

THE LAKES NEWS SHOPPER'S

Spring home Okoboji



A special supplement to the award-winning
THE LAKES NEWS SHOPPER
Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Inspiration for Our Day- "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful." ~ Colossians 3:15

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Local Boat Lovers Start Their 6th Summer Helping Clients Broker Their Boats!

Barry and Julie Van Iperen are extremely excited to continue having Boji Boat Brokers in the Iowa Great Lakes area. There are not a lot of options for people wanting to sell their boats and Boji Boat Brokers, located at 1520 Hudson Avenue, Spirit Lake, can offer options with terms that work. Their focus is on you and helping you sell, purchase or trade your boat. It has taken years of knowledge working in the Okoboji area, along with experience in this industry, contacts and relationships, to get where they are today.

Boji Boat Brokers offers you a complete and professional process with skills that specialize in the sale and marketing of boats. If that means helping you find your next boat or selling your existing one, they are here and their priority is YOU!

They make sure your boat is clean and ready, and expose it in both a local and national network of advertising. They will represent you and your boat like it's theirs. Stop in and see for yourself.

If there is a particular boat you are looking for, with their many resources, they are able to help you find your "dream boat".

Their goal is to be able to fill a niche that customers have been looking for, but haven't been able to find. They have many years of

experience selling boats, but it has been part of their lifestyle even longer.

Barry has been selling boats in the Lakes area for over 25 years. Since 1969, Barry has been enjoying summers in Okoboji, starting at Edgewater Plaza, swimming and skiing, to working 25+ years in the boating industry, locally and then gaining the knowledge of selling yachts in Florida for one of the largest family owned brokerage companies in the world. Barry's experience is vast and he wants to share his knowledge of buying and selling boats with you.

Julie's knowledge of boats comes from a life centered around boats and boating. She worked at a local boat dealership for nearly 10 years doing all aspects from accounting to cleaning to selling boats and was looking forward to getting back in the business.

With one common theme, passion for the water, Barry and Julie want you to enjoy it as much as they do.

Boji Boat Brokers looks forward to reconnecting with past customers, and making new ones in 2024. Stop in at 1520 Hudson Avenue in Spirit Lake or call 712-330-3152 for more information. You can also check out their website at bojiboatbrokers.com for current inventory and testimonials.



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Snook's of Okoboji

Whether it's a weekday or a weekend, with the sun in full heat or the leaves falling from the trees, Snook's of Okoboji is sure to be open and ready to fill your lifestyle needs. Snook's of Okoboji opened in 1995 in a quaint building in West Okoboji, and has since grown into their current building with 20,000-square-feet of show space on Highway 71 in Okoboji. You'll know you've arrived at Snook's of Okoboji as the vibrant hues of summer welcome you with a wide variety of Adirondack chairs and outdoor furniture, in every color, located on the front lawn and beyond.

We have the largest outdoor showroom in the lakes area, you are sure to feel right at home as soon as you enter. Friendly staff members immediately greet customers with a warm welcome. Upon talking to them, you'll realize just how knowledgeable and well-informed the Snook's staff is. Customers that know exactly what they want will appreciate the ability to buy any piece off the floor and take it home the same day, or have it delivered. For those that need a little more guidance, have no fear. Talk with an expert designer about your needs; they are equipped to guide you through the entire process.

With a wide variety of product offerings and unbeatable customer service, it's no wonder Snook's has been a design staple of the lakes area for over 20 years. Bill Adams managed the store for eight years before taking ownership in October 2011. He took the business from its original location, added the outdoor store, appliance store and eventually combined three locations into one, making Snook's the ultimate destination store. Snook's offers a full color center of flooring for every room; carpet, hardwood, luxury vinyl tile, plank wood and more. They also design and install custom tile showers, surrounds, backsplashes, and in-floor heating systems. You will also find a wide variety of Leather Italia indoor furniture, decor, fantastic selection of umbrellas, outdoor patio furniture, and fire tables/pits.

Known for the largest selection of outdoor

living furniture in the Northwest Iowa Great Lakes area, Snook's has what you need to take your outdoor living experience to the next level. From lounge chairs for quiet mornings, to fire pits and fire tables for late-night get-togethers, you're sure to find what you're looking for at Snook's. Weather-proof Adirondack furniture makes a great addition to any outdoor living space. There's no chipping, fading,

mildew, or maintenance, so you can set your chairs outside year-round and let your cares float away, with our 20 year warranty. For those cool summer nights, Snook's offers propane, natural gas plus wood burning fire pits in a plethora of styles and designs.

