry@allied-inspectors.com](mailto:harry@allied-inspectors.com)

**Robert Robinson** 2024-2026  
Lee's Summit, MO | [ATM.HomeInspection@gmail.com](mailto:ATM.HomeInspection@gmail.com)

**Paul Staron** 2022-2024  
Scottsdale, AZ | [pstaron@cox.net](mailto:pstaron@cox.net)

## ASHI STAFF

847.759.2820 | Monday – Friday | 8:00 am CT – 4:30 pm CT

**James Thomas**  
*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*  
[jamest@ashi.org](mailto:jamest@ashi.org)

**Laura Rote**  
*REPORTER EDITOR*  
[editor@ashi.org](mailto:editor@ashi.org)

### MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

**Susan Lane**  
*DIRECTOR OF MEMBERSHIP  
AND CHAPTER RELATIONS*  
[susanl@ashi.org](mailto:susanl@ashi.org)

**Michael Krauszowski**  
*MEMBERSHIP ADVANCEMENT  
AND SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR*  
[michaelk@ashi.org](mailto:michaelk@ashi.org)

**Rose Stanfa**  
*MEMBERSHIP SERVICE  
ASSOCIATE*  
[roses@ashi.org](mailto:roses@ashi.org)

### EDUCATION AND EVENTS

**Edwin Barrera**  
*DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND  
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT*  
[edwinb@ashi.org](mailto:edwinb@ashi.org)

**Michelle Santiago**  
*THE ASHI SCHOOL  
EDUCATION MANAGER*  
[michelle@theashischool.com](mailto:michelle@theashischool.com)

### FINANCIAL SERVICES

**Tim Buell**  
*FINANCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR  
AND ASHI PRESIDENT 2018*  
[timb@ashi.org](mailto:timb@ashi.org)

**Alicia McCray**  
*FINANCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR*  
[aliciam@ashi.org](mailto:aliciam@ashi.org)

### STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

**Edie Mann**  
*GRAPHIC DESIGNER*  
[ediem@ashi.org](mailto:ediem@ashi.org)

### TECHNOLOGY

**Rhett Claypool**  
*DIRECTOR OF IT*  
[rhettc@ashi.org](mailto:rhettc@ashi.org)



**PUBLISHER** James Thomas  
**EDITOR** Laura Rote  
**GRAPHIC DESIGNER** Edie Mann

**Questions, Comments  
and Article Submissions**  
[editor@ashi.org](mailto:editor@ashi.org)

**Advertising**  
[communications@ashi.org](mailto:communications@ashi.org)

## AMERICAN SOCIETY OF HOME INSPECTORS, INC.

932 Lee Street, Suite 101 | Des Plaines, IL 60016

ASHI REPORTER – ISSN 1076-1942 – the official publication of the American Society of Home Inspectors, Inc. (ASHI), 932 Lee St., Suite 101, Des Plaines IL 60016, is published monthly. Periodical postage paid at Des Plaines, IL 60016 and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ASHI Reporter, 932 Lee Street, Suite 101, Des Plaines, IL 60016-6546.

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HOME INSPECTORS



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# Is Home Inspecting a Good Career?

## Pros and cons of being a home inspector: Part 1

BY STEPHANIE JAYNES, MARKETING DIRECTOR, INSPECTORPRO INSURANCE

*One of the pros of being a home inspector is that you get to see cool homes. The good, the bad, the ugly — and the positively beautiful!*



**Stephanie Jaynes** is the Marketing Director for InspectorPro Insurance, which offers ASHI members exclusive benefits through its program: InspectorPro with the ASHI Advantage. Through risk management articles in the ASHI Reporter and on the InspectorPro website, InspectorPro helps inspectors protect their livelihood and avoid unnecessary risk. Get peace of mind and better protection with InspectorPro's pre-claims assistance and straightforward coverage. Learn more at [inspectorproinsurance.com/ashi-advantage](https://inspectorproinsurance.com/ashi-advantage).

In December 2023, American employers faced an interesting predicament: There were 9.5 million job openings, but only 6.5 million unemployed workers, according to the US Chamber of Commerce. With a surplus of employment opportunities for a limited workforce, laborers had their pick of the litter.

Many self-starters and building enthusiasts looking for employment consider a career as a home inspector. By our definition, a home inspector is a trained professional who performs limited, non-invasive examinations of residential and light commercial properties based on standards set by their state or association—like the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI). Inspectors produce reports on their findings to help clients make more informed home purchasing and selling decisions.

If you're contemplating a career as a home inspector, you may be wondering:

- Is being a home inspector a good job?
- What are the pros and cons of being a home inspector?
- What's the worst part of being a home inspector?
- Is being a home inspector hard?
- Who do home inspectors work for? Do home inspectors work for themselves?
- Can you be a home inspector part-time?
- Is home inspecting a risky career?

In this two-part series for the *ASHI Reporter*, we aim to answer these frequently asked questions with the help of a few home inspectors and industry experts. While their experiences and opinions are personal and subjective, they might prove valuable as you weigh this career for yourself.

## What are the pros and cons of being a home inspector?

If you want to enter the profession with your eyes open, you must weigh the cons. But there's plenty to love about a career as a home inspector, too. In fact, you'll notice many of the cons are a two-sided coin. Depending on your strengths and preferences, some of the disadvantages can also make home inspection a good career for you.



*The Managing Risk column with InspectorPro Insurance provides home inspectors with tips to protect their businesses against insurance claims, craft effective pre-inspection agreements, offer additional inspection services, and use new tools and equipment.*

Let's explore four of the pros and cons of being a home inspector.

### CON 1: IT ISN'T REMOTE.

One of the worst parts of being a home inspector, some argue, is the driving. According to FlexJobs' survey, 95% of workers want some form of remote work, whether hybrid or fully remote.

According to Luis Chávez of Top Inspectors in Texas, the disadvantage of not working remotely as a home inspector is exacerbated by unpredictable commutes. When counting how many hours a week home inspectors work, driving can throw a wrench in predictable schedules.

