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THE METROPOLITAN BUILDER

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Giselle Bernard
Publisher



In this issue, the two building professionals showcased have a collaborative partnership when building custom homes and come highly referred by vendors within the industry. Lance Franz, owner of Savannah Grace Homes, and Linda Ewing, Owner of Double L Interiors, own two separate companies, yet, they combine their expertise in partnership when building and designing homes for their customers.

If you think about it, a Custom Builder/Interior Designer relationship thwarts miscommunications between their collaborative efforts and the customer, avoiding unnecessary anxiety, missed deadlines, and an out-of-control budget. They work closely to create the perfect

masterpiece based on style, taste, and vision.

It is very beneficial for a custom home builder to consult with an outstanding Interior Designer when building custom homes. Interior Designers can assist the builder and their customer with product research and selection. Doing so frees up valuable time for the custom home builder to manage the construction site. He can give his full attention to supervising his subcontractors and addressing any problems that may arise during construction. A good Builder/Interior Designer relationship should be a symbiotic relationship.

Enjoy your read

Steps to Protecting Your Investment

By Austin Wolf

1. Plan

The first step in securing a jobsite, like any great construction project, is to plan. Understanding the easy entry points on site and identifying what high theft items will be on-site for the project's duration is necessary. Due to rising material costs and lack of availability, the following products have all been identified as high-risk theft items common in housing construction: appliances, copper wire/pipe, PVC, lumber, and generators.

2. Prepare

Preparing your job site before deliveries of high-risk items will help protect big-budget construction materials. If areas of your site have tall bushes or large overgrown wildlife, clearing such will eliminate potential cover for thieves. Adding lighting to areas of poor visibility on your site will further push your boundary of obscurity further away from costly materials. Finally, putting up



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site fencing with mesh covering will help keep criminals from being able to identify when and where a product is on site. Locked fencing makes site entry and exits much more difficult for anyone with ill intent.

3. Prevent

Due to longer and longer replacement lead times, it has never been truer that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Implementing an intimate circle of trust is a proven method of safeguarding precious items. Ideally, you or your supervisor are opening and closing the site daily. This way, the lock codes, and keys are only shared when necessary. Furthermore, visible security and surveillance systems can significantly deter burglars, pushing them onto the next softer target. Don't let it be you! Make sure to take the proper steps to secure your sites today to safeguard the money on your site and in your wallet.



WE ARE HIRING JOIN OUR TEAM

Creative Ways to Attract Employees

by Sheles Wallace

Has the labor market opened up since recent layoffs? Rachel Sederberg, a senior economist at Lightcast, an information services company providing labor market analytics, believes the market is still tight for smaller businesses. Business owners can continue to expect a tight labor market based on the following shifts in the market.

Skill Shortages: As industries evolve and new technologies emerge, the skills required to perform specific jobs also change. The need for skilled workers with the skills required to fill these roles can create a talent shortage, leading to a tight labor market.

Competition for Talent: Competition among employers for skilled workers can also tighten the labor market. Companies may offer more competitive compensation packages or other incentives to attract candidates, which can drive up labor costs.

Demographic Shifts: Demographic shifts, such as the aging workforce or declining birth rates, can impact the labor market. As older workers retire and fewer young people enter the workforce, fewer workers may be available to fill open positions.

Covid-19 Pandemic Effects: The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the labor market, with many workers leaving their jobs due to health concerns or changes in work arrangements. While the economy has started recovering, some workers may hesitate to return to work due to ongoing health concerns.

Employers need to implement creative strategies to attract the best talent.

Offering Flexible Work Arrangements: Many people prefer flexible work arrangements, including remote work, part-time, or flexible schedules. By providing these options, you can attract candidates who might have yet to consider your company.



Providing Generous Benefits: In addition to salary, you can offer generous benefits like health insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, or tuition reimbursement to attract employees. These perks can significantly impact an employee's decision to join your company.

Creating a Positive Company Culture: A positive company culture that values employees' contributions, supports professional development, and fosters a positive work environment can help you attract the right employees. You can do this by promoting teamwork, recognizing employees' achievements, and investing in employee development.

Offering Sign-On Bonuses: Sign-on bonuses are a one-time payment provided to employees upon signing a contract with the company. Sign-On Bonuses may be set to pay out after an employee has been with the organization for a specific time. This approach can help you attract candidates in high demand or who might hesitate to leave their current employer.

Hosting Events: Organizing events like job fairs or meet-and-greets can help you reach a large pool of potential candidates. These events allow candidates to learn about your company and meet with current employees.

Leveraging Social Media: Social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter can be valuable tools to attract employees. You can post job openings, share

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Savannah Grace Homes – More Than A Custom Home

By Mary Lynn Mabray, ASID

Cullen Franz is part of a third-generation home-building dynasty. His maternal grandfather, John Attaway, lit the first home-building torch in Alief, Texas, and created Lancaster Homes. Cullen's father and mother, Eddie & Evonne, joined the company and later became president and Vice President of Dover Homes. Dover was one of the largest high-volume building companies during the '80s and '90s in the Greater Houston area. Suffice it to say home building is engrained in Cullen's blood.

