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Sprucing Up For Spring







HARLAN -- Local contractors are getting busy as the weather warms up and thoughts turn to spring home improvement plans.

Top: Devin Fink, with Dave Martin Construction in Harlan, works on a driveway patch Thursday, March 31. He said they've been getting busier as the weather starts to turn warmer.

Bottom left:Tom and Wyatt Muenchrath, kneeling, of Tom's Electric & Grain Equipment of Westphalia, work on updating the service at the old Flower Barn building Thursday, March 31.

Bottom right: Arrick Clausen, of Elevate Roofing in Denison, backs up a load of plywood Thursday, March 31. Elevate is putting a new rubber roof on the building that will soon be home to Patriot's Choice Contracting in Harlan.

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PAGE 4 HARLAN TRIBUNE - TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022



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correctly installed sulation is Insulation only works as a thermal barrier when in complete contact with your building's air barrier (often drywall) with no gaps, voids or compression



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4 Replace incandescent light bulbs with more efficient CFLs or LEDs 75% less energy 10x longer life;

\$30 saved over its life 5 Use energy-efficient variable speed pool

pumps

up to **\$400** per year can be saved by upgrading your pool pump, depending on size of motor, operating hours, and utility rate schedule.

Reduce air

pressure Duct leakage and door closure can

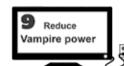
cause significant air pressure within a building which greatly increases heating and cooling costs

7 Install shade screens

80% of solar heat gain can be blocked by shade screens; use on east, west and south facing windows

Recycle your old refrigerator or freezer in the garage

\$100 per year can be saved by turning off an old refrigerator or freezer



Disconnect appliances that drain electricity, such as your TV and computer by unplugging them or plugging them into a power strip and switching the power strip off

10 Set thermostat based \$150 per year can be saved by installing a programmable thermostat

by turning down the thermostat by

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Signs it is time to overhaul your kitchen:



Remodeling a kitchen adds value to a home. Remodeling Magazine's "Cost vs. Value Report" indicates mid-range kitchen remodels cost about \$66,000, and homeowners can expect to recover about 60 to 80 percent of that cost at resale.

Homeowners may wonder if remodeling their kitchens is worth the investment. But homeowners should not just consider cost, but also the current conditions of their kitchens when deciding if a renovation project is the right move to make. These signs indicate it may be time to renovate a kitchen.

- Breakers are triggered: If the lights go dark from a tripped circuit breaker every time you try to microwave and run the toaster oven at the same time, your wiring is likely not up to the task of handling the workload and could be out of date. A kitchen remodel will assess wiring load needs and an electric overhaul may be necessary.
- Lack of storage: One of the biggest hassles homeowners encounter in their kitchens is a lack of storage space. If making a meal involves a Jengalike stacking and rearranging of kitchen tools, or if an avalanche occurs whenever you search for an item, you might need more storage. A carefully planned redesign can achieve this, even in a smaller kitchen.
- Outdated appliances: Even if your appliances are not avocado green or mustard yellow relics of the 1970s, they might still need to be replaced. According to CRD Design, appliances are only expected to last around 10 to 15 years. If appliances have become unsafe or energy hogs, it could be time for a remodel.
- Family is expanding (or shrinking): Kitchens often are the heart of a home. They need to meet the needs of the family that resides in that home. A remodel can add space as needed. On the flip side, when a couple becomes empty nesters, kitchens can be redesigned and downsized to reflect their new needs and desires, such as the addition of a wine chiller or espresso station.
- Poor lighting: Task lighting is essential in a kitchen, but older homes may not be equipped with lighting where it's most needed. A carefully designed remodel can improve lighting with under-cabinet lights, pendants, overhead lighting, and even natural light to make the space attractive and more func-

tional

- Frequent run-ins: The notion that you can have too many cooks in the kitchen refers to having too many people trying to pitch in or offer their opinions. However, it also can apply to when too many people are gathering in a small space. Redesigning a kitchen can improve the efficiency of a space and make the room feel larger.
- Aesthetic appeal: Many kitchen remodels have been inspired by unsightly kitchens. Cosmetic changes can lead to big improvements.