"You don't pick where the house is, so you're driving. Sometimes it's an hour. Sometimes it's 10 minutes away," Chávez said. "But you can't work from home."

### PRO 1: HOURS CAN BE FLEXIBLE.

Remote working aside, you'll find a lot of autonomy in your career as a home inspector—especially as a self-employed one.

Inspectors can't get enough of the job's flexibility. You can break free from the 9-to-5 and set your own schedule, planning around other things that matter to you. For example, if you're a single parent or want to pick up your kids from school or be at soccer games,

controlling when you book inspections is a huge perk. Deciding when you want to be available (or not) also makes inspecting a great side hustle.

As a father of four young children, Chávez enjoys prioritizing family time.

"I create my schedule around the family—not the other way around," he said. "I can wake up with the kids, send them off to school, and drop them off if I need to because my start time is flexible. Then, I try not to schedule my inspections too late so that I'm home for dinner. Eating together as a family is a big thing for us."

Think flexible hours are only a perk for inspection firm owners? Not so. Many inspection companies, like Thomas Wells' of Home Sweet Home Inspection Services in Florida, allow inspector employees to choose their schedules, too.

"Even if they work for a multi-inspector team, a lot of times, they're still kind of their own boss," Wells said. "My guys tell us their availability, and we schedule it from there. If they need a day off, that's up to them. We don't tell them whether or not they can. They just put it on the calendar."

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## CON 2: SUCCESS IS TIED TO THE REAL ESTATE MARKET.

If you read our article in January 2024, you know inspectors across the country have reported a 20 to 60% decline in inspections since 2020. This article associates the decreased demand with low housing supplies and high home prices.

Wells said having a business that depends on a healthy real estate market can be difficult.

"The majority of our business comes in from people buying homes," he said. "When the market's strong, our business is strong. When the market's weak, our business is weak. It's frustrating when you have a business that you can't control."

To combat the ebb and flow of demand, inspectors like Wells look for opportunities to make more money. This includes services outside a typical buyer's inspection, like mortgage field services and light

commercial inspections, as well as ancillary services like sewer scope and pest inspections.

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## PRO 2: YOU GET TO SEE COOL HOMES.

For Wells, the real estate aspect also makes his career as a home inspector entertaining and inspiring. Seeing the good, the bad, and the ugly of varying properties gives Wells ideas for his own home projects.

"You're in so many different homes—much more so than the normal person. You get a lot of ideas," Wells said. "I'll see something and I'll go, 'Wow, that's cool. Maybe we should do that at our house.'"

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## CON 3: IT'S COMPETITIVE.

No matter what business you're in, if you own your own company, you're bound to face competition. Specifically for inspectors, pressure from competition can make it difficult to balance demand with affordable pricing.

Chávez said he's lost customers for two reasons. Some people have deemed his company too expensive and gone with a more affordable inspector. Others have passed up his business for another that offers more services.

Additionally, competition can affect how inspectors feel about each other. If you're starting a career as a new home inspector or if you're new to the area, other inspectors may be reluctant to help.

Chávez said some inspectors can be territorial. But others, like him, are willing to mentor.

"I share my experience with people who want to join. I don't see them as competition because I think there's enough work," he said. "If I can train and mentor someone to do the same quality inspection as me, then some of those inspectors who are not doing a good job get flushed out. It helps the business as a whole."

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## PRO 3: YOU'LL LEARN AND GROW.

As stressful as competition can be, it inspires personal growth and development. This, in turn, makes people happier. According to BetterUp, personal



development leads to better self-awareness, self-esteem, resilience, and relationships. And a career as a home inspector is ripe with growth opportunities.

"You're always learning. Every home is a book, teaching you something," Wells said.

Continuing to learn also helps you improve your business and manage your risk, Joe Cook of House Call North Shore in Louisiana previously told InspectorPro.

"I don't think it can be understated how important continuing your education and continuing to learn things can be," Cook said. "It helps you in your career. It helps you offer a better product, which lessens the amount of problems you have and the number of times you have to get in touch with your insurance provider, which is very important."

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#### CON 4: IT'S PHYSICALLY DEMANDING.

If you're used to spending your days at a desk, inspecting will be an adjustment. Climbing on roofs and clambering through crawl spaces, bearing the snow outside, and braving the heat in the attic all come with being a home inspector.

"When you have to work in the rain or you have to work when it's 100 degrees out, that's not fun," Wells said.

Bad weather, tall heights, and confined spaces aren't just inconvenient. They're also hazardous, says Dirk Hougum of D & P Home Inspection in Florida.

"With me falling off a roof, I learned ladder safety very quickly," Hougum said. "It can be very dangerous."

And it isn't just the house's structure you have to worry about. It's what's inside the house, too. Dogs, snakes, spiders, rats, bats, insects, raccoons, and other pests may all be awaiting you.

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#### PRO 4: EVERY DAY IS DIFFERENT.

Sure, a career as a home inspector comes with challenges. There are some days when being a

home inspector is particularly hard. But every day of inspecting is rife with fresh, exciting, new possibilities.

Did you know somewhere between 43 and 53% of the workforce is bored right now? If Forbes contributor Curt Steinhorst is right about that, then many employees are feeling unsatisfied and uninterested in their work. Being bored can lead to lots of consequences: less motivation, reduced pleasure, increased depression, and triggered anxiety, to name a few from the National Institutes of Health.

For inspectors like Hougum, the variety of houses and situations makes inspecting enjoyable and interesting.

"Every house is different. When I enter a house, I don't know what I'm walking into, what kinds of nooks and crannies I'm going to find," Hougum said. "You're a detective and looking for the crime scenes."

But what about the actual inspecting? Isn't going through the same procedures boring? Wells said the fact that the properties and the findings are always different prevents monotony.

"Everything you do every single day, even though it may be repetitive, it's in a different house. There's always a different set of circumstances," he said. "You never quite know what you're going to run into, and you kind of look forward to that."