From a young age, Cullen was on the job after school, sweeping out houses and shoveling mud out of the streets. His mother and father taught him the importance of learning the business from the ground up. "I was very fortunate to have such amazing role models." Even after

her death, he carries his mother's spirit with him daily. "She taught me the importance of working hard, communication, and treating every employee and sub-contractor like family."

After attending The Village School and Kinkaid, Cullen attended The Fay School as a boarding student in Southborough, Massachusetts. Boarding school taught him self-discipline and self-reliance, two skills uniquely necessary in the building industry.

It was also through Fay that he later reconnected with his former classmate, Erica. They dated long distance for a year when he decided to move from Texas back to Massachusetts, where her parents owned a large residential construction company. Cullen began working in her family



business while simultaneously attending college at the Wentworth Institute of Technology, one of the premier building science and construction management colleges in the United States.

Wentworth was instrumental in expanding Cullen’s knowledge of construction and growing his desire to learn more about the scientific advancements in building products and practices. While attending school, Cullen also learned real-world experience as a superintendent on a large 92 lot, custom home subdivision.

When Cullen moved back to Houston seven years ago, he started Savannah Grace Homes, a custom home and

remodeling company. Savannah for his daughter, and to portray the importance of family and Grace for the Grace God bestows on Cullen and his family daily. Without his family’s support and his faith, Cullen feels that he would never have come this far in his career. “God leads my life and this business for His purpose and not that of my own,” Cullen stated.

Cullen has a unique perspective on building and one that all builders should adopt. “I am privileged to build a product that is the canvas for so many family memories.”

Continued on page 8

Before



After



Continued from page 7

Through his education and experience, Cullen learned the importance of transparency and education in building a durable and efficient home. “Many builders can build a beautiful house. Educating my customers on the process and the thought I put into every aspect of building their home creates a relationship based on trust”.

Grading the land for positive drainage, the placement of the slab, and the envelope of the house are vital to building a good home and avoiding future issues. Water, air, vapor, and thermal management are all critical elements that require careful thought and deliberate decisions in each home.

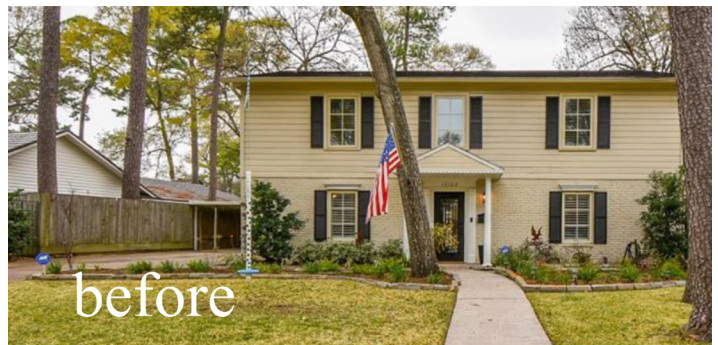
“Details that seem small and are often overlooked are the most important. Knowing what type of water-resistant

barrier you have on your home or if your HVAC system includes humidity control is essential. We discuss what is behind your walls with the same amount of passion that we discuss designer finishes”.

Speaking of designer finishes, Cullen recognized early on that working with designers was paramount to his homeowners’ smooth home-building experience. “We work as a team. Hiring a designer for all my projects allows me to focus solely on the construction and allows my customers to work with an expert on the flow of the house, unique design elements, and beautiful finishes.” He stated that he has been very fortunate to work with Linda Ewing of Double L Designs on several projects. “Linda is a consummate professional and is outstanding to work with. She is detail-oriented, trustworthy, and a true extension of my team”.

Savannah Grace is focused on the future and on “building safe, durable, and healthy homes through trusting and honest relationships with each client.” With current projects all over town, including River Oaks, Memorial, West University, and the Heights, to custom ranches and beach homes in Brenham, Weimar, Hockley, Refugio, and Rockport, Cullen feels very blessed and humbled. This business is based on relationships, and I am grateful for every customer, sub-contractor, and vendor that has invested in me and helped me build my business”.

An aside observation of Cullen Franz by this writer and designer: In my three decades of experience in design and renovation, I have never met a young man of faith that cares so deeply about his work and the families that benefit from that hard work and dedication. The building industry could use many more men and women like Cullen Franz. Like my daddy used to tell me, “you did good, kid,” and Cullen, you have.



