

# Ask questions before remodeling

With the remodeling season approaching, you may be among the many homeowners who are considering home improvements but are frightened by the horror stories of dishonest or unqualified contractors.

"The good news is that by asking the right questions and looking in the right places, you can find a professional, experienced remodeler to do a job that will not only raise your home's value but also make the home more enjoyable for many years to come," said L. David Kellett, co-chairman of the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan (BASM) Remodelers Council and president of Kellett Construction Co. in Bloomfield Hills.

The best places to find qualified contractors is through friends, neighbors, local real estate agents and BASM's Remodelers directory.

Many homeowners like their neighborhoods and don't relish the expense and trouble of moving but want a change in space or amenities. Remodeling makes it possible to upgrade and expand without moving and often rewards the investment with a higher sale price when the house is later put on the market.

"The percentage of a remodeling investment which will be returned depends on the job and the number of

years until the house is sold," said Thomas Kellett, co-chairman of BASM's Remodelers Council and vice president of Kellett Construction Co.

"A minor kitchen remodel can return 100 percent of the initial investment, while a new skylight illuminating a room could return even more. A rule of thumb is that any improvement which brings a home up to the level of similar houses in the same neighborhood is a good one."

In choosing a remodeler, the lowest price is not always the best choice. No two remodelers will do a job exactly the same way. Be as specific as possible and ask the contractor to specify the materials and brand names on which he is basing the quote. Be especially wary of a quote significantly lower than the range indicated by the others.

With a remodeling project, the lowest price often comes with a sacrifice or compromise of quality workmanship or materials, professionalism, time, supervision, service and follow up.

By the time you decide to hire a remodeler, you probably already have a fairly good idea of what you want the finished job to look like. A professional remodeler can take your ideas and recommend the most effective ways to achieve the results you are seeking

while staying within your budget.

Like any important purchase, a remodeling project is not something to be spontaneous about. Although it may take some time to find a remodeler with whom you feel comfortable and can communicate, it is well worth the effort.

One of the most important things that can be done to learn about a remodeler is to ask for a list of recently completed projects that are similar to yours. He may have done kitchen remodeling, but that won't be much of an indication of how well he can add an additional level to your home.

Then, call the references and visit the sites if possible. To be protected from possible legal problems, it's important that you verify that the remodeler has the licenses and permits required to build in your city and is properly insured according to Michigan's regulations.

A good remodeler will want you to do your homework before you sign the contract. In fact, since so much of a remodeler's business comes from referrals, a good remodeler will do everything possible to ensure that the job will reflect well on his company and add one more customer to his list of satisfied clients.

## Handyman to broadcast from Cobo

NewsTalk Radio AM-1270 WXYT will broadcast the "Ask the Handyman" show featuring master handyman Glenn Haegle live from the 77th Annual International Builders Home, Flower and Furniture Show at the Cobo Conference-Exhibition Center on Saturdays and Sundays, March 18-19 and March 25-26 until noon.

Glenn Haegle has an extensive background in the do-it-yourself industry. His career includes nine years with a national paint manufacturer and 13 years with the largest independent hardware chain in the country. As he's done for the past 11 years, Glenn continues to invite industry experts to be guests on his radio show and answers home improvement questions from callers.

"The 'Ask the Handyman' show has become one of the most popular weekend talk shows in Metro Detroit," said Michael Packer, WXYT vice president/general manager. "I credit that success to Glenn's sincerity and his expertise in the home improvement industry."

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Saturday 11:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
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Regular Admission: Adults \$4.00; Seniors and Children 6-12 \$4.00; Children under 6 admitted FREE  
Special Family Ticket, includes 2 adults and all the children, \$9.00 - available only at Farmer Jack