#### To Be Continued

From the competitive nature to the physical demands, the learning opportunities and the variety, there are lots of variables to weigh when deciding if a home inspector is a good career. Hungry for more? Stay tuned next month as we delve into four more pros and cons of the business. 🌟



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# Stand Out in a Stagnant Market

*Leveraging continuing education for home inspection success*

BY MEGAN L. STEVENSON

**T**he real estate market is an ever-evolving industry that experiences phases of both expansion and stagnation. As key players in this sector, home inspectors are also affected by these market fluctuations and must devise strategies to remain competitive during challenging periods.

To remain successful in difficult times, inspectors must be resourceful and proactive. Leveraging real estate continuing education is one way inspectors may enhance the appeal of home inspection services.

In this article, we highlight the value of continuous learning, propose methods for embedding it into your marketing approach, and showcase how it can contribute to the growth of your home inspection enterprise in a less-than-favorable market.

## The Importance of Continuing Education

Continuing education is essential for professionals in the real estate industry, including home inspectors. It keeps you up-to-date on industry trends, advances in technology, and changes in regulations. By committing to ongoing learning, you demonstrate your dedication to providing top-notch services to your clients, which can help you stand out from your competitors.

Furthermore, real estate agents and brokers are required to complete a certain number of continuing education hours to maintain their licenses. As a home inspector, partnering with educational providers or offering courses yourself can open up new networking opportunities and establish you as an industry expert. In a stagnant market, this can be a game-changer for your business.

## Strategies for Utilizing Continuing Education

**Offer Continuing Education Courses.** Consider developing and offering your own continuing education courses in home inspection-related topics. This can help position you as an expert in the field and make your business more attractive to potential clients. You can offer these courses in person, online, or through a combination of both formats to reach a broader audience. Topics could include:

- Common home inspection issues
- How to prepare a property for inspection
- The impact of new regulations on home inspections
- The role of technology in home inspections



*Megan L. Stevenson is vice president of Preferred Systems and is responsible for managing its national education programs. The company's InspectionInstructors program is a turnkey service that enables home inspectors throughout the US to establish and manage a continuing education program. Preferred Systems handles all paperwork and administrative tasks, including instructor and course filings, course offerings notifications, credit filings for agents and ongoing customer support. Learn more at [inspectioninstructors.com](https://inspectioninstructors.com).*



**Guest Speaking Engagements.** Offer your services as a guest speaker at real estate conferences, workshops, and networking events. These engagements can provide an opportunity to showcase your expertise and promote your home inspection services. Be sure to have a supply of business cards and promotional materials on hand to give to interested parties.

**Utilize Social Media and Content Marketing.** Share your knowledge and expertise through social media platforms or a blog on your company website. Publish informative articles, videos, and infographics about home inspection topics, with a focus on continuing education. This will not only help establish you as a thought leader but also drive traffic to your website and improve your search engine rankings.

**Establish Partnerships with Educational Providers.** Forming partnerships with real estate schools and continuing education providers can be a mutually beneficial relationship. Reach out to local institutions to propose collaboration on courses, workshops, or webinars. By sharing your expertise, you'll be able to market your home inspection services to a wider audience, increase your professional network, and create valuable connections with real estate agents and brokers.

## The Benefits

There are many benefits to incorporating continuing education into your marketing plan:

**Enhanced Credibility.** By engaging in continuing education and sharing your knowledge, you establish yourself as an expert in the home inspection field. This can improve your reputation among real estate professionals and potential clients, leading to more business opportunities.

**Increased Visibility.** Participating in or offering continuing education courses can increase your visibility within the real estate community. This can lead to valuable networking opportunities and help you form relationships with real estate agents and brokers who can refer clients to your home inspection services.

**Diversified Revenue Streams.** By offering continuing education courses, you can diversify your revenue streams and generate additional income during stagnant market periods. This financial buffer can help you sustain your business and maintain a competitive edge.

**Enhanced Client Retention.** Continuing education initiatives can create stronger connections with your existing clients, who will appreciate your commitment to staying informed and providing top-quality services. This can lead to increased client retention and loyalty, as well as positive word-of-mouth referrals.

**Staying Ahead of Competitors.** By staying current with industry trends and changes, you can adapt your services accordingly and ensure you're always ahead of the curve. This can give you a competitive advantage over home inspectors who may not be as proactive in their professional development.

**Improved Services.** Continuing education provides you with the knowledge and skills necessary to improve your home inspection services. This can lead to increased client satisfaction, more referrals, and a stronger reputation in the industry.

## Conclusion

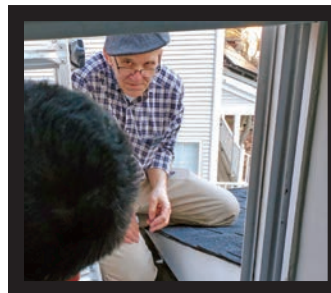
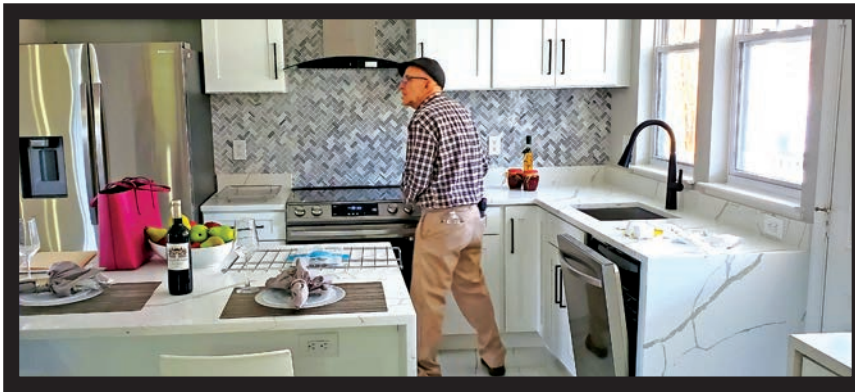
Incorporating real estate continuing education into your marketing strategy can be an effective way to promote your home inspection services during a stagnant market. By establishing partnerships with educational providers, offering courses, engaging in guest speaking, and utilizing social media and content marketing, you can enhance your credibility, increase your visibility, and ultimately grow your business.