The Franz Family

For more information about Savannah-Grace Homes

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www.savannahgracehomes.com

New Kitchen And Bath Inspirations From KBIS Wellness Products And Dramatic Color Lead The Trends

By Linda Jennings

The Kitchen & Bath Industry Show held recently in Las Vegas was welcomed enthusiastically! This year's event welcomed an eager crowd of industry professionals excited to learn about the latest products and trends in kitchen and bath design. KBIS, sponsored by the National Kitchen & Bath Association, was one of five shows folded into Design & Construction Week, which also includes the International Builders Show. The combined five trade shows gave attendees

an amazing opportunity to visit five industry trade events with just one badge. Total attendance was nearly 70,000 at IBS and 40,000 at KBIS with more than 1,800 exhibitors showcasing the latest housing products stretched across nearly one million net square feet of exhibit space. Highlights from the brands exhibiting included wellness products, personalized options, unique finishes and above all Color! Here are a few standouts:



The Dejen Collection from Acquabella

Haute Couture For The Bath

Acquabella debuted an exciting lineup of new collections in Vegas, including a crowd favorite, the new Dejen - a wall-mounted bathtub that conveys the elegance and luxury of a freestanding bathtub while making the most of bathroom space. Measuring 67" x 23" x 34", Dejen exudes modern appeal with sharp lines and rounded finishes. It is crafted from Acquabella's signature Dolotek material, a superior mineral composite, resulting in a flawless, silky, smooth-to-the-touch finish. Dolotek offers the added benefit of providing an antibacterial surface that is easy to clean, is amazingly durable and resistant to UV rays and thermal shock. The Dejen tub is offered in a snow white standard finish and includes options for a striking dual-tone look with pairings in brown, light grey, dark grey and black.



The Sebastian by Cartisan Design Vanity & Bath

Orange Sensation

Cartisan Design Vanity & Bath had a colorful display with their new Sebastian, and Barcelona vanities. The Sebastian has a beautiful shape and stunning Red Amber color, which contrast its dark walnut wooden legs. This outstanding design sets it apart from other vanities - modern & artistic. Two drawers provide comfortable storage space. Pure white countertops with white vessel sinks also bring a sense of freshness and cleanliness to the entire bath space. Also on display was the newest model Barcelona. This vanity brings elegance, texture, and clean lines to your bathing space. Barcelona features two sturdy undermount style sinks, as well as ample storage space for all bath necessities. Both are made from multi-layer engineering wood for durability.

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Richard Arnold -
richard@ifhouston.com

Richard Arnold is the proud co-founder of International Flooring and is based in Houston, TX. With over 25 years of experience in the building industry, Richard has worked his way up from Construction Manager overseeing over 200 home builds to becoming the CEO of three construction companies: International Flooring,

Texas Treads, and Karina Homes. His robust construction knowledge qualifies him to solve a variety of building needs, from product sourcing to installation, crew management, and more. Richard takes a hands-on approach with clients through multiple job site visits and straightforward advice. Working with Richard means connecting with Houston's top custom builders, designers, and remodelers

Customer Reviews

David Herzog, CEO - Herzog Homes, LLC

Herzog Homes has built over 2,000 on the east coast. When we opened our Texas division, we learned of Richard Arnold, owner of International Flooring, by way of a very strong recommendation from our construction lender. Any referral from a construction lender is extremely credible. We met with Richard and the rest is history. They installed the flooring in our first home over 5 years ago, and they have done every home since, including two of my personal homes. Accordingly, we have given Richard and his company abundant referrals to customers, friends, designers, and builders alike. Additionally, we strongly recommended them to the CBUSA builder chapter for membership. This is a very selective organization, comprised of over 50 regional builder who work with our internally approved trade contractor and suppliers. After membership vetting, they were accepted, and we are elated to have them as part of the CBUSA team. Richard and International Flooring have executed expertly, their employees are professionals, and we cannot say enough great things about this company. They are regularly voted favorite quarterly trade by our team, and we look forward to decades of continued partnership. I am happily available to discuss our superb relationship with International Flooring. I can be reached at David@HerzogHomes.com or 832-314-9000.

Selena MacKay, Owner of The WM

International Flooring is my go to source for flooring. The selection is outstanding. Richard is very knowledgeable and is able to always meet our budget with quality products that make my clients super happy!! The service is excellent and overall a great experience working with him.

Steve Gulledge, Gulledge Homes

I highly recommend using International Flooring for all your flooring needs. Richard Arnold, an owner of International Flooring, knows his product inside and out. He can explain the different wood species and flooring options to my clients, so they are well-informed in making their flooring decisions. Richard bids on the job and walks the jobs, overseeing the jobs closely. He communicates daily and closely with his project manager, Eduardo Trigo with whom I really enjoy working. International Flooring provides my clients and I with outstanding service. If there are issues with punch items, they take care of it right away. I must add that Richard has built an island butcherblock countertop for me that turned out fabulous.



Roma in Marina by Native Trails

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Dramatic Blue Hues

Native Trails added to their beautiful Murano Collection of glass sinks with the Roma series. A distinguished half-globe bowl with a ribbed exterior, Roma will be offered in two new design styles: Marina, where ribbons of blue and white hug each curve, and Seaspray, with translucent white swirls on a clear basin, creating a stunning light effect. Each glass vessel sink is expertly formed by Italian glassmakers with traditions dating back to the 13th century and given its own personality as an irreplaceable work of functional art. The molten glass is molded and spun while color is added and then hand shaped to sculpt each unique, inherently sustainable vessel sink. In addition to Marina and Seaspray, the Murano Collection consists of five design series—Beachcomber, Abyss, Bianco, Shoreline, and Abalone—each containing multiple sink styles and colors inspired by views of the Italian coastline.