Snook's also has an expansive selection of indoor furniture in every design style, from traditional to modern. They offer very affordable leather furniture and accent pieces to give your home style, and a luxurious soft place to land - Snook's offers a huge assortment of interior furniture and accessories to meet your needs. If you're looking to floor your guests, check out Snook's unbeatable selection of stylish, durable flooring options today. Their highly trained, certified installation experts take care of everything, from measuring your space to removing the existing floor and installing new flooring.

Besides offering quality furniture and flooring, Snook's customer service goes above and beyond. The store offers an array of services like design consulting, financing, fast delivery and estimations for all your flooring needs. Whether you're here to play or here to stay, stop by Snook's of Okoboji today. You'll be pleasantly surprised by everything the "hometown place to shop" has to offer.

In October of 2023, Snooks of Okoboji and Okoboji Wholesale joined homes! Snooks and Okoboji Wholesale are located at 1005 Okoboji View Ave. Feel free to call us at 712-332-7530. Check out our website at www.snooksofokoboji.com and follow/like us on Facebook.

Get the Whole Package at Snook's of Okoboji

Starting a new business is hard enough, but Bill Adams and his crew make it look easy. Hence, the new appliance store was started. Appliances, everyone loves them until they no longer work for the intended purpose. That's where Bill saw an opportunity to enter the lakes area in October of 2018, to offer scratch n' dent appliances at a wholesale price. Owner Bill Adams did countless hours of research and found the lack of discounted appliances in Northwest Iowa and made the business decision to open up shop. Spirit Lake was the original home of Okoboji Wholesale in a 2,400 square foot showroom packed to the walls in scratch n' dent appliances. Before each appliance set foot on the floor it was run through rigorous testing to ensure the appliance was working as intended. With some appliances arriving in non-working condition the service team would have to diagnose the issue and repair until the appliance was sellable. With thousands of units leaving the showroom floor, Bill and his staff took the liberty to ensure the satisfaction of a working appliance was leaving with a happy customer. With a lot of blood sweat and tears from Bill and the top tier staff he has, they relocated in the heart of Okoboji on Highway 71 to Snook's of Okoboji, which is a 20,000 square foot building. The purchase of a long-term existing appliance store in Milford happened in August 2020, which was Okoboji Wholesale's biggest milestone. This gave them the opportunity to purchase brand new appliances along with the new scratch n' dent. Melanders in Milford was around for many years and served thousands of happy and satisfied customers. Included in the purchase, Okoboji Wholesale agreed to take over those customers and continue to help and serve them. They now offer a wide variety of kitchen and laundry appliances from top brands such as GE, LG, Speed Queen, Frigidaire, Midea,

Galanz, Beko & Bosch. As soon as you walk in the door, you are greeted by a knowledgeable staff with a combined 25 years experience to help you from start to finish. Any project big or small, they will guide you to make sure you are getting the appliance that is right for you. Professional delivery and installation by their delivery staff, who will go the extra mile, is always a plus for those in need. Snook's doesn't finish after the door is shut. Service is a huge key to any appliance, and they service anything they sell, whether it's in or out of warranty. Any brand new appliance sold by Snook's Of Okoboji comes with a manufacturer's warranty. The scratch n' dent and used appliances are different. Even though the scratch n' dent appliances are open box brand new they do not carry a manufacturer's warranty. Since Snook's has their rigorous testing procedure to ensure all appliances are in working condition that is not an issue for their customers. Also, for pennies on the dollar, they can provide up to 5 years of an extended warranty on the scratch n' dent appliances purchased. With a huge selection to choose from, Snook's Of Okoboji has become the largest new and used appliance dealer in Northwest Iowa. It's your one stop shop for any refrigerator, stove, dishwasher, microwave, ice maker, freezer, washer, dryer, and much more. Stop in at 1005 Okoboji View Ave, call 712-332-6050, or message us on Facebook for any questions on availability to get your dream appliances today! Snooks of Okoboji and Okoboji Wholesale joined homes and now have a combined 20,000 square feet of space to showcase all the appliances, indoor and outdoor furniture, and flooring they have to offer. Be sure to stop in and check us out today! Visit our website at www.snooksofokoboji.com and like/follow us on Facebook.





