

Inside This Issue:

- Home Improvements That Pay Off
- Is a Deck in the Cards?

BEL-O Sales and Service's

HOMESense

Time saving, money saving and energy savings tips for your home.

Spring 2011

\$3.00



MyWord

The Future

By Jim Lugge



Hello Friends,

Do you ever get the feeling that real life sometimes seems a little more like science fiction?

Our smartphones are smarter than we are. Our cars tell us where to go – and will even caution us if we've made a turn they didn't recommend. Wherever we go, we can carry as many books with us as we want, without breaking a sweat, thanks to eBook readers.

Yes, time and technology marches on. In a lot of ways, that's a good thing.

In this business, for example, we have seen incredible advances in home comfort systems over the years. For someone like me, who truly appreciates equipment that is the top of its kind, I'm impressed all the time by improvements in energy efficiency, convenience and comfort. And I love to see the faces of happy customers when they first "feel" this difference in their own homes.

continued on page 4



The Highs and Lows of Home Comfort

SEASONAL SHIFT

Cooling your home can take quite a bit of your cold, hard cash. And the air conditioner itself – based on its age, condition and energy-efficiency rating – has a lot to do with whether you're spending more or less.

Central air conditioners are not created equal, and you see the differences in the SEER, a rating standard for "seasonal energy efficiency ratio". The higher the SEER, the better the energy efficiency.

Air conditioners are significant investments for any home. Plus, there's the operational costs. Overall, you'll want to look for a balanced investment – comparing the air conditioner's cost with your monthly operational savings. Here's your range of options:

- **High/Low** – Yes, they cost more upfront, but they also save more. Many homeowners prefer the logic of a higher upfront cost that saves them months after on their energy dollars. For high-efficiency central air

conditioners, you'll look for 16 to 23 SEER.

- **Mid** – When you see SEER 14.5 to 17, you're in mid-range efficiency for central air conditioners. They're priced a little lower than the higher efficiency units and have a few less benefits. If you're replacing an air conditioner that's more than 12 to 15 years old, this would seem like top of the line by comparison.
- **Low/High** – Minimum energy efficiency comes in a 13 to 14.5 SEER air conditioner. The lower initial cost won't bring as high a level of savings on the operational costs, but many homeowners on a tight budget will consider this to be a good value.

What's right for your home? Give us a call at 618-235-6626 or email us at contactus@beloman.com to get our free report *Maximizing Energy Efficiency*. As a customer of **Bel-O Sales and Service**, we'd also be glad to come out and give you a free Energy Survey. Just give us a call.



Your **Quick Call** Comfort Hotline:

618-235-6626



Poison Prevention Begins with Smart Practices

HEALTHWISE

As you spruce up your lawn or garden for the greener days to come, you'll find many elements that you'd be pleased to see eradicated – like weeds and pests. But the poisons and chemicals that take care of business at hand can cause serious problems if they end up where they're not intended.

Following these guidelines from the Home Safety Council can help keep your family and your pets safe:

- **Read the labels of products you buy and keep in your home.** If you see the words, "Caution," "Warning," "Danger," "Poison" or "Keep Out of Reach of Children," be very careful.
- **Store poisons in a place where children cannot see or touch them.** Use child safety locks. Products you should keep locked up include: pesticides, automotive fluids, charcoal



lighter, paint thinner, antifreeze and turpentine. Ideally, hazardous products should be stored in a locking cabinet.

- **Keep products in the container they came in.** Do not put them in a different bottle or jar.
- **Do not mix products together** because their contents could react together with dangerous results.
- **Gasoline is very dangerous inside a home or garage.** Gasoline vapors can explode with just a tiny spark. Never bring or use gasoline indoors. Use it as motor fuel only. If you must keep gasoline at home, use a special safety container.
- When using harsh products, **follow directions.** For example, use gloves, eye goggles and masks if the label says so.
- Pesticides to kill bugs, mice and rats are extremely dangerous. If possible, **have a professional help you.**
- **Mix insect sprays outdoors, away from areas used by your family and pets.**
- **Pool chemicals are poisonous and can catch on fire.** Store and use pool chemicals according to the manufacturer's directions. Keep them tightly covered in the containers they came in. Keep them dry and away from other chemicals and products.



Is a Deck in the Cards?

Adding a deck to your home can be a great addition – offering a way to relax with your family and entertain friends, while adding value to your home. As with any significant project, however, it's important to plan ahead. You can start by asking several questions:

- ▶ **Location and Access –** Where will you place the deck and how will it be accessed? Will it be located on a sturdy

foundation? (Decks can be weighty.) Will the area be shaded? If the deck's in full sun, it may be too uncomfortable to enjoy. Also, does the location offer enough privacy, or will you feel like you're on display?

