

# Get 'road map to success' from local contractors

Remodeling has become fairly common practice.

Factors of the tight economy, fewer lots on which to build and people buying distressed properties for investment have led to a surge in remodeling. Many people who have experienced remodeling jobs have various stories to tell - not all of them good.

But a group of area licensed subcontractors and designers has organized to create an environment where remodeling can be a positive experience. The Homeowners Remodeling Group assists homeowners in remodeling projects, big and small, offering them with "A Road Map to Remodeling Success."

Mike Archambault, owner of Wood Whims and one of the founders of the remodelers' group, said the homeowner can serve as their own contractor for the work. If he or she would rather not be in charge of the project, Jack Bercel, one of the principals in Bercel Builders, will serve in that capacity.

"We basically build you a road map to show you how to work with the subcontractors to get your remodeling job done," Archambault said.

A potential remodeler answers a questionnaire to determine what his or her needs are. The survey gives the remodeler a good idea on what is involved in the job and saves the person at least 20 percent on the work.

"If you serve as your own contractor, you will probably save more than 20 percent, but by working with this group, you will save at least that much," Archambault said.

The homeowner works directly with the subcontractors, saving time, frustration and money over working with "big box" stores in a do-it-yourself project.

"Big box stores generally promote how fast they are," Archambault said.

"What they don't tell you is the full story of a remodeling job. They aren't going to give you all the information you need, and you are not going to be working with seriously experienced subs."

The remodeling group provides more than 200 years experience between them.

"We are giving you a series of excellent people who insist on the highest standards in every job," Archambault said. "When we came up with the idea (of forming the group), we sat and figured out who we would recommend to somebody who was asking for a specific job."

By using the remodeling partners, the customer gets quality workmanship, and the subcontractors are able to work more in a down economy.

"It's a win-win for everybody," Archambault said.

There are criteria a customer must meet to serve as their own contractor on the job. Organization is a key factor in leading a team through a remodeling project.

The "Road Map to Remodeling Success" is personalized to the client. It includes a detailed timeline to keep the work on track.



Before



After

"This gives a homeowner a realistic idea on what it takes to do a remodel the right way," Archambault said. "It really helps calm the unknown in remodeling and helps prevent mistakes from occurring."

Archambault stresses that using licensed subcontractors "saves a ton of money in the long-run and prevents the customer from making mistakes."

"People are going to get exactly what they ordered, so communication is key. That's what this group is designed to do. It is a group effort that works well."

For more information about the program, call Wood Whims, (480) 837-1458. Other subcontractors in the program include Bercel Builders, Inc. (Jack Bercel, (480) 837-2596); Ferguson Bath, Kitchen and Lighting Gallery (Jillian Puglisi, (480) 556-0103); Fountain Hills Design Center (Alice Blackerby, (480) 837-6561); Mike's Drywall Service, Inc. (Mike Kochen, (480) 816-0980); Rimrock Design Enterprises (Reuel Moser, (602) 996-7707); Stone Net, Inc. (Tom Wagner, (623) 707-3615); Travis & Sons Plumbing, Inc. (Bob Travis, (480) 837-9422; and Trinity Power & Electric, Inc. (Mark Cook, (480) 837-2838).