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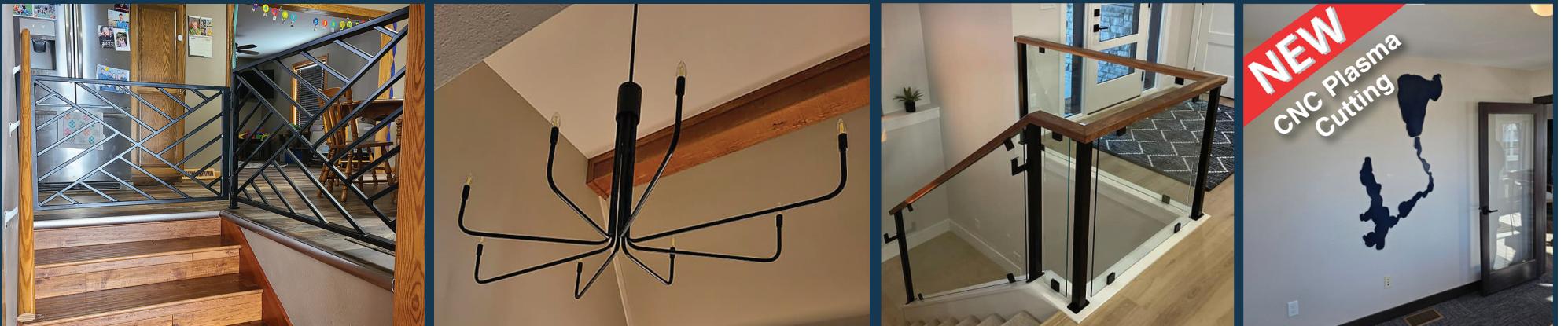
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-Who We Are-

Founder and Owner, Cory Garland, was raised in the Lakes Area and graduated from Spirit Lake High School. Cory went on to earn a degree in Welding from Iowa Lakes Community College in Emmetsburg. Cory put down roots West of Milford with his two sons and wife.

Cory has 12 years of welding experience under his belt and always had the dream of opening his own welding shop. That dream became a reality in September of 2019 when he opened Garland Iron Works, LLC. Cory strives for perfection and the highest quality in his work. He often jokes that this business is "like retirement" for him since he gets so much joy out of making customers' visions come to life.

Growing up in the Okoboji area makes it easy to fall in love with the beauty of the lakes and the community that surrounds them. It is the same community that has helped this business become successful with the support it has provided. Cory looks forward to continuing to build and fabricate beautiful metal works that families can enjoy for years and years to come.



Garland Iron Works exceeded our expectations! We were looking for someone to build handrails and a chandelier for our remodel and had heard awesome things about Cory. His craftsmanship and attention to detail is second to none. We highly recommend Garland Iron Works and would definitely work with Cory again. - Sean Kondrath

Cory was professional, on time, on bid and listened to my ideas. I am so thrilled with the quality and beauty of my new deck. Don't hesitate to give him a try! - Jamie Hicks



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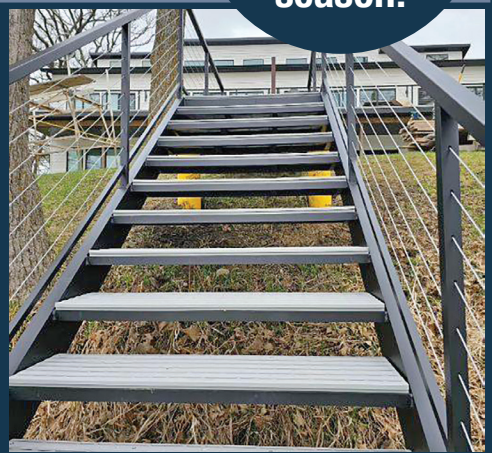
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Features to Consider for a Relaxation-Themed Bathroom Remodel

Homeowners want to view their homes as a respite from all that goes on outside their doors. Indeed, turning a home into a residents-only retreat can ensure everyone looks forward to walking through the front door at the end of the day.

One of the more popular ways to turn a home into one's own personal retreat is to upgrade the bathroom. A renovated bathroom can completely transform how individuals feel about their homes. The following are some features to consider when remodeling a bathroom with relaxation in mind.

• **Open shower:** An open shower is a visually stunning addition to any bathroom. Such showers give a bathroom a more open look, thanks in part to the fact that these modern features do not feature a door or require the use of a shower curtain. The result is a clean look that many people associate with a luxury hotel. When speaking with a contractor about an open shower install, homeowners can ask about a half-wall to safeguard against water splashing out of the shower. In addition, a heat lamp can help ensure residents stay warm until they're ready to leave the bathroom.

• **Heated features:** Additional features to keep everyone calm and warm can be considered when upgrading the bathroom. Radiant flooring can ensure everyone's toes remain toasty, and the installation of such a feature can eliminate the need for floor mats and bath mats that some homeowners may not like. Commit further to the heat theme with a heated towel rack, which is another feature associated with luxury hotels that can be just as enjoyable at home.