Embrace the importance of continuing education and leverage it to your advantage. Not only will you be better equipped to navigate a stagnant market, but you'll also be positioned as an industry leader who is committed to providing the highest quality home inspection services to your clients. 🌟

**Preferred Systems is a proud ASHI Affiliate member.**

BY LAURA ROTE

# giving back



*Hollis Brown is awarded the 2023 ASHI John E. Cox Award.*

**H**ollis Brown is satisfied. He's had multiple careers, he's surrounded by peers striving to do their best work, and he's both learning new things and sharing the things he's learned with others. This year Hollis was also recognized as the John E. Cox Member of the Year. The annual award recognizes an ASHI Certified Inspector (ACI) who has made exceptional contributions to an ASHI Chapter.

"ASHI is better because of having Hollis as part of our Society," says Scott Johnson, ACI, ASHI President Elect, and a member of ASHI Georgia. "Hollis has been instrumental in mentoring me, personally, in my leadership and volunteerism in ASHI."

Brown is a member of ASHI's Mid-Atlantic Chapter and Northern Virginia Chapter, past speaker of the ASHI Council of Representatives, and has more than



25 years of residential construction experience. He founded the ASHI Online Meeting Group (OMG)—the first virtual chapter. We recently spoke with Brown to learn about these accomplishments and more from his career—including how he got to where he is today.

## Why Home Inspection?

"I did construction work for long enough to recognize I couldn't do it forever, and this opportunity came along," Brown said, recalling the day he received a brochure advertising a class for future home inspectors. "I found myself sitting in the classroom looking at the teacher thinking to myself, 'I could be that guy.' Be careful what you wish for."

Brown moved to home inspecting full-time in his 40s and has been an ACI since 1997 in the DC area suburbs. He's a member of the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of ASHI (MAC) of Rockville, Maryland as well as NoVa ASHI of Fairfax. He owns ThoroSpec, where he's the sole inspector, as well as the Home Inspector Training Academy, which he acquired from HomeTech in the early 2000s, where he now teaches class on Saturdays, to help accommodate budding inspectors' schedules.

## Lessons Learned

"Home inspection for me was a real character builder," Brown said. "I had spent the last 25 years on construction sites wearing cutoff jeans in the summertime, but it was energizing at the time—and fun. It was a good time of my life, but there are certain skills and opportunities you can't develop out there on a construction site."

Brown's first challenge in home inspection was understanding the technology, he said, but the biggest learning curve was working with people. "How to interact with professional adults in family

situations—those were skills I didn't have the opportunity to exercise on the construction site. I'm certainly a better person for having made the decision to go into home inspections. I take a lot of pride in what I've done."

## From Learner to Leader

Brown said he was more of a "consumer of the chapter experience" for the first 10 to 15 years of his ASHI membership. "I was the new guy trying to figure it out and discovering attending these meetings was beneficial. I became a better home inspector as a function of these meetings."

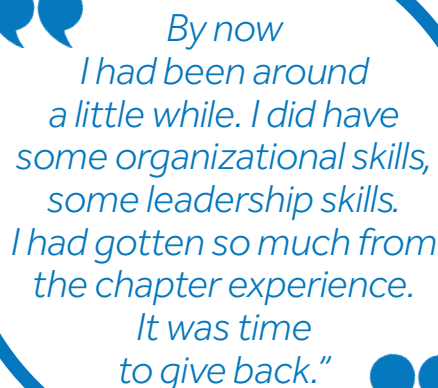
At the time, he didn't see himself as a leader. But as he spent more time with mentors and saw the people leading the way, carving new paths, and volunteering much of their time to local chapters, he realized all their efforts were directly beneficial to him. "They were the ones who went out and found the speakers and collected the money and paid the bills and rented the facilities," he said. "All I did was pay my dues and show up and grow." One day a board member told him he could get minimally involved—as chapter vice president. While the minimal part turned out to be untrue, it was a wonderful experience. "He said 'Since you're here, why don't you hang out at the

board meetings and we'll give you this title of vice president. Don't worry. We're not asking you to do any work.' I fell for that," Brown laughed.

## Giving Back

The more Brown talked with other ACIs and heard chapter leaders' stories, the more he realized he did have something to share. "By now I had been around a little while. I did have some organizational skills, some leadership skills," he said. "I had gotten so much from the chapter experience. It was time to give back."

It was around that time that his chapter elected him to the ASHI Council of Representatives (CoR). That experience showed him there was room to do



*By now  
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It was time  
to give back."*

even more. Participation in those meetings at the time was sparse, and he wondered why.

After Brown took a leadership role in the CoR, he learned that 60% of ASHI members were not affiliated with any chapter at all. He did the math; there were thousands of inspectors out there eligible to participate in the chapter experience. Many of them just couldn't get to one because of distance or scheduling. "There was an opportunity there for somebody to figure out how to make this chapter experience available to this large number of people," he said.

Johnson said Brown's idea, in hindsight, was amazing. "More than five years ago, he started promoting meeting on virtual platforms. He had the foresight to develop an online ASHI Chapter. I thought he was crazy," Johnson said. "Then Covid happened and suddenly, Hollis, you are a genius. The Online Meeting Group, OMG, was born. Not only has Hollis built up the OMG to 80-plus attendees per meeting, he helps to support the virtual production of several regional chapters."

### **Bringing Mentorship to the People**

While Brown said Covid further highlighted the convenience of technology like video conferencing, no one was certain how folks would respond once people began to return to pre-pandemic routines. However, more and more people seem to find meeting from home beneficial. It's especially helpful for inspectors who would otherwise have to drive far to find an in-person meeting, losing out on important time when they could be working.