Ruvati's Giana Workstation Kitchen Sink

Kitchen Sinks Go Glam

Ruvati brought the glamour to the show with their bold new line of kitchen workstation sinks. The Giana series brings colored stainless steel to Ruvati's popular workstation sinks. Available in various sizes and top-mount

and undermount configurations, Giana sinks deliver a fabulously functional way of adding color to the kitchen. The new sinks are offered in an elegant Matte Gold or bold Gunmetal Black and come equipped with convenient accessories that include a corresponding color strainer and drain assembly. The Giana is meticulously crafted from 16 gauge premium T-304 stainless steel that will never rust or stain.



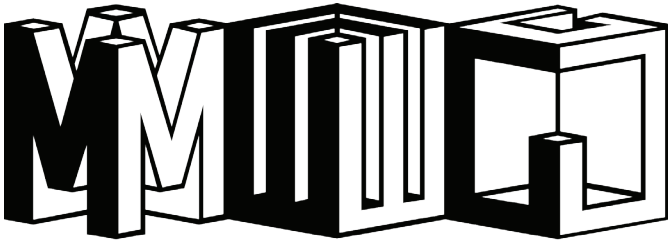
Nebia Corre Four Function Shower find us at Brondell

Shower Spray Precision

A new acquisition to the Brondell family, Nebia introduced the Corre Four-Function Handshower at the show. Featuring a patented nozzle technology engineered to offer industry-leading water conservation. Using 50% less water as compared to standard 2.5 gpm showerhead sprayers, atomizing nozzles produce millions of precise water droplets for optimal warmth, rinsing, and body coverage. Toggle easily between the 4 different modes, from soft showerhead spray to high-pressure spray, and enjoy a shower that's always tailored to your needs. It is offered in Oil Rubbed Bronze, Brushed Gold or a Matte Black option. Installation takes only a few minutes, and it includes a 72-inch hose and magnetic mounting for a secure hold and easy release.

To find out more about the hardware and fixture products mentioned here, visit their websites:

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Photos courtesy of Fairmont Custom Homes

Customer Reviews

Matt Sneller -
Sneller Custom Homes

We are a custom builder/remodeler and have been working with Esvin/MWG for about 4 years now. They are one of our best trade partners that we have. Esvin is extremely creative and great around our clients, but he also does what he says he's going to do and is great about staying in communication. He has done everything from simple framed glass shower doors to very detailed shower enclosures to custom cabinet doors to a custom metal and wood table for our new conference room. I would highly recommend working with MWG!

Michael Pelletier
President/Owner Fairmont Custom Homes

We have been working with Esvin Tista and MWG Innovations for over 5 years. Esvin is our go to for shower glass and mirror work. I am proud to say that we have been able to set market trends with the help of MWG Innovations and his excellent customer service. Rarely, do I find an individual that is as reliable as Esvin in our world of building custom homes. Esvin has been a great partner for Fairmont Custom Homes bringing excellent value to our customers and helping us become the number one builder in Fulshear, TX. We look forward to our continued relationship with MWG Innovations.

Brandon Kraut -
Construction Project Manager at Urban Craftsman
The MWG team does beautiful work, has great customer service, communicates clearly, and provides a great experience! I am a project manager for a custom home builder and we exclusively use MWG for our shower enclosures and glass work. I had them do my new shower enclosure at home as well. You can't go wrong with MWG!

Sales Professionals



Esvin Tista - *Esvin@mwginnovations.com*

In his 12 years of experience in the glass industry, Esvin found himself wanting to do more than install glass. As a true Texan, he believes everything is bigger in Texas and decided to open his own business in 2018. Esvin is talented and has the passion and vision for designing and fabricating unique pieces of art for metal, wood, and glass consisting of shower doors, vanities, mirrors, handrails, and more. He credits his passion to his loving family and success to his professional team. When his not working, you will find Esvin enjoying the beautiful Houston weather fishing, hoping to catch more than a cold breeze on a sunny, rainy day, all in one trip to the bay!



Lilian Tista - *ltista@mwginnovations.com*

Lilian is experienced in management accounting. In search of a better balance between work and family time, she joined Metal Wood Glass Innovations LLC in 2021. Her commitment is to provide excellent service, helping the corporation to create and build a better business. She enjoys the opportunity to serve customers on a personal level and the originality behind each project. She spends her free time with her son. She loves to run, and occasionally you will find her running marathons and obstacle course races.



Dialogue with a Designer

Linda Ewing

BATHS OF AMERICA opened its doors in January 2005 when brothers Ali and Zeeshan Sultanali decided to start selling plumbing and tiles to the Houston market. *Baths of America* focuses on customer service and partners only with brands offering *BATHS OF AMERICA* quality products and customer service. In addition to plumbing, *Baths of America* now provides door and cabinet hardware, major appliances, cabinetry, and countertops. It has turned into a one-stop shop for designers, builders, and architects, offering the latest designs and trends in the market.