Kitchen renovations can add instant appeal and help address issues that tend to plague outdated rooms.



It's House Moving Day!

HARLAN -- Bruce Burger Construction and O'Neill Company moved a home from 7th St. in downtown Harlan to its new resting place in north Harlan Thursday, March 3. Burger has used the transport company many times to relocate homes and remodel them for residential use, many of which brighten the neighborhood in north Harlan. Here, they navigate the corner of 7th and Durant Sts. (Photo by Bob Bjoin)

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Upgrade bathroom safety features

Bathrooms can benefit from updates that improve their form and function. While styles and color patterns may inspire bathroom renovations, improvements to safety also should be considered.

Bathrooms can be one of the most dangerous rooms in a house. Bath and shower areas account for about two-thirds of accidental injuries in these spaces. Many other injuries involve the toilet. In 2008, a thorough investigation of bathroom dangers conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that mishaps near the bathtub, shower, toilet, and sink caused an estimated 234,094 nonfatal injuries in the United States among people aged 15 years and older.

Seniors are particularly vulnerable in the bathroom due to reduced mobility and flexibility, visual impairment and other factors. However, some key modifications can make bathrooms much safer for aging populations.

• Raised toilet seat: Install an ADA-compliant raised toilet seat. Standard toilet seats are roughly 15 inches high, but elevated seats can

raise the bowl an additional two to four inches. Another option is to invest in risers that can be attached to an existing toilet.

- Grab bars: Seniors may use towel holders as grab bars, which don't have stability and can dislodge from the wall. Install secured side grip bars by the toilet and inside the shower to make maneuvering easier.
- Water temperature: Seniors may be vulnerable to hot water temperatures. Lower the water temperature setting on the hot water heater. StaySafe.org recommends 120 F.
- Faucets: Change faucet handles to paddlestyle handles rather than knobs. Knobs can be challenging to grip for those with arthritis in their hands. Also, handles that are easier for seniors to use can reduce the risk of the elderly losing their balance as they attempt to gain leverage to turn the water on and off.
- Nonslip mats: Nonslip mats or tape strips can be used in showers and tub bottoms, as well as outside of the shower to reduce the risk of slips and falls. Rugs should have rubberized, slip-resistant backing.

- Rounded corners: Choose counters and fixtures with rounded corners. Should a senior fall against something, the rounded corner may prevent serious injury.
- Shower benches and transfer seats: Benches and transfer seats make it easier getting in and out of the shower. Also, sitting while showering reduces the risk of becoming light-headed or losing balance.
- Walk-in tubs/showers: Minimizing the threshold to the shower or bathtub is an important safety feature. Some manufacturers make walk-in tubs with doors that secure and make watertight seals. Showers that don't have a lip or tub to scale also are better for seniors.
- Lighting: Eyesight weakens over time, so improve lighting with combinations of overhead lighting and softer side lighting. Night lights or soft-glowing toilet lights can make it easier to get around the bathroom in the middle of the night.

These are just some improvements that can create safer bathroom environments for seniors.

Budget-friendly dining room renovation ideas If the kitchen is the heart of the home, then the dining room may be akin

If the kitchen is the heart of the home, then the dining room may be akin to one of its arteries. The mood created in the kitchen spreads to the dining space where family and friends gather to eat and enjoy one another's company.

Dining rooms can get lost in the home renovation shuffle, as many homeowners tend to focus on renovating kitchens and bathrooms instead. Homeowners do not have to invest a lot of money in renovations to give their dining spaces awe-inspiring makeovers. Here's how to do so on a budget.