• **Soaking tub:** An open shower creates an instant feeling of luxury,

but few things are more suggestive of relaxation than a soaking tub. A long day at school or the office or a day when winter winds are howling outside is made much better with a good soak. The National Kitchen & Bath Association notes that luxury bathrooms featuring soaking tubs are wildly popular, and that vaunted status is undoubtedly due to the relaxing benefits of a good soak.

• **Skylight:** Even if the goal of a luxury bathroom is to leave the outside world outside, allowing some natural light inside is a great way to add a little extra calm to the room. Floor-to-ceiling windows may seem appealing in brochures or advertisements, but such features do not create the sense of privacy many people prefer in their bathrooms. One or two skylights can create that sense of privacy and still allow for natural light to enter the room, making this an option that provides the best of both worlds.

These features and more can help homeowners transform their bathrooms into luxurious, relaxing respites from the outside world.

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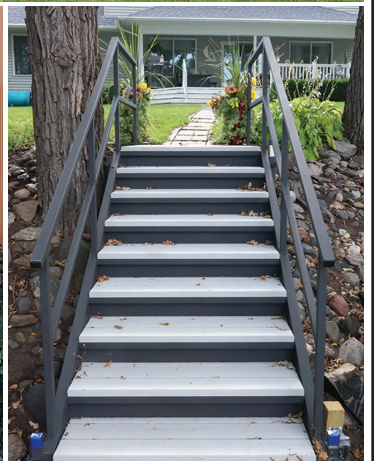


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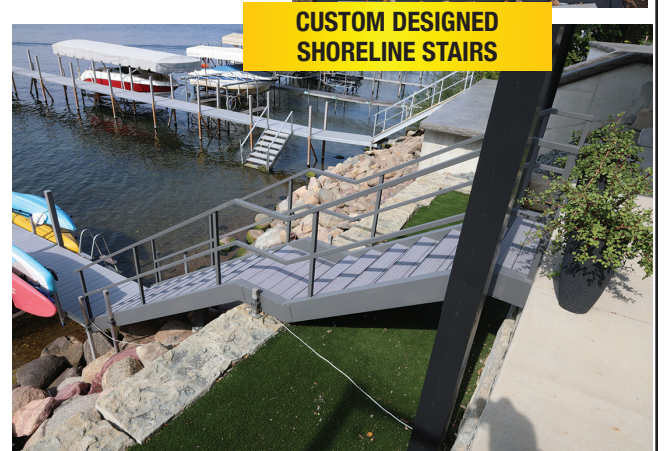
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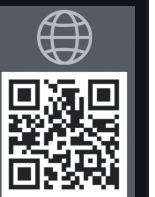
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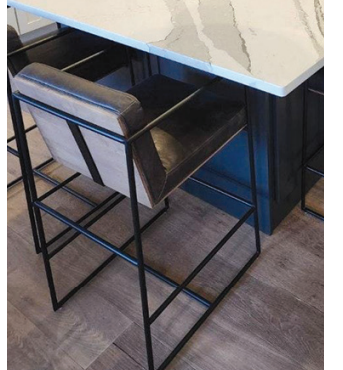
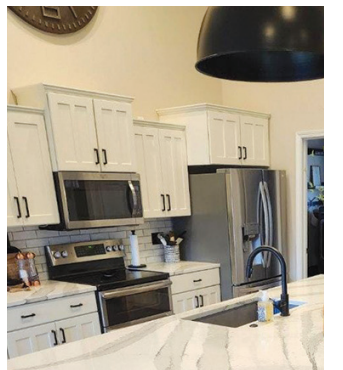
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Color Tips to Make Your Home Exterior POP

Home exteriors make a first impression, setting the tone for neighbors, guests, and if a property is on the market --prospective home buyers. So how do you boost your curb appeal and make your exterior pop? According to those in the know, a lot of it has to do with color.

“Choosing deep, bold colors for your door or siding can provide eye-catching focal points and dramatically increase curb appeal,” says Jon Lapp, vinyl siding product manager at ProVia. To help you make selections that work best for your home and vision, ProVia is offering the following insights:

Siding

Color and texture play significant roles in the overall look and style of a home, so consider pairing your vinyl siding with other materials, such as manufactured stone, decorative shake, or board and batten. Whether you go for soft earth tones or deep hues of primary colors, color retention technologies will maintain the look through the years. To that end, here are a few qualities to look for in your siding:

- UV protection: Think of it as sunscreen for your house. This layer of protection helps shield your siding from the destructive effects

of the sun’s UV rays.