This month *BATHS OF AMERICA* speaks with: Linda Ewing, of Double L Interiors. A Houston native, Linda attended the University of Houston as well as the Art Institute studying Fashion Merchandise and Textiles as well as Interior Design. She has been working as a designer since 1985. She has worked on countless projects ranging from ranches to Hollywood sets, celebrity homes, second homes and private jets. There is no limit to her design style and ideas. Linda is very easy and fast to work with and will work tirelessly to bring your vision to life. She is the epitome of a people person and will become your best friend. Kenedy Trainer has been enjoying working for and learning from Linda about all the joys of design. She is new to Houston, and is currently studying Interior Design

at the Art Institute. Like Linda she loves every step of the design process and will work happily to ensure your vision is executed seamlessly. She loves color, texture and all the little details.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What motivated you to enter interior design?

Linda Ewing: It all started with Psychology at HBU! Believe me when I say, “There is much psychology in interior design!” When dealing with people, couples, families, and corporations, you will, at some point, have to be able to read people. Ultimately, architecture, fashion, textiles, and history aimed me toward design.

BATHS OF AMERICA: How has the field of interior design changed since you graduated?

Linda Ewing: Well, technology has changed everything! I attended three separate schools over many years. In the 1980s, I began with psychology at HBU. A few years later, I started fashion merchandising with a University of Houston degree in Interior Design with a bonus follow-up in Historical Architecture. Honestly, I was born a “professional student,” as my mother would fondly say.

BATHS OF AMERICA: How can an interior designer help a custom home builder or a remodeling contractor with



their building or remodeling projects?

Linda Ewing: Construction projects are extremely stressful. Millions of monumental and intricate decisions to make on a timely basis. Budgets to establish! Designers help link the client and builder by guiding the client into their true vision. Showing them that the details matter. Having a good working relationship with the builder is key.

BATHS OF AMERICA: How do you begin the materials selection process when working with builders' and remodelers' clients?

Linda Ewing: First, a budget must be established. The price range and diversity of materials have transposed and vastly expanded. On turnkey projects, roofs and flooring are at the top. Secondly, we choose appliances, plumbing, and hardware. Usually, we give clients detailed stories enabling them to visualize a choice A, B, or C decision. We try to keep it simple (KISS).

BATHS OF AMERICA: What sets me apart from other designers?

Linda Ewing: I grew up fortunate to be well-traveled. Architecture and textiles became my passion. However, my knowledge of construction and ability to recognize and use wasted space is what I love the most about my job.

BATHS OF AMERICA: Speaking about staying current, how do you keep yourself up to date with all the design

trends happening in the industry today?

Linda Ewing: We attend trade shows and visit all the major markets, such as HPM, Vegas, Dallas, Atlanta, and, when able, European markets, such as "Design Week" in Prague. Additionally, home builder trade shows are right here in Houston! We stay current on Interior Design publications, websites, and continuing education classes through ASID.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What is your favorite design style?

Linda Ewing: Functional, efficient, and comfortable! I love them all!

BATHS OF AMERICA: What fascinated you, and how do you incorporate it into your style?

Linda Ewing: The fifth ward fascinates me! It's such an underdog! Many so often forget ceilings. It's the best way to incorporate style and sometimes whimsy.

BATHS OF AMERICA: What has been my most challenging project? Why?

Linda Ewing: Geo H. Funeral Home. There was more than one real decision-maker. Working for SCI was a wonderful experience, but a corporation meant many channels, disagreements, and useful psychology and mediation. Eventually, it was divine.

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BATHS OF AMERICA: Any last thoughts or comments?

Linda Ewing: If you're reading this, you're young, possibly in school for interior design, stay and graduate! You won't be sorry. Find a great mentor and enjoy the process.

"The details are not the details. They make the design!"
 – Charles Eames

Double L Interiors

Linda Lyons Ewing

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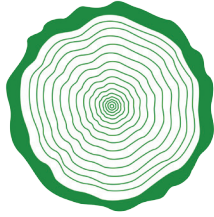
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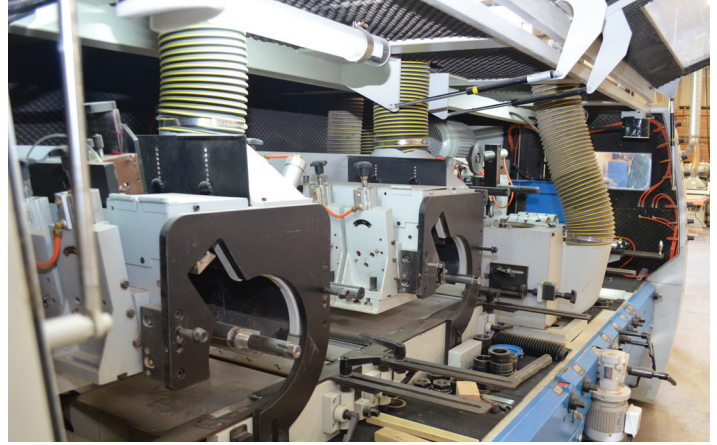




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Customer Reviews

Cullen Franz - Savannah Grace Homes

“Hardwood Products has gone over and above to source the best quality materials for the best price to help me grow my business. Kenny Francis and the HWP team has provided me with outstanding customer services that leaves other competitors in the dust. I can’t say enough about the value that I have received in partnering with HWP. My custom homes have never looked so good !! Thank you Kenny and HWP !!”

