

HANDY TIPS

from



**HANDYMAN
SERVICE**

If you are interested in updating your home but don't want to invest in a major remodel, there are several quick and relatively inexpensive options:

- New flooring can create an entirely new look. Try a different surface — tile, slate, wood, or carpet — in a new color.
- Wall textures and coverings, with a wide range of patterns and styles, can also offer an updated look to your home.
- A modern countertop in one of today's new laminates or cultured marble can be inexpensive yet make a big difference in the kitchen or bath.
- Another quick fix for bathrooms is an updated tub or shower that is attractive and easy to clean, with new fixtures that help conserve water.
- On the exterior, simply changing your front door, porch area, or entryway can provide the new look you desire.

Read more about [affordable home improvements](#) in the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*.

Kaufman Wins Award

Kaufman Construction has won a 2008 QR Master Design bronze award in the Exterior Facelift category. This is the second Qualified Remodeler honor for Kaufman Construction, who won the silver in 2006 for a finished basement project.

Sponsored by [Qualified Remodeler](#) magazine, the Master Design Awards is the premier national contest recognizing outstanding achievement in residential remodeling projects in

22 categories. Nominees are residential remodeling companies from across the country, and entries are judged on aesthetic appeal, construction techniques used, financial value of the project, functionality of space and overall impression of the project.

Visit the [Kaufman Construction website](#) to see photos of the winning project.

Planning & Design are Key

Updates and perspectives on architectural design and trends

By Devan Kaufman

Every remodeling or building project, no matter how large or small, must include a design phase, and ideally this phase a) occurs before construction begins, and b) includes lots of input from the homeowner.

Purpose of Design

The design phase has several key purposes:

1. Provides aesthetic details (how it looks).
2. Provides technical details (how it works).
3. Outlines a timeframe for the project.
4. Outlines a budget for the project.

Looking at the purpose of design, it is easy to see why this phase works best when it comes before (and not in conjunction with) the construction phase.

Design before a project provides a more accurate understanding of the overall project cost, a more accurate timetable of how long it will take, and better understanding about what the end-product will look like. It also helps make sure this project

ties in well with the rest of the house, property and location.

Homeowner Input is Key

Homeowners should plan to be involved in the design phase, even if they have no experience with a remodeling or building project. A good contractor or designer will help guide the design discussion to determine how to proceed in a way that meets the client's lifestyle and budget.

Architectural drawings should be provided that include specifics about appearance and materials. Small details such as how tile pieces fit together or the location of electrical outlets are very important.

Although a design phase may seem like an extra step, when done properly it actually saves time and money, because much of the project management has already been done.

In my experience, homeowners are most frustrated when a project costs more than they expected, takes longer than expected, or doesn't turn out as expected — and allowing for a good, complete, high-quality design phase for the project will help eliminate many of those frustrations.

A good design can take several months, so it's best to PLAN AHEAD.

READ ABOUT GREEN BUILDING IN OUR JULY NEWSLETTER.

And check out the [MidAmerican Energy Advantage](#) program to see if you have energy-efficient equipment that qualifies for incentives or rebates.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT Meet Eric Carlson

Job Title: Manager, KC Handyman.

Hometown: Winterset.

Years doing this type work: 18.

Most rewarding part of job: Solving problems for clients.

Most challenging part of job: Juggling and managing the wide range of responsibilities.

When I was in 6th grade, I wanted to be: A cowboy.

What I expect to be doing in 20 years: Training dogs for hunting.

When I am not at work, I like to:

Spend time with family, run dog trials, and hunt.

The one tool/ piece of equipment I can't be without: Computer.

Biggest change in the construction business over the past 10 years: Internet and availability of information.



the ASK EXPERT

Why is it important for my contractor to have years of experience in this community?

Naturally, years of experience *anywhere* is great, but years of experience in this community can bring extra benefits to both the homeowner and contractor.

many contacts within the area better able to hire and retain quality employees, will know which suppliers and subcontractors are the most reliable, who to call to secure the best materials, and to ensure that those materials arrive on time. They will also be able to anticipate any of the potential problems that could arise — especially those caused by typical weather patterns.

A contractor with local ties also is more likely to understand the importance of neighborhood aesthetics and trends. And as a local businessperson, he or she has a natural investment in the community, and so is more likely to take pride in quality work.

When your contractor is familiar with the market, he or she will have that will help ensure the job flows smoothly. The contractor will likely be

Do you have a home design or remodeling question, or a maintenance problem that's been nagging you for months?

Send your question to us at expert@kaufmanconstruction.com and we'll respond in an upcoming issue of our newsletter.

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For the

[2008 Tour of Remodeled Homes](#)

September 20-21

Sponsored by the Des Moines Remodeler's Council.

Bring this invitation with you, and receive one complimentary admission.