Brown has helped to streamline other processes across ASHI chapters using technology, too. He points to the annual turnover of ASHI leadership positions as one area of improvement. "There's always a new board, a new treasurer, a new secretary, and there is a learning curve," he said. "Right around the time someone starts to excel in their position, it seemed like it was time to switch again. I thought it would be better if we could automate some of the process to become more streamlined."

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***President's Staff Award – Alicia McCray***

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**Look for their stories in future issues!**

He and colleague Dan Abrams worked to develop a web-based platform for chapter management, first for his own chapters to try out. Today Chapter Office is an online tool that is used by multiple ASHI chapters to facilitate basic chapter activities. And as Brown oversees this and other audio/video for multiple hybrid ASHI seminars, he gets insight into trends and needs across chapters. This opens up another opportunity for universal solutions, he said, instead of chapters struggling in silos, some of them not even perhaps realizing they have the same problem.

"Hollis recently recognized emerging trends and invested in technology necessary to improve the quality of hybrid events," said Dave Goldberg, MAC ASHI President. "He has taken the lead on organizing, promoting, and delivering quality content to audiences—both in-house and virtual."

Goldberg said that, as MAC ASHI president, Brown set a standard his successors have strived to emulate. "Following his presidency, having become familiar with the process and procedures that a chapter repeats annually, he began development of his web-based chapter management tool. This software has significantly lightened the loads of our chapter volunteers in that it automated so many routine tasks."

Learn more from Brown himself in the April issue of the *Reporter*, when he recounts his experience in starting OMG. 🌟

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BY LAURA ROTE



# From ASHI





*OPPOSITE: Bill Loden  
at his last home inspection  
in June 2020.*

*THIS PAGE: Bill Loden  
flanked by two of the  
Artemis II Astronauts—  
Mission Specialist  
Christina Koch and  
Mission Commander  
Reid Wiseman.*

# to Aerospace

*Bill Loden has always assessed risks, from houses to, well, rockets.*



**B**ill Loden is thinking about rockets. To be more precise—he's thinking about a very big rocket, one that will return America to the moon. It's called the Space Launch System.

That's because Loden is currently the Program Risk Manager for the Space Launch System at NASA. But he's also been an active ASHI Certified home inspector. Loden worked part-time inspecting homes from 1996 to 2004, then full-time from 2004 to 2020. He hasn't inspected a house since, but he continues to be a valuable resource, answering a few questions from real estate agents he used to work with about report findings from other inspectors.

"I am still very interested in the profession," he said. "I maintain contact with the many inspectors from around the country I met through my involvement with ASHI and keep up with what is happening in the industry. Every month I look forward to receiving the *ASHI Reporter* and usually read it cover to cover as soon as it arrives in the mail. I especially like to look through the membership anniversaries for the names of my many friends who are members of ASHI."

We recently talked to Loden to find out more about his experience both with NASA and as a home inspector.

**I hear you're a rocket scientist turned home inspector and back. Is that accurate?** That is a fair statement, though I would say I am more accurately an engineer and not a scientist, though many people use the terms interchangeably.

**How did you go from that work into home inspecting?**

I started at NASA in the aftermath of the Challenger disaster in the late 1980s as NASA was strengthening the Flight Safety program. I had learned of the home inspection profession in the mid-90s and, having a BS in construction engineering technology, it sounded like an interesting field. It also mirrored much of my work at NASA. I was initially in the problem reporting area at NASA, and I also worked on the Space Shuttle Solid Rocket Booster Postflight Inspection team, where our team would spend two weeks after every flight disassembling and inspecting the boosters after every launch.



Also, at this time my son was nearing graduation from high school, and I wanted to pay for his college education without going into debt, so I decided to start a side business as a home inspector.

I studied everything I could find about the process and began in 1996 by inspecting the houses of my friends for free on the weekends, developing a report format and learning the skills I would need to perform inspections for paying clients. I gradually built up my business in my free time, but the real breakthrough for me was when I found ASHI. I remember my first InspectionWorld in New Orleans. It was a fantastic learning experience for me, and I became a strong believer in ASHI and its benefit to home inspectors.





My side business soon began to take up most of my evenings and weekends, and at NASA I transitioned out of the Space Shuttle program into Risk Management, becoming an instructor and working with various projects in setting up risks management processes and conducting risk workshops.

In 2003, I moved into a managerial role at NASA, where my time was increasingly devoted to management and personnel issues with little technical responsibility. Being a hands-on type of engineer, this caused me great frustration, so in 2004 I decided to leave NASA and become a full-time home inspector where I could again use my technical skills in a hands-on way.



**What do you love about inspecting homes?** Homes are complex systems, just like rockets, and the various systems interact in sometimes surprising ways. Every home presents an opportunity to observe and learn more about these systems, knowing you have the responsibility to provide the client with as much useful information about the condition of these systems as possible.

I have always loved investigations—searching for problems and finding solutions. I also found satisfaction in knowing home inspections are a very valuable risk management tool for homebuyers. I have always believed that we as home inspectors provide a very valuable service to our clients. In many instances we have the ability to help home buyers avoid financial ruin. In some cases, we identify safety issues that could potentially save our clients' lives. I also love that no matter how long you are in this profession, there is always more to learn. It was very satisfying to me to provide useful information to my clients.

**What interests you about risks? Is that something your careers have had in common?** When I started at NASA, I managed the problem reporting system on the Space Shuttle Solid Rocket Booster. I also became a part of the Booster Postflight Assessment team, inspecting the hardware after each mission. When something went wrong, we fully investigated and resolved the problem and worked to make changes that would prevent it from happening again. Later, I



moved into risk management where we proactively worked to identify the potential for failure and to take steps to reduce the likelihood of a problem. No one ever wants to hear an astronaut say, "Houston, we've had a problem."

