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*Minimum purchase required of 10 kitchen or bath cabinets.

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LET'S REMODEL

This column is provided by the Michigan Remodeling Association.

Q: We are in the process of updating our kitchen and would like to use some accent lighting. Can you help?

A: The kitchen can be a very challenging room for lighting. This room requires a lot of task lighting over countertops and other work surfaces. You should have plenty of lights under the cabinets to light your work. Also, consider what type of surfaces will be installed. A white or light-colored surface is certainly the easiest to light. But if you have chosen a darker countertop, there will be more reflection which will alter how you light that surface. Linear low-voltage halogen lights and miniature can lights work very well in this space.

Overhead lighting and overall illumination are also important in the kitchen. Linear lighting within the soffits and above the cabinets provides excellent accent along with some overhead light. Center fixtures work better with accents from recessed cans. You can also get quite creative with your general lighting, using dimmer controls. This comes in very handy when entertaining and works well for wall washing — illumination that covers the entire room and enlarges the look of it.

Don't forget the accent lighting in your kitchen. Object lighting, cove and in-cabinet lighting, can add just as much to a room as the object itself. Using lighting so subtly will draw attention to these aspects without being overpowering.

Energy efficiency is another important point for any room. In terms of efficiency, incandescent light is least efficient, followed by halogens and then fluorescent lights. Consider all your options. You may be surprised at the new styles of some of these light sources. Still, the most efficient way to conserve energy and save on your electric bill is to turn lights off when leaving the room.

Bob Nacyert, Lunar Home Improvement, 810-779-4700.

Q: We will be converting our three-season porch into a sunroom and would like some ideas?

A: Sunrooms are being used to create and enhance a wide range of attractive living spaces including family rooms, exercise areas, pool and spa rooms, dining rooms and even home offices. Of course, they can also be used as traditional greenhouses for plants. Versatility in style, design and modular engineering make sunrooms a very desirable way to expand your home without threatening its architectural integrity. Today's technology, in building materi-



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als and glass provide maximum insulation while minimizing drafts, condensation and heat gain.

Developments such as Solar Control glass and Heat Mirror make it possible to enjoy your room year round. With the new glass technology the sun's infrared heat is reflected away from the glass, while visible light comes through with reduced glare, the result is not unlike sitting under a shade tree on a hot sunny day. If the weather is cold outside, radiant heat from within the room is 'mirrored' back inside, significantly reducing condensation, cold drafts and utility bills. Solariums range from small porch enclosures to greenhouses and fully customized room additions. Regardless of how you use it, a sunroom can add hours of pleasure to your life. Investigate, plan and then choose a professional remodeler and the sunroom options right for your house and lifestyle.

Eric Brakke, Four Seasons Sunrooms, Southfield 810-352-4250.

If you have home improvement questions, call Gayle Walters at the Michigan Remodeling Association (MRA) at 810-335-3232, or send questions to "Let's Remodel," 2187 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 103, Sylvan Lake, MI 48320. Answers are provided by members of the MRA, the local chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). Members include professional contractors, manufacturers, wholesalers and lenders representing all facets of residential and light commercial remodeling. For more information or a free copy of our membership roster call 810-335-3232.