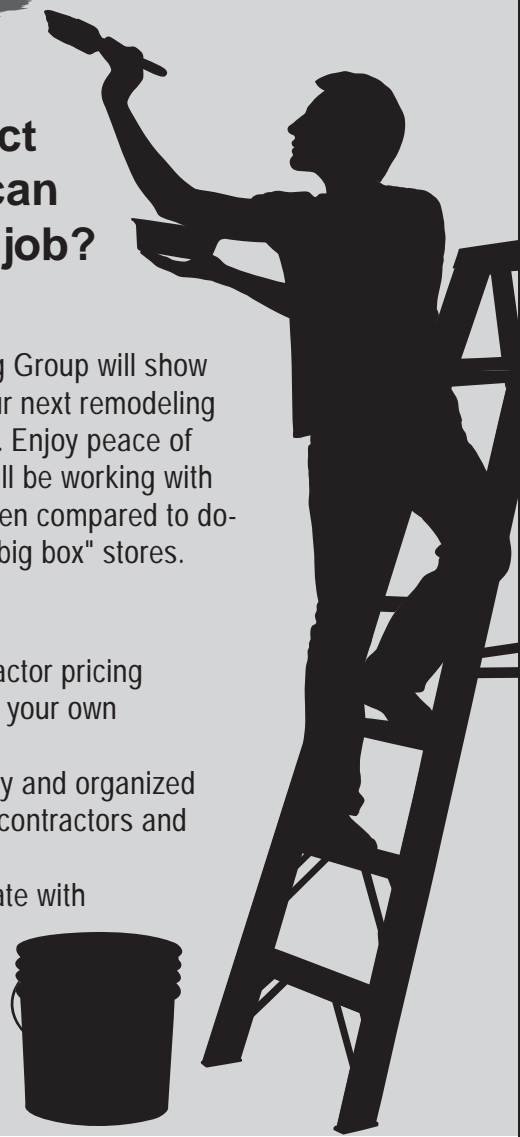
# Be the Boss on your next remodeling project and save 20%

## Do you have a remodeling project and believe you can handle your own job?

The Homeowners' Remodeling Group will show you how to keep control of your next remodeling project and save 20% or more. Enjoy peace of mind knowing professionals will be working with you and saving you money when compared to do-it-yourself shopping at valley "big box" stores.

- If you want to remodel
- If you want to receive contractor pricing
- If you are willing to manage your own project to save money
- If you are responsible, timely and organized
- If you are willing to contact contractors and trades for estimates
- If you are willing to coordinate with contractors on the site

### Call today and tell us you want to be the boss!



Contact Wood Whims or any of our remodeling partners, answer a few questions about the scope of your project and you will be well on your way to saving money on your next remodel. Wood Whims or another designated contractor will provide you with your own personalized Road Map to Remodeling Success. Your Road Map will include a task list of who to contact, when to contact them and how to successfully accomplish the project.

### Homeowners' Remodeling Group

**Bercel Builders, Inc.**  
(480) 837-2596 • Call Jack  
ROC 064760

**Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery**  
(480) 556-0103 • Call Jillian

**Fountain Hills Design Center**  
(480) 837-6561 • Call Alice/Beverly

**Mike's Drywall Service, Inc.**  
(480) 816-0980 • Call Mike  
ROC 130069

**Rimrock Design Enterprises**  
(602) 996-7707 • Call Reuel

**Stone Net, Inc.**  
(623) 707-3615 • Call Tom  
ROC 137062

**Travis & Sons Plumbing, Inc.**  
(480) 837-9422 • Call Bob  
ROC 197585

**Trinity Power & Electric, Inc.**  
(480) 837-2838 • Call Mark/Eleanor  
ROC 193292

**Wood Whims, Inc.**  
(480) 837-1458 • Call Dave/Mike  
ROC 190556

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# Long-running business knows people like to be cool

Rich Davila's signature desert rat isn't the only one who wants to be cool.

It is Davila's business to keep residents cool – or warm, depending on the season – with Fountain Hills Air Conditioning & Heating.

Davila opened his business in August 1974. As one of Fountain Hills' first business owners, because of his longevity in the community, Davila knows his customers. He has experienced Fountain Hills from the early days when growth was slow but steady through the boom years and beyond.

For nearly all those years, Davila worked in new construction. About

four years ago, he decided to get out of that side of the business and continue with repair and replacement.

"We now do routine maintenance checks, repairs and replacements," he said.

Seasonal specials are offered for maintenance checks in the spring and fall. Davila said he does not sell maintenance contracts.

"Maintenance contracts cost more than they are worth," he said. "Twice a year maintenance checks are routine. You don't have to get somebody on a contract to do that kind of work. It doesn't make sense."



Rich Davila is owner of Fountain Hills Air Conditioning & Heating. He opened the business in 1974.

Davila is a Rheem dealer. He said he has always been impressed with Rheem's quality, performance and their availability of parts.