- Lighten and brighten. Dining rooms were once very formal spaces. Dark woods, large pieces of furniture, over-the-top chandeliers, and other details could be found in many homes. But now that houses are being built with open floor plans, dining rooms can blend with other spaces, which have moved to lighter colored walls, flooring and furniture. A fresh coat of vibrant paint can work wonders and it doesn't cost much. If you can't remove a floor, cover it with a brightly colored area rug.
- Switch things up with slipcovers. Slipcovers can be changed each season to dramatically alter the look of a dining room for little investment. Slip covers also protect chairs and can be easily laundered after spills.
- Add floating shelving. Floating shelves provide much-needed storage or display space without the need to invest in another piece of furniture. Depending on the shelving, they can work in modern design schemes or even farmhouse dining spaces.
- Clear out the clutter. It might be time to say "so long" to that large curio cabinet and the knickknacks within it. Curio and china cabinets used to be de rigueur, but plenty of people now prefer more open and airy dining rooms. For those who want to keep the cabinet, try decluttering inside to only include the very best display pieces and see if the cabinet can be refinished with paint or a lightly colored stain.
- Improve lighting. Make the chandelier the statement piece of the space. Go for a bold color or an innovative design. Then add accessories throughout the space that coordinate with the chandelier.
- Add bench seating. Those who need additional seating may not have to get entirely new furniture. Swap out some chairs for benches, which can fit a couple more guests than chairs.
- Create depth with color. HGTV says that using various shades of the same color in a space can add depth. Coordinate drapes, walls, seat fabrics, and accessories for a cohesive design.

Renovating a dining room doesn't require a large investment of time and





money. A few simple steps can give dining spaces a whole new feel without busting homeowners' budgets.



The basics of container gardening

Gardening is a rewarding hobby that has been linked to health benefits like reduced stress and improved mental well-being. Gardening also can lead to an inviting home landscape full of attractive blooms and/or delicious foods.

Backyard gardens have long been planted after clearing a plot of land, tilling and amending the soil, and planting rows of favorite crops. However, gardening can be less labor-intensive and even more successful when people consider the many benefits of container gardening.

What is container gardening?

As its name implies, container gardening is growing plants inside of containers. These containers can be flower pots, rectangular deck boxes or even large raised garden beds.

Pros to container gardening

One of the advantages of container gardening is that plants can be moved in and out of sunlight to ensure the right growing conditions. This isn't as easily achieved when gardens are stationary. Also, beginner gardeners may be more able to control soil conditions inside of a small container rather than a vast ground-based garden, which will require a good deal of manual labor. Pots and boxes also can be grouped together to create eye-popping displays, usually at lower costs than the sheer volume of plants that would be needed to fill out an expansive landscape.

Cons to container gardening

Container garden plants will not have direct access to the ground, so they need gardeners to create the ideal growing conditions. Developing the right care formula can be challenging. The home and garden resource The Spruce says that drainage is an important factor in container gardening, and most containers do not offer enough drainage holes. If water cannot escape the soil, the roots of the plants can rot and die. It's not enough to add stones or gravel to the bottom of containers. Drill additional holes in the bottom (1/2-inch in diameter for small or medium-sized pots; one inch in diameter for larger pots). Also, be sure to check on soil moisture so that watering can be adjusted. During hot stretches, plants may need to be watered more frequently.

Plan for plants that play well

Grouping plants together can create visually stunning combinations. However, it is important to choose plants that require the same amount of light and moisture. Look at plant tags when visiting the garden center and select complementary plants, or ask a store employee. Mixing different plant shapes, colors and leaf textures, as well as plants of various heights, can help containers look filled out.

Feed plants accordingly

Plants need nutrition to thrive in containers. Quality potting mixes will contain fertilizers, but nutrition will wane over time. Every couple of weeks, container plants will need either fresh potting mix or granular fertilizer added to feed them. Oregon State University Extension Services suggests using a slow-release fertilizer or worm castings several times throughout the season.

Container gardening is a great way to add plants to smaller patios, reduce the workload involved in maintaining expansive gardens, and customize conditions for optimal growth.





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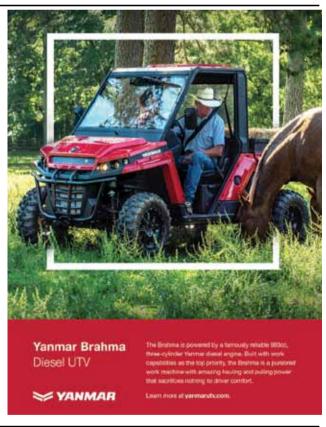




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