- Weather barrier shield: Anti-weathering materials on the siding’s surface can help ensure long-lasting color fidelity and low-maintenance freedom for your home’s exterior.

- Heat resistance: Heat-resistant inorganic pigments ensure exacting deep colors, reflect heat from exterior walls, and deflect solar rays to reduce solar heat build-up and unsightly weathering.

- Anti-fade protection: A strong molecular chain, found in super polymer vinyl siding, is engineered for superior color retention. “At first, it might be difficult to tell the difference between a good vinyl siding panel and an outstanding one. But over time, the true strength and quality of each panel will be revealed,” says Lapp.

It’s for this reason that ProVia’s entire lineup of super polymer vinyl siding is formulated with Tri-Pigment Reflective Technology, Color Keeper Anti-Fade Protection, Weather Barrier Shield and SPX-2000 UV Blocker. These components work together to combat fade and increase weather resistance.

The Entry Door

The entry door is an amazing place to make a color statement.

However, if you buy an exterior replacement door and try to finish it yourself, achieving the flawless finish you’re hoping for is easier said than done. Then there’s the trim, and possibly sidelights and a transom that also need to be painted to match or coordinate with the door color.

From classic hues, such as rustic bronze or forest green, to trending colors like avocado or burnt orange, you can ensure a consistent, beautiful and lasting finish by having your manufacturer paint the door before it leaves the factory floor. Bonus: the color will also be under warranty. Look for a manufacturer that crafts custom doors, allowing you to choose different interior and exterior colors and other specifications tailored to your taste.

To get inspired for your home exterior project, visit provia.com. In addition to photo galleries of finished projects, the site’s home designer tools allow you to visualize how various elements will look on your home.

By selecting professional-quality exterior products, you can ensure long-lasting durability and a big boost in curb appeal.

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How to Create an Outdoor Living Retreat

Al fresco entertaining has taken off in recent years. It's much more common today to find homeowners who want to extend living spaces to the outdoors in meaningful ways that go beyond a few lawn chairs and a stand-alone grill. Dream backyard living rooms mirror similar spaces indoors and contain features like cozy corners, lush furniture and televisions or movie projectors. Plus, they often abut additional outdoor luxuries like fully functional kitchens. Homeowners have various options when designing outdoor living spaces. Above all else, spaces should be created with the goal of encouraging people to get together. Here are some ideas.

Poolside retreat

Homeowners with pools and other water features likely want this area to be the star of the entertaining space. Furniture will be more of the lounging variety, with comfortable chaises and spots to catch the sun. If a swim-up bar isn't possible, a rolling bar cart can be stocked with essentials for cocktails or mocktails for the kids. Furniture near the pool will be exposed to a lot of sun, so look for durable, sun-resistant fabrics.

Fireside nook

Gathering around an outdoor fireplace or fire pit is a treat when the weather cools down. Mirror the look of the same setup indoors by arranging outdoor sofas so they flank the fireplace. Add some ottomans or side tables for stowing mulled cider or hot chocolate. A mantel above the fireplace can hold pots of greenery or candles that add to the ambiance.

Consider a custom banquette

Unused corners on a patio or rooftop retreat can utilize a custom-made banquette that provides the functionality of a sofa sectional outdoors. Have a contractor design it to the exact specifications of the area, and add a rug to ground the space.

Vary the flooring

Depending on the entertaining space, a balance of soft grass, pavers or other hardscape will be necessary. Certain areas will need to be hard enough for chairs and other furniture, particularly for those who are including an outdoor dining table in the design.

Create some privacy

Some homeowners are lucky enough to have natural barriers that offer privacy in their entertaining spaces. When there isn't enough, tall shrubs, inexpensive bamboo fencing or trellis can provide a blind that makes an outdoor living area more cozy and private. Consider placing tall, potted plants on rolling casters to improve privacy as the need arises.

Outdoor living spaces are all the rage, and they can add value and functionality to most any home. *©metrocreativeconnection*



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Tree climbing comes naturally for Randy Nelson, owner of Randy L. Nelson Tree Care, located in Estherville, Iowa. He has always enjoyed the outdoors and being in nature. When Randy was younger he would drive his parents crazy always climbing trees, little did they know he would end up making a career out of climbing them! Randy grew up in Fairmont, Minnesota, and joined the active army in 1987 after graduation. He started his Arboriculture career in the Twin Cities in 1992, becoming an ISA Certified Arborist in 1997. Randy started his own company in 1999, back in his hometown of Fairmont, Minnesota, but a lot has changed since then. He had to take some time away from climbing to recover from rotator cuff surgery in 2015-2017, then moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where he worked as a consulting arborist for two years, then back to Minnesota in 2018 where he was an operations manager for a national tree care company. With all his years of combined experience as an arborist he decided to get back to doing what he loves most, owning his own business again. Randy and his wife Stacie purchased a log home situated on 5 acres, on the west edge of Estherville, in March of 2021. As an arborist, the space was a perfect fit for him, with tons of mature trees and room to grow his business.