**We are all risk managers. Every day our very lives depend on how well we manage risks.** In your home, the stairs' treads are a uniform height and depth to prevent falls. When you get in your vehicle to go to an inspection you put on your seat belt. When you are performing your inspection, you practice ladder safety, and you have the proper PPE when entering crawl spaces. And, of course, as home inspectors we play a very important role in managing the risks that a homebuyer faces when purchasing a property.

### **How have your different roles informed your work?**

While at NASA I often had to deal with hardware contractors who tried to skirt around the contract requirements and would have to identify and cite these requirements to enforce compliance. When working as a home inspector I ran into the same issues in dealing with the building contractors, and it would often come down to my word against theirs in regard to construction defects. To counter this I obtained and studied the building codes and product installation details. If I found a variance in either during an inspection on new construction, I would document the code or installation instructions in the report.

Once I started doing this I seldom ever had an argument from the builder, though a few tried to ban me from inspecting their properties. I know many home inspectors and insurers are frightened by this tactic, but I made it clear in the inspection report and my pre-inspection agreement that I was not conducting a code compliance inspection, and any reference to the building codes was simply to provide my client with an authoritative source to confirm my observations.

### **What advice do you have for other home inspectors?**

First, I would advise an inspector to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by their ASHI membership. Continuing education is imperative for any professional. ASHI also provides an inspector opportunities for professional growth through networking at both the local and national level. Learning is not limited to the classroom, and I personally have benefited tremendously from relationships with inspectors across North America.

**What's next for you?** Initially I had planned on staying at NASA through the Artemis III mission when we will again land astronauts on the moon. However, recently there was a shift in the schedule and the moon landing is now scheduled for September 2026. I'm reassessing and will likely retire after the crewed Artemis II Mission in September 2025. 🌐

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# Code Conundrums: Foundation Anchorage

BY JOHN WEIBURG, ACI

**C**ode interpretations and commenting on building codes are beyond the purview of the home inspector during an inspection. However, background knowledge of the codes can be helpful in many instances.

In this installment of “Code Conundrums,” we’ll explore more issues that may arise during inspections, how they are related to the building code, and why sometimes the code and best practices are not aligned. Let’s focus this issue on foundation anchorage.

## REAL-LIFE CASES

Pre-purchase home inspections were performed recently on a 10-year-old house and on a new construction house. In both cases the houses have their Certificates of Occupancy (CO) from the local Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ). Each AHJ was a different municipality. However, the framing was not anchored to the foundation properly in either house. A third case involves a house elevation project with a new foundation and some poorly located anchor bolts.

**Case 1: In the 10-year-old house, which is located in a flood zone, anchor bolts were installed**

**and protrude through the sill plates but do not have nuts and washers to secure the framing to the foundation. The anchor bolts are rusted due to the saltwater exposure.**

**Case 2: In the new construction house, anchor bolts have also been installed but are not secured with nuts and washers for the framing/foundation connection. Spray foam installed for energy code requirements made the anchor bolts difficult to access. However, all 12 anchor bolts inspected did not have a nut or a washer.**

The contractor of record was “surprised” when this was pointed out and insisted we were lucky to have found all the improperly secured anchor bolts. Going out on the proverbial limb, we made the assumption that all anchor bolts were not properly secured and pointed this out to the prospective buyer. The buyer became wary of the contractor’s finished work in the remainder of the house due to this concern.

**Case No 3: The third case is for a house elevation project with new foundation in a flood zone. To the contractor’s credit, most anchor bolts were installed and secured properly to the foundation. Several anchor bolts were in the wrong locations on the sill plates.**



## Relevant Code Section

### **Section R403.1.6:** Foundation Anchorage

(Definition from 2021 International Residential Code)

Wood sill plates and wood walls supported directly on continuous foundations shall be anchored to the foundation in accordance with this section.

Wood sole plates at all exterior walls on monolithic slabs, wood sole plates of braced wall panels at building interiors on monolithic slabs and all wood sill plates shall be anchored to the foundation with minimum half-inch diameter anchor bolts spaced not greater than six feet on center or approved anchors or anchor straps spaced as required to provide equivalent anchorage to half-inch diameter anchor bolts.

Bolts shall extend not less than 7 inches into concrete or grouted cells of concrete masonry units. The bolts shall be located in the middle third of the width of the plate. A nut and washer shall be tightened on each anchor bolt.

There shall be not fewer than two bolts per plate section with one bolt located not more than 12 inches or less than seven bolt diameters from each end of the plate section.

There are additional foundation anchorage requirements for seismic zones C, D0, D1, and D2.

(Mudsill anchors by Simpson-Strong-Tie are one possible alternative to anchor bolts.)



**John Weiburg is a Professional Engineer and an ACI who has been inspecting houses on Long Island, New York since 2004. Weiburg is the current President of Long Island ASHI and is actively involved in elevating houses and designing new houses to meet FEMA requirements to mitigate future impacts from storms such as Hurricane Sandy. He is often called in as a Professional Engineer to consult on storm damaged houses and provide expert witness testimony.**



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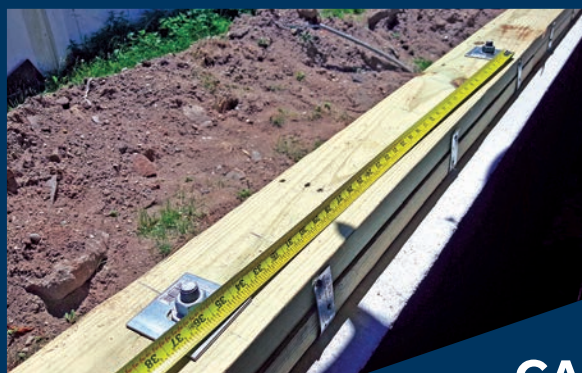
## CASE 1

*Nuts and washers are not installed on anchor bolts on this 10-year-old house.*



## CASE 2

*Nuts and washers are not installed on anchor bolts in this new construction.*



## CASE 3

*House elevation project with new foundation and properly installed anchor bolts (left). House elevation project with improperly located anchor bolts – Not in middle third of width of sill plate (right).*



## BONUS CASE

*Another house elevation project with approved Certificate of Occupancy with improper anchor bolt attachment*



### INSIGHT

The first two cases are in violation of the building code requirements as per the International Residential Code, yet have their Certificates of Occupancy. The third case was mostly in compliance and needed some adjustments to be in full compliance, as the CO has not been issued yet.