"I have been a Rheem dealer for more than 30 years," he said. "It is a great product, and the factory stands behind its equipment. I have sold other brands, but I have had situations with warranties and getting parts that I didn't like. Rheem has great quality."

Davila said when he is replacing a system for a customer, he asks several questions before he makes a recommendation for the new unit.

"The first thing I ask is whether somebody is a year-round resident," he said.

That determines the type of unit he will recommend. If someone lives in the area part-time, Davila recommends that the customer buy a unit with a minimum "SEER" rating. SEER is short for "Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio." The higher the SEER rating, the more efficiently the unit uses power.

"You won't need a high SEER rating if you aren't here in the summer months," he said.

Conversely, for year-round residents, Davila recommends purchasing the highest SEER rating they can afford.

"Now things are very affordable to go to the top end of the units," Davila said.

Several rebates are available to homeowners who install new units. There is a federal tax credit of up to

\$1,500 until 2010. Rheem is offering a rebate of up to \$1,200 until July 15. Salt River Project, which provides power to Fountain Hills and some parts of Scottsdale, has a \$300 to \$400 rebate.

Davila said you can get a 16 ½ to 17½ SEER unit for less than you can purchase a 13 SEER unit.

"That is a really good deal," he said. "You end up saving 30 to 50 percent on your air conditioning bill."

Davila decided years ago he wanted to open his own business in a place where there was little or no competition.

He added that in those early years where there was no competition, "There wasn't much business, either."

But that has changed. Davila has a thriving business serving Fountain Hills, the Verde communities and Scottsdale in the 85259 ZIP code.

"I've been doing this for a long time," Davila said. "I still enjoy what I do. The people here are great."

Davila said that he is proud of the business he has built.

"There is one thing to remember," he said. "It's not hard to build a good reputation, but it is hard to keep it."

Davila's number of years in the business speak to his reputation. After almost 35 years, he must be doing something right.

For appointments and information, call Fountain Hills Air Conditioning & Heating, (480) 837-1313. The company is located at 16524 E. Laser Drive, Suite 8, in Fountain Hills.

## Flooring America

# Family-owned business leads the way in floors

The owners of Scottsdale's Flooring America know their business.

In the community since 1995, Ed, Valerie and son Todd Boettcher watch the trends in floor coverings and provide their clientele with a wide range of choices in tile, carpet, wood and more.

Size does matter. Tile has taken a turn toward larger sizes. What was common not long ago, a foot square piece, is being replaced by 18-by-18 inch tiles or 20 by 20-inch. The larger size is growing in popularity, and the Boettchers say they are installing the new sizes on a daily basis.

The larger tile offers numerous advantages over their smaller cousins. Less grout is required to install the larger tiles. Grout often is the most vulnerable to dirt and staining. This is greatly reduced with the larger tile sizes.

Larger tiles make an area appear larger. With fewer grout lines, the room appears less busy.

Installing larger tile updates the look of a home.

"This look definitely modernizes the home," the Boettchers say. "It has a classic appeal."

Wood flooring also has gained popularity in this area since the Boettchers opened their Scottsdale store. In the beginning, people in Scottsdale, Fountain Hills and other nearby communities were not buying wood flooring. It has become more and more popular in the last five years.

Larger planks are becoming stylish

replacing the standard two- and three-inch wide slats. The narrower planks continue to be popular in a more formal setting, but the wider slats create a casual, comfortable feel in any room. Current wood styles include a "hand-scraped" look, which offers an undulated surface which shows less foot activity and use.

"Green" products also are appearing more and more in homes. Renewable resources such as cork and bamboo are satisfying people's need to be more environmental and earth-friendly. Another environmental method is to use reclaimed flooring, where planks are removed from old buildings, such as churches or schools. The top veneer is removed, and a new wood floor is created.

"It is just a good way to recycle good wood flooring," the Boettchers said.

Engineered wood also is available. The wood is made from plys, similar to plywood, so it is less expensive but also is durable. "Engineered wood is real wood, but it isn't solid," the Boettchers said. "It is more stable than solid wood floors in that it decreases the expansion and contraction of the wood. It just provides another option for the consumer."