"I feel very privileged to be involved in the tree care industry as a climbing arborist. Tree climbing with rope and harness has become kind of a lost art nowadays with aerial lifts and bucket trucks being used more often." I truly enjoy meeting new clients and helping them solve their tree problems," Randy said. My goal for Randy L. Nelson Tree Care LLC is to develop long term clients and be able to help them develop a pro-active tree care program that makes sense for their property with their budget in mind."

"Tree service comes in many forms. In the case of the removal of a Norway Maple tree in our front yard in Mason City, we selected Randy L. Nelson Tree Service. We provided a few pictures of the tree showing the tree as well as the location near power lines, a deep rural ditch, and other obstacles that made a boom truck impossible. Randy quoted us a price for the removal of the tree and an exact date for the work. Randy did indicate that unexpected weather conditions could possibly delay the removal. He communicated his arrival time and was able to remove the tree within his plan and price quotation. We found his work to be professional and, more importantly, completed safely both for our property as well as himself. We would not hesitate to call on him again. He is truly an asset to Iowa homeowners and business owners." - Sandy and Dan Breyfogle - Mason City, IA

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2025 will mark the 40th anniversary for Overhead Door Sales & Service doing business within the Iowa Great Lakes Area. These past 4 decades have witnessed tremendous changes within the overhead door industry, and this family owned & operated Arnolds Park business has kept pace by offering the latest and greatest to their residential, commercial and farm customers.

Founded by her father, Jon Payne, owner Nicole Norgaard & husband Nathan purchased the business in 2014. With over 37 years of combined experience, the Norgaard's take great pride in providing professional, prompt and courteous sales, service & installation to their clients.

When thinking about your home, your garage door is your biggest, and often most-used entrance way. Selecting the right door can prove overwhelming when you take into consideration all of the finishes, materials and how it will compliment both your home and neighborhood.

What's the importance of an overhead door? Well, here are a few reasons you'll want to consider upgrading your garage doors: return on investment, enhanced curb appeal, energy efficiency, enhanced privacy & security.

Did you know an overhead door is one of the best home improvement projects with payback for your house? According to the 2023 Cost Versus Value Study coordinated by Remodeling magazine, a garage door replacement returns a whopping 102.7% of the investment cost for a homeowner. That's the second highest recoup value of more than 23 home improvement projects in the study. To put it plainly, for every \$1,000 you invest in a garage door, \$1,027 is added to the value of your home.

With technology, comes heightened energy efficiency of doors, and that's where the U Factor comes into play. In actual use, a garage door consists of multiple sections coupled together, plus track, hardware, and accessories. The assembled door may include features that greatly impact the thermal performance, such as section joints, stiles, thermal breaks, air spaces, weather seals, etc. These design elements, whether all being present or just some, generally affect thermal conductance in a door. Some elements of door construction can provide a "thermal shortcut" around the insulation in a door section, thereby increasing heat flow. Other elements such as thermal breaks and weather seals resist heat flow.

Now, we also consider the R Value when selling & installing doors. Calculated Door Section (R-value), a method estimating the insulating value of a door section without accounting for the complexities of door section joints, stile attachments, etc., and therefore should not be used for garage door assemblies. A typical insulated door has an exterior surface, interior surface, and an insulating core material. Also present is the insulating effect of air on a vertical surface, termed "air film". Each of these elements has a unique R-value that added together create the door section R-value. $R_{section} = R_{air\ films} + R_{outside\ surface} + R_{insulation} + R_{inside\ surface}$ For a door, we assume air will be stagnant on the inside of a closed door and the exterior will have air moving against it at 15 MPH.

So, what Overhead Door Sales & Service takes into account when selling, installing and servicing your doors goes much deeper than the look of the door. There's science behind their service and they take enormous pride in that.

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4 Trends to Take Muted Interiors from Drab to Dreamy

While neutral tones continue to be popular this year among home DIYers, bold and colorful surroundings also are trending right now.

From adding dramatic style to the kitchen to giving an unexpected space a splash of color, these ideas—inspired by the 2024 FrogTape Design Trends, as identified by celebrity interior designer Taniya Nayak—will make areas around your home pop in 2024.

