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News on the House

GoGreen!



GREEN IS EASY!

The summer brings on many projects to remodel, plan home improvements big and small. This time around, plan to embrace “green” technologies... and no, it is not tough or expensive. Read on and see how green is easy.

I hope you enjoy this month’s newsletter that is full of tips and ideas for you as a homeowner. My time as a real estate professional has left me with keen insights into my clients’ needs and challenges, and I want to let you know that my experience is at your disposal. Please feel welcome to talk to me about any of your real estate needs.

To ensure that you live without worries about your home or appliances, I would like to leave you with a warm note to talk to me about your home buyer protection plans.



Think ‘Green’ When Planning A Home Improvement Project

With soaring energy prices and states adopting regulations that prohibit products that emit harmful fumes, environmentally friendly building has become a hot topic. The U.S. Green Building Council has established criteria for incorporating green products and materials into homes. Here are a few green products or projects to consider:

- Leaky ducts can account for 30 percent or more of wasted energy. Caulking around your doors, windows, moldings, baseboards and vents is an easy and inexpensive project. Choose a high-quality product that complies with regulations governing volatile organic compounds, (VOCs), which are ozone-damaging pollutants. Polyseamseal All-Purpose Adhesive Caulk has a VOC level of 3 percent and provides a paintable, fast-drying, long-lasting seal. For more information, visit www.polyseamseal.com.



- Ready to add on to that beautiful deck? Need to do some minor repairs? When selecting an adhesive for the job, be sure to choose one that is easy and safe to

use, such as Loctite Exterior Power Grab construction adhesive. The latex-based formula emits no VOCs and has an initial tack that is nine times stronger than traditional construction adhesives. Plus, it is easy to work with for interior applications because it has low odor, is paintable and can be cleaned up with water. For more information on Loctite brand products, visit www.loctiteproducts.com.

- Are you ready to replace your siding? When choosing your siding material, consider the insulation value and the amount of maintenance it requires. Insulated vinyl siding, such as CraneBoard Solid Core Siding, is an energy efficient solution. It features a foam backing and provides better insulation than wood, fiber cement or traditional vinyl siding. For more information, visit www.cranesiding.com.

- One of the most obvious ways to make any home more environmentally friendly is to use less electricity. Buy Energy Star appliances and switch incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs to save up to 30 percent on their energy bills, or more than \$400 per year. For more help, visit www.tcpi.com.

To learn more about green building, visit www.greenbuilding.com or www.usgbc.org.

DID YOU KNOW...



Having **the right home protection plan** helps ensure that **your home & your budget is protected.**

Call your Real Estate Professional today to find out how you can **save time and money** on home repairs.



The most primitive style of cooking—meat roasted over an open flame—can't be beat. You can pan-sear and broil all you want, but nothing compares to a grilled steak. The combination of a smoky, caramelized crust and a tender, juicy interior is what grilling beef all about.

Tips for a perfectly grilled steak

- **Choose wisely:** Favorable grilling candidates include New York strip, T-bone, porterhouse, sirloin, filet mignon and rib-eye.
- **Size matters:** Choose cuts that are 1- to 1-1/4 inch thick. Pay special attention to bone-in cuts of meat: make sure the steak is an even thickness. Meat near the bone will take longer to cook.
- **Use caution with marinades:** Over-marinating can result in tough

or mushy meat. For additional ways to flavor-up a steak, try a dry rub or top cooked steaks with herbed butter.

- **Handle hot coals:** Sear steaks over direct heat, then move them to indirect heat to finish cooking. For a 1-inch thick steak, a general guide is 5 to 7 minutes per side for medium-rare (145 degrees F). For an accurate reading—and to avoid cutting into that sublime steak—use a meat thermometer to test for doneness.

Fair-Weather Fowl

Chicken may be one of the trickiest foods to grill, especially the ever-popular boneless, skinless chicken breasts. The grill's high heat tends to dry out the meat before it's cooked through. One way to avoid this is to lightly pound boneless chicken breasts to a uniform thickness, helping the breast cook evenly.

Enjoy the summer!

No A/C? Here's how to keep your cool.

If you live where summer temperatures are scorching and your home doesn't have air conditioning, relief is on the way! There are several tried-and-true techniques that can help you cool down your house. Some of these are immediate and inexpensive; others will require a bit of time and investment. The idea is to minimize sources of heat and remove built-up heat from inside.

- Cut back the transfer of heat through the roof and walls. If the attic isn't already insulated or is under-insulated, insulate it NOW. This will give you the greatest change in comfort for the least amount of expense.

- Install a foil radiant barrier in the attic. Staple it to the underside of the roof rafters, allowing an air space between the foil and the roof sheathing.

- Install inexpensive heat-reflecting film on windows that face the sun. This will keep your house cooler and reduce glare and ultraviolet rays.

- Use shelters to prevent direct sunlight from streaming in through windows on the south and west-facing sides of the house. Overhangs, patio overheads, latticework, awnings: All of these work well.

- Plant now to provide shade in the future. Trees, large bushes, and vines provide shade and cooling evaporation.

- If you have operable skylights or transom windows high on walls, open them to let out super-heated air and create convection currents

- Use portable fans or ceiling fans and the "Fan Only" setting on your heating system's thermostat to keep the air moving.

- Unless you absolutely need them, turn off incandescent lights and heat-generating appliances. When it's time to cook, opt for the barbecue instead of the oven and cook top.



**First American
Home Buyers Protection
Corporation**

The beach or backyard pool are a virtual summer institution for Americans but they are places that need to be monitored carefully—particularly when children are around. An important factor is appropriate safety fencing for pools. All private backyard pools should be fenced independently from the house and the gate should be fitted with a self-closing self-latching device.

SWIM SAFE

Adults too can fall prey to drowning, particularly in unfamiliar or challenging environments. No matter how experienced a swimmer, adults swimming at the beach should make sure they swim between the flags.

Swimming after drinking alcohol is another safety concern. If you've been drinking alcohol – stay out of the water. Water can be a great source of exercise, relaxation and fun but it is also to be treated with caution as holidays can turn tragic if safety is forgotten.

Even decks made of rot-resistant woods, such as cedar and redwood heartwoods or treated pine, require finishes to minimize sun damage, mildew, and natural discoloration. Though some people paint decks with deck paint, most choose to take advantage of the natural beauty of expensive decking woods by applying a clear or lightly stained finish. If you do choose to paint, use a stain-blocking oil or alkyl primer first.

In general, the best finishes are those that soak into the wood, not those that provide



Deck up your deck.

a surface film. A heavily pigmented, solid stain isn't really recommended for decking because it shows wear patterns and may tend to peel. You want something that really soaks in. There are three important characteristics to look for in a finish:

- First, the finish should be "water repellent" or "water proof," not just "water resistant."

- Second, it should offer ultraviolet (UV) protection.

- If mildew is a potential problem, the finish should contain a mildewcide, which a "wood preservative" does.