Matt Sneller – Sneller Custom Homes and Remodeling

“I have known and worked with Kenny/Hardwood Products for over 15 years. We consider them to be one of our most loyal and trusted trade partners. We are a custom builder/remodeler and use them for a lot of our interior and exterior trimwork/materials. Their pricing is fantastic, but even better than that is their customer service. Kenny is always easy to get a hold of and super responsive to any issue that arises. We would highly recommend using them!”

Rick Davis - DC Kitchens & Remodeling

I can’t say enough about working with Hardwood Products. I’ve been in business for about 35 years and have been working with Hardwood products for as long as I can remember. I find their entire staff trustworthy and extremely professional, especially Kenny and Laura. The entire staff has a full understanding of their extensive line of hardwood products. I find that they are extremely dependable, and their customer service is outstanding. They always go out of their way in providing the very best in high-quality materials and for the best price. Not only that, I find them to be very dependable. I can trust that they will always be on top of things. I feel more comfortable working with them than anyone else.



**Charlie Molloy -
cmolloy@hwp.us**

Charlie has over 30 years of experience in the building material industry, dating from 1992 to the present. He has expert knowledge of most building products, including hardwood lumber, plywood, cabinet hardware, plastic laminate, and custom moldings. In his previous years, he was a manager in the grocery industry

for Eagle Discount Supermarkets and Randall’s Food markets in the Houston area. His strengths include managing employees, customer service relations, logistics, and outside sales. He has lived in the Houston area since 1968 and spent his childhood in Spring Branch, graduating from Spring Woods High School. He went to the University of Houston where he majored in Music, Hotel and Restaurant Management, and Business management. Hobbies include playing the National Anthem with his trumpet at professional baseball games, hiking in the Big Bend area, and woodworking. Charlie has been married 39 years and has one son, a daughter, and two grandchildren.



**Kenny Francis -
kfrancis@hwp.us**

Kenneth has 32 years of experience in the building industry from 1990 to present. He started at Wilsonart in 1990-2001 in the Houston area. He was employed as the operations manager of over 27 employees. He decided to take his sales knowledge & expertise to Hardwood Products 2001 - present. Kenny enjoys working

with companies & building relationships. From commercial millwork shops and remodelers to Custom Builders. Every day is a challenge, from supply & demand to rising costs. Providing innovation & service for the customer is the bottom line. Kenny has lived in Houston his entire life & knows the area well. His hobbies are anything outdoors, from hunting and exercise to sports. He has a wife of 17 years & two beautiful daughters.

2023 Off to A Sluggish Start for Single-Family Production

Although rising builder sentiment indicates a turning point for housing later this year, lackluster single-family production in January is a sign that the housing sector faces further challenges, as elevated mortgage rates and high construction costs continue to put a damper on the market.

Overall housing starts decreased 4.5% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.31 million units, according to a report from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Census Bureau.

The January reading of 1.31 million starts is the number of housing units builders would begin if development kept this pace for the next 12 months. Within this overall number, single-family starts decreased 4.3% to an 841,000 seasonally adjusted annual rate. The multifamily sector, which includes apartment buildings and condos, decreased 4.9% to an annualized 468,000 pace.

“Housing construction weakened in January as ongoing affordability conditions fueled by high mortgage rates and building material costs challenged the market,” said Alicia Huey, chairman of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and a custom home builder and developer from Birmingham, Ala. “And while a recent two-month upturn in builder sentiment indicates a turning point for single-family construction could take hold in the months ahead, policymakers need to fix the supply chain for building materials to ensure builders can add the additional inventory the housing market desperately needs.”

“As completions continue to outpace construction starts,



**National
Association
of Home
Builders**

this marks the eighth straight monthly decline for the number of single-family homes under construction, which has fallen to 752,000,” said Danushka Nanayakkara-Skillington, NAHB’s assistant vice president for forecasting and analysis. “Meanwhile, the number of apartments under construction stands at the highest level since November 1973, which means a slowdown for apartment starts is approaching.”



On a regional basis compared to the previous month, combined single-family and multifamily starts were 42.2% lower in the Northeast, 25.9% lower in the Midwest, 7.3% higher in the South and 5.5% higher in the West.

Overall permits increased 0.1% to a 1.34 million unit annualized rate in January. Single-family permits decreased 1.8% to a 718,000 unit rate. Multifamily permits increased 2.5% to an annualized 621,000 pace.