Colorful Kitchens. Make the kitchen a focal point by painting the cabinets or panels on the island a vivid color. Calming blue will ensure a relaxed and laid-back feeling, while fuchsia will energize the design. Nayak recommends using FrogTape Delicate Surface Painter's Tape to prevent paint bleed and achieve crisp paint lines. The low-adhesion tape is designed to prevent damage on surfaces like cabinets, freshly painted walls, wallpaper and more.

Dynamic Décor. If painting projects aren't in the plan for this year, revive a living room or bedroom by adding a collection of brightly colored pillows and throws, bohemian-style macramé, wall art and a rug with geometric patterns. As long as the colors are complementary to each other, the blend of styles and textures will catch the eye and make the room feel refreshed with little effort.

Nourishing Green. A simple, but effective, way to boost the mood of a space is to fill it with large blooms. Place a modern plant stand in an empty corner or between rooms as a divider, and layer in green houseplants or ones with colorful leaves on the shelves. Accentuate the greenery with pops of the same color throughout the room to create a sense of cohesion.

Elevated Exteriors. It's not just the interiors of the home that should speak to personal style, the outside should, too! Give the front door a facelift by painting it a daring color. Don't be afraid to choose one hue for the outside of the door and another for the inside. For this project, apply FrogTape Multi-Surface Painter's Tape before painting, so that trim around the door and doorknob is protected from paint bleed.

For more fresh decor ideas and design tips, visit [FrogTape.com](https://www.frogtape.com).

Whether you choose one or all of these trends, they can be tackled by DIYers with a range of skillsets to transform dull living spaces into the home of your dreams.

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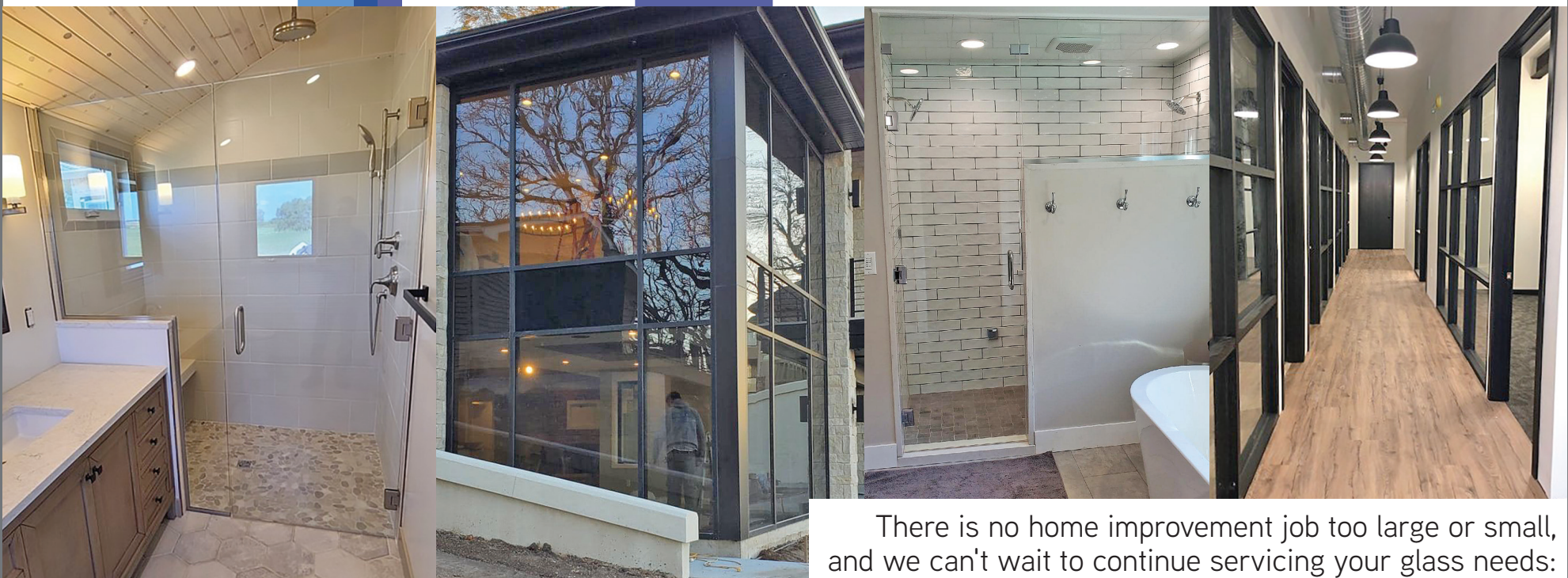


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Give Your Living Room a New Vibe



An “out with the old, in with the new” mentality can extend to people’s visions for their homes. A home in need of repair or renovation can serve as a catalyst to take inventory of personal style and help make interior spaces reflect one’s unique vibe.