Ed Boettcher noted that floor covering sizes have "grown" over the years, but prices have not followed suit. Competition by manufacturers of both tile and wood have maintained, and in many cases, lowered prices to the

consumer.

Flooring America may be able to help its customers with financing. The store offers a one-year, no interest, no payment plan for qualified buyers. Other plans are available.

The store, located at 10240 N. 90th St., is a modern, 5,000-square-foot showroom with current tile, wood, laminate and carpet samples, along with multiple in-stock specials of tile and laminate. Flooring America offers its customers a chance to sign out products for in-home viewing, giving people a real look at how the materials will work in their homes.

The Boettchers also provide no cost, no obligation measuring for any flooring project. They also have design consultation, as well as showroom experts who can answer questions about all types of floor covering.

Flooring America is a member in good standing with the Better Business Bureau and the Registrar of Contractors.

The store is open 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6



The staff at Flooring America, clockwise from center, Valerie Boettcher, Melissa Jones, Ed Boettcher, Jaclyn Onion and Todd Boettcher.

p.m. Saturdays and from noon to 5 p.m. Sundays. The phone number is (480) 451-9600.

## Water conservation program turns 10

The water conservation program, Water – Use It Wisely, is 10 years old.

The outreach effort has a new look, as well as expanded services. The goal of the program has always been to provide simple water-saving tips and resources individuals can apply to their everyday lives. The focus generally has been for indoor water use; the focus has now shifted to outdoor use.



**WATER USE IT WISELY.**

The Web site has been redesigned to provide regional landscaping tips, local resources and ways to get involved and join the cause.

There also is a new online events calendar featuring expos and landscaping courses to help residents become more water efficient.

Visit the updated Web site at [www.wateruseitwisely.com/Arizona](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/Arizona)

## Home, garden shows slated

One way to get lots of ideas for sprucing up your home and yard is to visit a home and garden show.

Maricopa County Home Shows features five shows a year at various venues. Each show is unique, and all have some of the same features. There are landscaping companies and actual landscapes, interior design competitions, gardens, celebrities, drawings, lectures, workshops and more.

Some of the upcoming events are as follows:

The Maricopa County Home & Landscape Show, May 1, 2 and 3, Ari-

zona State Fairgrounds, Phoenix.

West Valley Maricopa County Home and Garden Show, Aug. 7-9, University of Phoenix Stadium, Glendale.

Maricopa County Home & Landscape Show, Sept. 25-27, Arizona State Fairgrounds, Phoenix.

West Valley Maricopa County Home and Garden Show, Jan. 15-17, 2010, University of Phoenix Stadium, Glendale.

Second Annual Southwestern Flower & Garden Show, March 5-7, 2010, University of Phoenix Stadium, Glendale.

## Premier Pest

# FH company offers varied services to customers

Premier Pest Management just keeps growing.

The Fountain Hills company, co-owned by Becky Garr and Sandy Hellems, opened in 1997. The driving force behind the company has always been to “do what it takes to add value to their customers.” Reasonable prices, excellent customer service and knowledgeable employees have helped grow the business through the years.

The goal for its pest control clients is to help keep people’s homes safe from unwanted pests.

From rattlesnakes to scorpions, Premier offers more options than just chemical applications.

“We’re very willing to share information with people,” Hellems said. “The solution isn’t always to grab a can and start spraying.”

“There should be careful consideration on the treatment approach and how to do it responsibly.”

Most of the solutions lie in just helping people understand the animals of the desert and how they live.

While scorpions and rattlesnakes don’t do much damage to the home, one insect that does is the termite.

Arizona has perfect conditions to support termites: low water tables and no frost give subterranean termites lots of space to forage. Additionally, the termite’s favorite food is dead roots. The desert provides a plentiful food source. Many homes are built right on top of scraped away bushes and trees with roots still in the soil.

Because of these conditions, it suggests that every home should have termite protection.