Looking at regional permit data compared to the previous month, permits were 7.8% lower in the Northeast, 1.7% higher in the Midwest, 3.0% higher in the South and 4.6% lower in the West.

Creative Ways to Attract Employees

Continued from page 4

employee testimonials, and highlight your company’s culture and benefits to engage potential candidates.

Providing Career Growth Opportunities: Employees are likelier to join a company that offers them a professional growth path. You can show potential employees you are invested in their success by providing ongoing training and development opportunities.

Offering Unique Perks: Offering unique perks like free lunch, on-site gym facilities, or company outings can help set your company apart from others and attract potential employees. These small benefits can make a significant impact on employee satisfaction and retention.

For guidance on recruiting and retaining the best talent, contact sheles@billionairethoughts.com or 832-371-6642



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Sales Professionals



Jeff Steiner -
jsteiner@bathsofamerica.com

Jeff has always enjoyed working with people and being able to offer them his exceptional services. No matter the size of the job, Jeff makes sure that the customer is satisfied and that the job he started gets his full attention

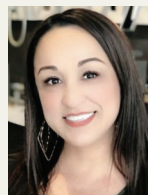
until completion. After sales, Jeff also follows up with clients to ensure they are aware of the functions of the products they have purchased and if he can assist in any product demo in person. Jeff, along with his assistant, Hillary Ratliff, started the appliance builder sales division at Baths of America. He has been in the appliance industry for 30 years now and has led Baths of America to one of the largest appliance dealers in Houston, TX.



Hillary Ratliff -
Hratliff@bathsofamerica.com

Hillary has been in appliance builder sales for the past four years and has no plans to go to another industry. Assisting Jeff with his builders, Hillary makes sure that products are ordered, scheduled for installation and the logistics

of jobs are handled sufficiently. Hillary enjoys the appliance category as it is a very niche, and the relationships that she's made in this industry. Helping builders and meeting new clients and industry partners has become a reason why Hillary plans to keep continuing her plans to grow in the appliance industry.



Chadney Alvarez-
chadney@bathsofamerica.com

Chadney has been in plumbing and hardware sales for 25 years now. Starting as a bookkeeper at EXPO Design Center at age 18, she has developed herself into one of the leading salespersons in the plumbing and hardware

industry. Developing customer relationships is very important to Chadney and a key reason why she's been very successful in maintaining her business. Starting from the beginning, when plans are just on paper, making selections, and seeing the final projects come to fruition a year or so later makes me love what I do.

Customer Reviews

Brian Phillips - Cayson Graye/Alair Homes

As a custom home builder, we have specific needs when it comes to appliances for our projects. Jeff and his team offer not only the selection we need for our clients, but also the expertise, competitive pricing and professional installs. Baths of America is a vendor with whom we are very proud to partner.

Courtney C - Client

After having a horrible experience at another appliance dealer, we stopped into Baths of America on a whim and were paired with Vincent. We told him about our situation and the terrible experience we had been having with the other company, and he was able to get us our appliances in a reasonable time. Not only was he upfront with us, but he was in constant communication with us throughout the whole process. We had some issues with installation on our end due to our contractor's mistake, and Vincent was even able to help us remedy the situation. Thank you, Vincent for helping us 100% through the whole process and always being in constant communication. True customer service!

Coraline Wheeler - Designer Details

Love! Love! Love this place. You will be pleasantly surprised to enter a beautifully designed showroom with a lot of exciting eye candy!! Every time without fail, the customer service has been excellent. Their knowledge and quick turnaround with quotes are always impressive, especially given the current environment. The range of products is a visual delight as well as impressive to take clients to when sourcing appliances, faucets, hardware etc. A must-visit! You won't be disappointed.

DIRECTORY OF SUPPLIERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

As a service to area building professionals, The Metropolitan Builder presents this listing of local suppliers and service providers in which are working with some of the most outstanding builders in the Greater Houston area. They have all been referred and/or vetted. Shouldn't they be working for you?

ARCHITECTS

Cameron Architects, Inc. 713-502-6644
Stephen Cameron
Architects@pdq.net
www.cameronarchitects.com

BANKER

Allegiance Bank 832-615-6807
Richardo Riojas
Richardo.riojas@allegiancebank.com
www.allegiancebank.com

CUSTOM BUILDER/RENOVATOR

Alair Homes Houston 713-922-7893
Chris Bolio
Chris.Bolio@alairhomes.com

BOOKKEEPING SERVICES

Efficient Bookkeeping Services 832-289-2401
Laura Daugherty
LDaugherty@efficientbookkeepingservices.com
www.efficientbookkeepingservices.com

BUSINESS COACH

Billionaire Thoughts 832-371-6642
Sheles Wallace
ShelesWallace@ActionCoach.com
www.billionairethoughts.com

CAST STONE

The Ark Cast Stone 713-695-2001
Harry Durham
harry@arkconcrete.com
www.arkconcrete.com

CUSTOM FLOORING

International Flooring 832-282-3073
Richard Arnold
Richard@ifhouston.com
www.ifhouston.com