A home inspector, as per the ASHI Standards of Practice (SOP), is required to inspect readily accessible, visually observable, installed systems and components listed in the SOP, including structural components. As per the SOP, the inspector shall inspect structural components, including the foundation and framing and describe the foundation, floor structure and wall structure. Furthermore, the inspector is not required to provide engineering or architectural services or analysis, or offer an opinion about the adequacy of structural systems and components.

Several tornadoes occurred in December 2023 in Tennessee and caused extensive damage and loss of life. Multiple homes were found to be only secured to the foundation with construction adhesive and nails, according to local news stations who reviewed National Weather Service inspection information. These homes were reported to be approximately 25 years old.

FEMA performs post-disaster studies after natural

disasters—including tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and wildfires. In a study called “Hurricane Sandy Recovery Fact Sheet No. 2 (May 2013),” FEMA stated that all buildings must be properly anchored to resist flotation, collapse, and lateral movement.

Most home inspectors are thorough and conscientious and want to provide the best service for their clients. This will include inspecting the foundation and framing, provided there is safe access. As noted above, houses not secured properly to the foundation can result in a deadly situation. The issue arises when the owner says they have a Certificate of Occupancy and are not going to address these concerns.

The home inspector is then put in a common, unenviable position between competing interests—in this case balancing the safety of clients versus code official approval. Just because the real estate agent provides you with a Certificate of Occupancy does not mean it was done correctly.

The home inspector can call this out in their report, indicating that it presents a safety hazard in their opinion, while not becoming involved in a code interpretation. The home seller and client are then put on notice that the issue should be addressed, reducing any potential liability for the home inspector. Note: Some states have modified their versions of the International Residential Code and may have different requirements. 🌟



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David Ames | Snohomish



Many chapters applied to host InspectionWorld events in 2024.

Aside from Ohio, the following three chapters won:

**Silicon Valley ASHI/CREIA Chapter**

**New England ASHI Chapter**

**St. Louis ASHI Chapter**



Check out [HomelInspector.org/Education/InspectionWorld](https://HomelInspector.org/Education/InspectionWorld)  
(or scan the QR code at left) for continued updates, including important  
dates, locations, and registration links for conferences as they are scheduled.

***We'll see you on the road!***



# 2024

## MARCH MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

### 30 YEARS

**Kevin Rose** Fidelity Building Inspection  
**Tom Maides** Accu-Spec Inspection Services  
**Paul Hutt** HomePro Inspections  
**Richard Healy** A-1 Home Inspection Services  
**Todd Radloff** Erie Inspection Service

### 25 YEARS

**Kevin Bird** Birds Eye View Home Inspection  
**Scott Johnson** BPG Inspection  
**Michael Edmonds** BPG Inspection  
**Fred Root** Fred Root & Associates  
**Shannon Cory** 5 Star Environmental Services  
**John Miller** Home & Stucco Inspections By John Miller

### 20 YEARS

**Jason Mitchell** HomeSpect (Front Porch Solutions)  
**Manass Hochstetler**  
Advanced Home Inspections of Elkhart County  
**Rod Whittington** Whittington Home Inspections  
**Michael Brooks** AAA Real Estate Inspections  
**Mike Blackman** Five Star Home Inspections  
**David Roos** Call2Inspect Certified Home Inspectors  
**Eric Mills** E&E Inspect  
**Bobby Beers** Peachtree Property Inspections  
**Arnold Bojak** Arnold Bojak Home Inspection  
**David Jolly** All Pro Home Inspectors  
**Scott Barnett** Home Rite

### 15 YEARS

**Michael Cantor** Advanced Property & Mold Inspections  
**John Grinnan** AllSpec Services  
**Brian Henley** Keystone Home & Environmental Services  
**Steve Carroll** Carroll Property Inspections

### 10 YEARS

**Michael Olszewski** Mid-Suburban Home Inspection  
**Ryan White** Buyers Inspection Service  
**H. Tyler Mahley** Clear Path Property Inspections  
**Alex Seligsohn** Spotlight Home Inspections  
**Duane Longenecker** Cingo  
**Dan Lindeman** Tri - State Property Inspections  
**Tyler Potter** Capstone Inspection Services, Inc.  
**Rick Glassman**  
**Ken Mitchell**  
**Christopher Bandy** Veteran Inspection Group  
**James Jones III** Home & Commercial Inspections  
**Pat Cosentini** Pillar to Post  
**Donny Williams** Amerispec Inspection Services | All Atlanta  
**Anthony Perjanik** Homeguard Incorporated  
**Travis Palser** Homeguard Incorporated  
**Jon Anderson** Anderson Home Inspections

### 5 YEARS

**Mark Burnett** Cardinal Home Inspection  
**Cesar Calzadilla** Roma Inspections  
**Charles Cilibrasi** HomeGuard  
**Thomas (Toby) Henesey** Greater Gateway Inspections dba Pillar To Post  
**John Zerrer** River's Edge Home Inspections  
**Nathan Shotton** Recon Home Inspections  
**Andrew Conaway** Conaway Home Inspections  
**Tom Summy**  
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**Jason Perry** The More You Know Inspections  
**Alan Jones**  
**Michael Vakos** Tri-County Inspections  
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**Todd Thuss** Integra Inspection Services  
**Brett Roberts** Roberts Property Inspections  
**Paul Brand** Brand Name Home Inspections  
**Todd Newman** AmeriSpec of Louisville  
**Elton Andrews** Pillar To Post  
**Zach Flory** AmeriSpec Inspection Services  
**James Royer**



## REPORTER

Here's a look at some of the topics we'd love to cover in upcoming issues of the Reporter. To be considered, submit your articles to [editor@ashi.org](mailto:editor@ashi.org) within these areas before the deadlines below.