Termite treatment doesn’t have to be awful. Hellems states that chemicals alone don’t make for great termite service. Proper application is necessary to make sure the right amount of material is used. And when the chemical application is complete the real work has just begun.

“What separates termite companies, in our opinion, is their finish work and customer service,” Hellems said. “A customer’s home should be treated respectfully from making sure our boots are clean to putting everything back where it belongs.”

Most importantly, Premier provides written and guaranteed proposals for both their pest and termite control services.

When we have a termite contract, we inspect the complete home at least once annually.

“Many companies just collect the renewal fee and say, ‘Call us if you see a problem,’” Hellems says. “Well, we are the professionals. We should be looking for the termites on the customer’s behalf.”

“Our company and its employees take personal pride in their work,” Garr says.

The growth of the pest control side led to the creation of Premier Home Services, LLC, a landscape maintenance company.

Premier Home Services, LLC, meets the needs of its customers in three pri-

## Energy savings

(cont. from page 11)

energy saving bulbs can save you quite a bundle in the long run and provide better quality lighting. Also, keep wattage in mind. Replace higher watt bulbs with lower ones for extra savings.

**Mind the water-** Not only should all drips and leaks be fixed for conservation of precious resources and some extra cash, but being mindful of regular water usage can be helpful as well. Take shorter showers instead of baths to use less water and, while shaving or brushing your teeth, remember to turn off the water when it’s not needed.

**What a pane-** Similar to utilizing blinds and overhangs, you can replace single-pane windows with double-pane, low-emissivity glass and vinyl frames to cut back on heat transfer and filter out the sunlight.

**Keep a lid on it-** For those with a fireplace, this luxury is often seen as an inexpensive way to warm the house without wasting electricity. But what about when the fireplace isn’t being used? Remember to close the damper and seal the opening shut to keep air, hot or cold, from escaping.

**Everything’s ship shape-** From weather stripping to door sweeps and window frames, make sure your home is well sealed. This helps keep the drafts out and your heated or cooled air in.

**The golden rule-** You’ve probably heard it a million times, but it bears repeating- If you aren’t using it, turn it off. From the TV and stereo to the computer and random lights, if it’s not being utilized, it’s just wasting energy and money. Being mindful of the small stuff can save you big on the electricity bill.

## Watch out for 'vampire' appliances

There are a number of appliances throughout the home that use small amounts of energy – which add up. Salt River Project calls them “vampire appliances.” These devices – clock radios, computers, garage door openers and others – have standby modes, which use electricity. Even leaving a phone charger plugged in while not charging

the cell phone draws a small amount of power. Consumers should unplug small appliances whenever practical. Savings may not sound like much, but an average home could save as much as \$90 to \$100 a year in electricity costs.

The five home appliances which use the most power are the air conditioner, clothes dryer, swimming pool pump,

**For a free consultation and estimate for maintenance, new plantings, irrigation system check and repair, lighting install or repair, or for pest control services, call Premier at (480) 816-9388.**

mary ways. The first is to communicate effectively with the crew and then to listen to how the customer would like their yard to look when finished.”

“We don’t just pay lip service to having an English speaker on the crew,” Hellems said. “At this point I am at every service. I may have to run out for supplies or a bid but I’m right back for quality control and final touch ups.”

Premier has standard service procedures for each plant/tree but that can be altered. Some customers prefer their trees or bushes to look more natural, not shaped.

“We do our best to follow the picture the customer paints for us,” Garr said. “We do make suggestions to help the customer see what’s best for the plant or tree in the long term.”

The other important feature for the home services business side is the irrigation system.

Hellems says many companies say they check the systems but she frequently finds improperly set timers, clogged drippers and leaks big and small.

“When we check the system and set the timers I create a Client Timer Sheet. I graph what plants or trees each valve operates, the start times



Premier Pest Management recently started a landscape maintenance company. Co-owners Becky Garr and Sandy Hellems take a hands-on approach to the new division of the business.

and duration of each,” Hellems says. “That way when we show up at the appointment we can run through the system and really know what’s going on. Ineffective watering schedules waste water and create weak plants.”



# Premier

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