COUNTERTOPS

W.R. Watson 713-865-3046
Pat Watson
pwatson@wrwatson.com
www.wrwatson.com

DIGITAL MARKETING & WEBSITE DESIGN

Crescere Digital 832-289-2401
Randy Corson
Randy@crescere-digital.com
www.crescere-digital.com

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Matt Pierce 210-441-2256
Matt@piercingmedia.com
www.piercingmedia.com

FINANCIAL PLANNER

Allstate
Frank Holder Mobile: 832-316-4202
frankholder@allstate.com
www.allstate.com

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Thomas Garage Door 713-725-8787
Sammy
Jthomasdoor@hotmail.com
www.jthomsdoor.com

HEALTH INSURANCE

US Health Advisors 832-641-0468
Cordie Ewing
Cordelia.Ewing@ushadvisors.com
www.ushadvisors.com

HOME INSPECTIONS

Inspections by Pat, LLC
Pat McInturff Mobile: 713-305-3356
pat@inspectionsbypat.com
www.inspectionsbypat.com

INTERIOR DESIGNER

Kendra Benson Interiors
Kendra Benson 832-405-4582
Kendra@kendrabensoninteriors.com
ASID TXGC President-Elect 2022-2023

KITCHEN & BATH

Baths of America 713-299-3189
Jeff Steinerjsteiner
@bathsofamerica.com
www.bathsofamerica.com

LENDER

ISB Capital 832-330-0016
Jack Blythe
Jack@ISBCapital.com
www.isbcapital.com

MILLWORK & LUMBER

Hardwood Products 713-203-0449
Kenny Francis
kfrancis@hwp.us
www.hwp.us

MIRROR & GLASS

Metal Wood Glass Innovations 713-834-4627
Esvin Tista
esvin@mwginnovations.com
www.mwginnovations.com

MORTGAGE LENDING

Amcap Mortgage Lending 713-703-7050
Roy Varner
rvarber@myamcap.com
www.myamcap.com

MOVING & STORAGE

Johnnie T. Melia Company 713-703-7050
Brandon Melia
brandon@jtmeliamoving.com
www.jtmeliamoving.com

PHOTOGRAPHER & VIDEO PRODUCTION

Piercing Media
Matt Pierce 210-441-2256
Matt@piercingmedia.com
www.piercingmedia.com

PROPERTY & CASUALTY

Greenline Insurance Group Inc 832-606-1289
Dulce Morales
dulce@greenlineinsgroup.com
www.greenlineinsgroup.com

REALTOR

KW Signature/KellerWilliams Realty
Rigo Villarreal 832-868-6981
RigoismyRealtor@gmail.com
www.thevillarealtygroup.kw.com

ROOFING

WM1 Roofing, Restoration & Solar
Will McNamee 832-301-1472
willm@wm1roofing.com
www.wm1roofing.com

SECURITY SERVICES

Wolf Security Cameras
Austin Wolf Mobile: 281-961-0805
Austin@wolfsecuritycameras.com
www.wolfsecuritycameras.com

TAX ATTORNEY

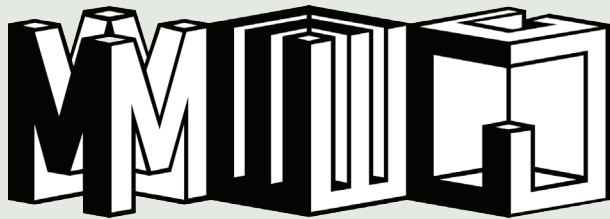
The Law Firm of Keith A Cothroll
Keith Cothroll 832-402-4440
kcothroll@cothlaw.com
www.cothlaw.com

TITLE COMPANY

TransAct Title 832-867-8026
Rebecca Haass
Rhaass@TransActTitle.com
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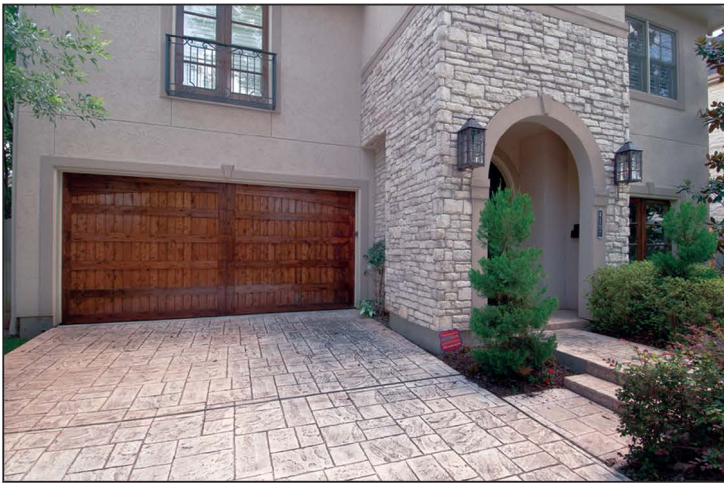
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