A living room can grow stale over time and often serves as a catch-call for clothing, blankets, gadgets, and other items. Upon recognizing a living room has seen better days, individuals may decide it’s time to give the space a new vibe. That transformation can start with these strategies.

Organize first

Clutter frequently is the culprit behind a living room that may not give off the vibe individuals desire. As families grow and people add belongings, space may be at a premium. Less is more has never been a more important concept. Remove extraneous items before purchasing new furniture or transitioning to a new design. You may even want to remove everything and start from scratch before reintroducing desirable elements to the space.

Seek the assistance of professionals

Some people are adept at decorating and designing spaces. But just as you wouldn’t perform your own medical procedures, you should leave jobs like interior design and renovations to the professionals. Hiring a professional interior designer and contractors can really bring a living room together in ways homeowners may have never imagined. These pros can build off of

your ideas and truly create a space that may be worthy of a magazine spread.

Promote wellness

You may want to consider adding natural materials in the design to promote well-being. Eco-friendly furnishings, raw fibers and organic textures will create an environment from sustainable choices. Plenty of plants also can create a welcoming environment that helps you surround yourself with positive energy and the items you love.

Light it up

One of the easiest ways to transform a room’s vibe is to utilize lighting. Change draperies to allow more natural light to shine in. Consider additional windows or skylights if yours is a particularly dark home. If you desire to create a more vivid or cozy ambiance, use a combination of accent, task and supplemental lighting in the space so there are no dim corners.

Create an industrial or urban vibe

Industrial-chic design celebrates the bones of a building. It’s what makes city lofts so appealing, with their exposed beams and brick. Even those who live in suburbia or out in the country can give a living room this look with subtle nods to the style. Unadorned windows, clean lines on furniture, oversized, gallery-style art, and metal accents can add touches of this popular look to your home.

Revamping a living room doesn’t have to be difficult. With an idea in place and some professional touches, an entirely new vibe can be achieved. *@metrocreat iveconnection*

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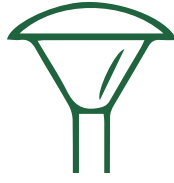
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Signs It's Time to Repair or Replace Your Deck

Spring is a season of rejuvenation that compels millions across the globe to quit hibernating and get back to enjoying the great outdoors. Spring also marks a great time to assess a home's exterior, namely those areas like a deck where people will spend a lot of time in the warmer months to come.

Assessing a deck after winter can be eye-opening. Harsh winter weather can take its toll on a deck, and the following are some telltale signs that a deck could be in need of repair or replacement.

- **Wobbly underfoot and in hand:** Wobbly planks and railings are one sign of a deteriorating deck homeowners won't recognize as they hide from winter weather indoors. But these tend to reveal themselves rather quickly when examining a deck after winter. Wobbly planks in the middle of the deck can be inconvenient, but wobbly steps and railings can be dangerous. According to the home improvement resource Angi, wobbly railings can be a byproduct of rot. A local decking professional can assess the extent of the rot in railings and elsewhere and determine the best course of action. If the rot is isolated to an area or two, a simple repair may be all that's necessary. Extensive rot may require a full replacement of the existing deck.
- **Faded paint:** Many homeowners paint their wood decks, and that paint will not last forever. Faded paint can turn an otherwise lovely deck into an eyesore, and paint can fade over the winter. Thankfully, a local painter can address a faded deck and may recommend some additional strategies to safeguard the deck against fading next winter and beyond.
- **Holes in the wood:** Many a homeowner has encountered curious-looking holes in their deck. This could be a sign of insect infestation. Termites, carpenter ants and carpenter bees are among the various types of insects that can bore holes through wood. Homeowners who notice holes throughout their deck are urged to call a deck professional and/or pest control firm to assess the holes and offer a solution. Though small issues may be addressed with repairs, a deck littered with holes caused by insects may need a full replacement.
- **Rust:** Wood decks may be made of wood, but they can still exhibit signs of rust, namely in the nails and metal connectors that hold the deck together. If screws have rusted to the point where they are no longer holding the deck together, a full-scale replacement could be in the cards, as the deck could have substantial structural damage. Like other issues that can reveal themselves during a springtime inspection of the deck, rust necessitates a thorough examination by an experienced decking professional. Many people do not use their decks during winter, which only underscores the significance of a full deck inspection in spring.

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