**MAY:** Roofing  
Deadline: Mar. 13

**JUNE:** HVAC  
Deadline: April 15

**JULY:** Indoor Air Quality  
Deadline: May 15

**AUGUST:** Roofing  
Deadline: June 14



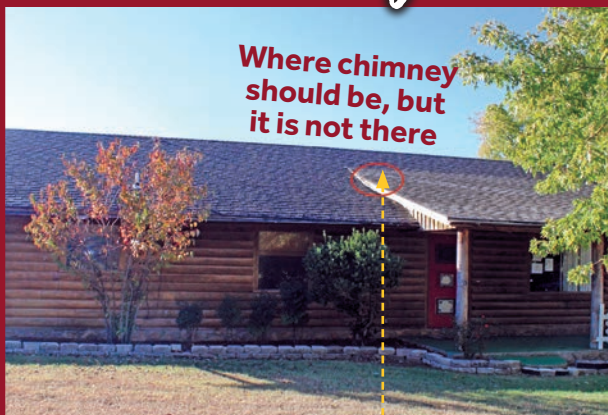


*Bathroom fan  
to nowhere*



Matthew Steger | WIN Home Inspection  
Lancaster, PA

*The missing  
chimney*



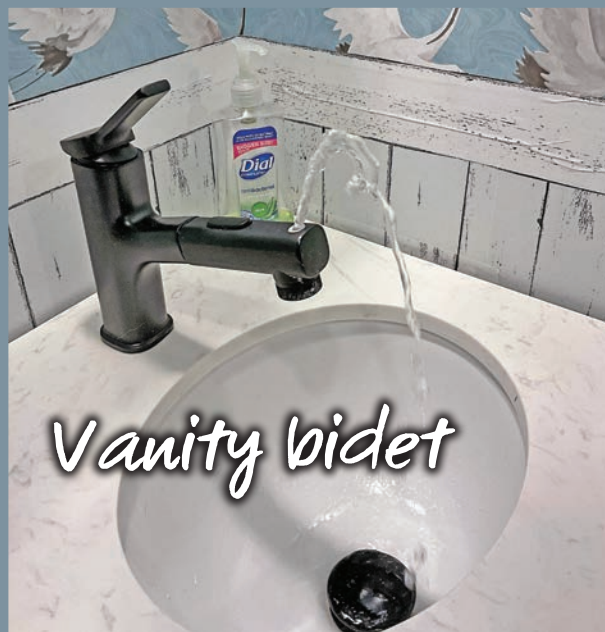
Konrad Delger  
Marlow, OK

*That will  
work!*



Brian Chatfield | BPG Inspections  
San Diego, CA

*Vanity bidet*



James Brock | Boston Home Inspectors  
Boston, MA





Ronnie Owenby | Total Home Inspections  
Asheville, NC

Did I enter and inspect this crawl space? Yes, I did.



Aaron Mayer | Housewarming Home Inspections  
St. Louis, MO



Matthew Menk | Five Star Home Inspection  
College Park, MD

There are repair methods more trustworthy than spray sealant.



Aaron Mayer | Housewarming Home Inspections  
St. Louis, MO

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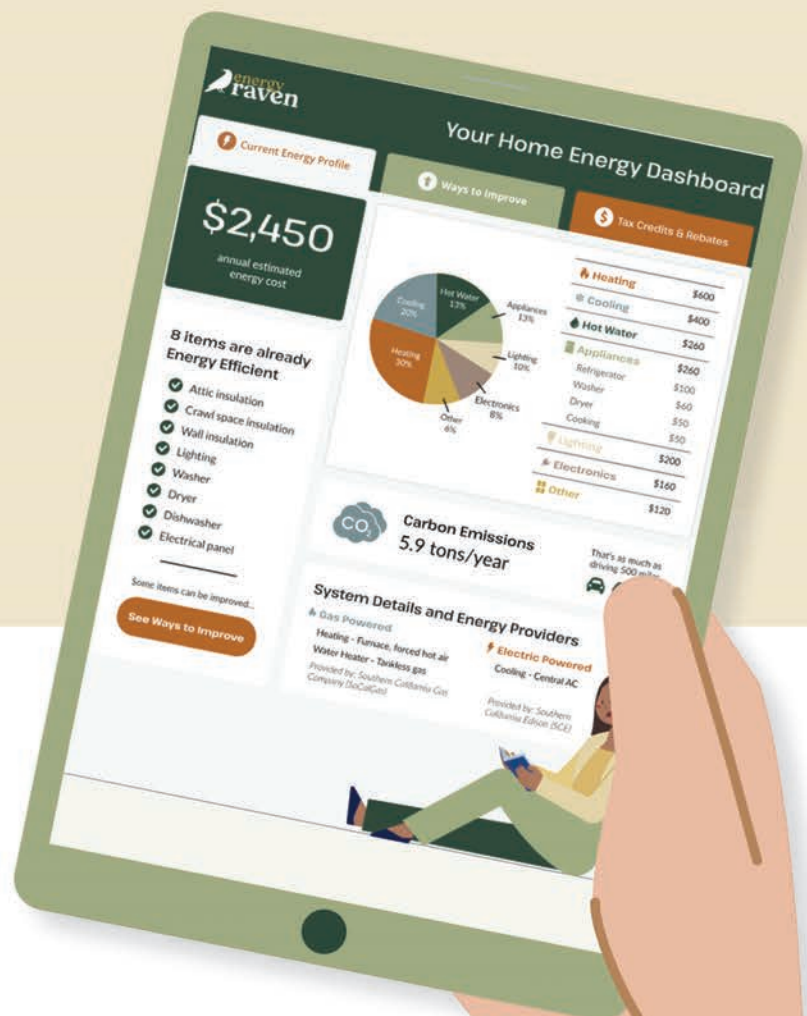
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