- ▶ **Size and Scope –** How large will your deck be? Will it accommodate the activities you see taking place? For example, will you need room for grilling and a dining area?

- ▶ **Design and Materials –** Will the deck's design fit with the design of your home? Will the quality of the materials make it a worthwhile investment?

To help with these questions, you can always hire a professional for a complete deck-building solution. Or if you're a true do-it-yourselfer, you can check with home improvement stores for design stations and deck-building kits.

HOME SMART



Home Improvements That Pay Off (or Turn Off)

MONEYWISE

Home values have slumped and the stock market is a rocky ride, but some investments can still increase value while enriching your quality of life. Certain home improvements are likely to improve the value of your home – and, hopefully, make it more attractive to a buyer down the road. But strategy helps – because some home improvements don't improve home value and can even lessen the ability to sell.

So where's the payoff and what's the turn off? Most experts say making changes in the kitchen and bathroom are a “go” and can earn homeowners an 80% and upward return on investment for remodeling projects.

Kitchen Remodeling

The kitchen is the center of family activity and the most-used room in the house. Some of the areas where you can give attention are new plumbing fixtures, energy-efficient appliances, solid surface countertops, tile flooring and recessed lighting.

Bathroom Remodeling

Investments in a bathroom remodel are also viewed favorably. You can start with the plumbing where it is and replace outdated fixtures, maybe tub and toilet too. Other areas include updated lighting, tile floors and vanity.

Outdoors

Adding a deck or patio yields a good return – a covered patio in particular. Landscaping is still a great bet too. It adds value and can be done with limited budget. Also, landscaping in the front adds that ever-attractive “curb appeal” that will impress your friends and neighbors and entice a future buyer.

Some areas of improvement, however, don't tend to yield a good return on investment. What areas are a “no”? A swimming pool could deter a significant pool of future buyers. Also, while an

outdoor kitchen is attractive and enjoyable, it's not the way to cook up a higher home value. Look for the “home value” caution flag



in these areas too: converting a garage into a family room and converting a spare bedroom to an office.

Another upside of making home improvements now is that the cost may be less, starting with a low interest rate on a home equity line of credit. Additionally, contractors that aren't as busy as they once were may offer a discounted price, and home building materials that aren't as much in demand may be available at a better price.

Did You Know?

- The phrase “sleep tight” derives from the fact that early mattresses were filled with straw and held up with rope stretched across the bedframe. A tight sleep was a comfortable sleep.
- The liquid inside young coconuts can be used as substitute for blood plasma.
- A raisin dropped in a fresh glass of soda will bounce up and down continually from the bottom of the glass to the top.
- An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain.



MyWord

continued from page 1

If your system is showing signs of age, we'll be glad to talk with you about some terrific options. Just give us a call.

In the meantime, we're committed to helping you keep your current system operating at its best – and regular tune-ups are the best way we can help make that happen. If you'll call and schedule your spring tune-up, we'll get someone out and help you get ready for the warmer days that are on their way.

Best wishes for an enjoyable season. Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Jim Lugge

P.S. Don't forget to check out the special offers on this page. If you're not able to use them, feel free to pass them on to a friend or neighbor.



Does Your Plumbing Seem a Little "Dated"?

The march of time affects everything – even your household plumbing. So what worked really well in the past might not be the best you can do for your family today.

Design and efficiency keep steadily moving forward. Don't get left behind. Let **BEL-O Sales and Service** make your dreary bathroom or kitchen your dream room with the latest technology and styles. Just call 235-6626 today.

©2011

Better Home Comfort, Easier than Ever

Great news from BEL-O! This Spring we're giving all qualified customers 12 months same as cash on home comfort equipment. Can you think of a better way to provide total home comfort for your whole family? We couldn't either! But this offer only lasts through the Spring, so call **BEL-O Sales and Service at 235-6626**.

©2011

Enjoy Clean Comfort.

Dirt is the number one cause of comfort system failure. And yet it's one of the easiest things for you to take care of. Just give us a call and take advantage of our Spring Cleaning Tune-up. We'll get your system ready to run at peak efficiency all season long.



Prevention is the best form of protection – especially when it comes to comfort problems. So call today to schedule your Spring Tune-up. Your system – and your family – will thank you.

BEL-O Sales and Service at 235-6626

©2011



If your mailing address is not correct, please call us!

