

Transformations

Vol. 3 No. 1, Spring 2009

Planned Home Improvement—Since 1968



(734) 729-3200



A Message From Mike & Mark Kwolek

It's been a year since our last newsletter and we figured it was time to reach out once again to all of you. And what a year it's been!

But rather than rehash all of the bad news, we're choosing to look at things in terms of "change" and "new opportunities."

NBC Nightly News reported recently that fewer Americans moved in 2008 than in any year since 1962! This is good news for those of us in the remodeling business and reinforces the "Staying Put" theme we've been using in our advertising.

A perfect example is the Brownlee family whose home expansion PHI completed in 2008. The Brownlees decided that the benefits of creating more space to entertain their growing family far outweighed the cost. See our update on page 3.

There's some good news for homeowners in our article on the updated federal tax credits for energy efficiency upgrades. Maybe now is the time to "green up" your house and earn a few tax credits.

We hope you enjoy our newsletter and find it useful. Give us a call regarding your remodeling needs or just to say "hi."

Don't Pick a Remodeler Based on Price Alone

When we bid on home remodeling projects lately, we often find ourselves competing against companies (or individuals) who have sprung up out of nowhere and who are giving prospective customers what we feel are unrealistically low bids.

While homeowners may feel they are getting "an offer they can't refuse," we worry that the estimates they are being given fit the old adage, "If it seems too good to be true, it probably is."

Planned Home Improvement may not always be able to give you the lowest price on a project, but

we will always give you a fair and accurate one.

Remember that there are other factors than price alone to take into consideration when getting estimates on remodeling work.

When Planned Home Improvement is on the job, there are a number of things you can expect:

- We work closely with you to draw up the plans and write the specifications for your project
- We've done it all and are not afraid to tackle one-of-a-kind projects
- We provide on-site supervision

continued on page 2

What We're Working On

Look for PHI's yard signs in and around town. Here's just a sampling of some of our recent remodeling projects:

- Family room addition—Canton
- Dormer—Canton
- Attached garage; household remodeling—Farmington Hills
- Addition and indoor swimming pool—Livonia
- Garage—Westland



**Planned
Home
Improvement**

Tell Your Family, Friends and Neighbors About Planned Home Improvement and Receive \$100!

Know someone who is thinking about remodeling their home?
Tell them to give Mark and Mike a call.
Once your referral signs a contract, we will send you \$100!

Expanding and Enhancing the House You're In

You love the neighborhood. You have kids in the local schools. The location is convenient to freeways, shopping and church. You'd be perfectly happy staying in your current house—if only you had more space.

Maybe you've outgrown your house over the years. Maybe an elderly parent is moving in or a child is returning. Or maybe you'd like to reconfigure or expand to accommodate lifestyle changes.

As more homeowners stay put, feeling comfortable and content in the house they're in is increasingly important. A home remodel allows you to stay in a neighborhood you like and avoid the expenses and inconvenience of moving, while making your home more livable.

Planned Home Improvement has completed many home additions over the past 40 years. We've helped our customers increase space by building on, up, out and down in terms of the existing home structure in order to create additional living space and enhance the quality of life within their homes. We can help you determine the type of addition that will work best for your needs and your lot size, restrictions, etc.

You can add space on the ground-level, for example, if any of the residents of your home have difficulty climbing stairs. Typical ground-level additions expand into the backyard and will not change the appearance of your house from the street.

On the second-story, you can add space over a garage or extend existing space with a dormer. It's often less expensive to build up because no foundation work is necessary.



Another popular choice is to expand a family's entertainment space, such as for enhanced TV viewing or to accommodate a home theater.

It may be true that given today's topsy turvy home values, the emotional benefits of a remodel or addition probably outweigh the financial returns. But you will be enhancing your family's quality of life, and it's hard to put a price tag on that.

Price continued from page 1

- We pay attention to the details
- We use only subcontractors we know and trust
- We have access to designers who will help you select materials for your project
- We have a reputation for promptness, reliability and integrity
- We offer a hassle-free remodeling experience

With over 40 years in the remodeling business, we have built solid, long-standing relationships with our customers, subcontractors, suppliers and the communities we work in. Family-owned-and-operated for three generations, there's a reason we've lasted this long.

So be sure to take everything into consideration, not just price alone, when deciding who will do your next remodeling project.

Multiple Generation Households Are On the Rise

According to a recent AARP survey, multigenerational households are becoming more prevalent as Americans of all ages deal with the effects of the economic crisis and the plummeting housing market.

"The recession is having an impact on people of all ages, and the effects are starting to be felt at home," says Jim Toedtman, editor of the *AARP Bulletin*. "More people are living under the same roof as their parents and their adult children."

The survey also revealed the following:

- 11% of people age 50+ live with their grandchildren or their parents
- 11% of people age 35-44 report living with their parents or their in-laws
- 34% of people who said that they would likely have to move in with family or friends said that it would be due to a loss of income

Some tips from AARP for living in a "multigenerational" household:

- Prepare your home so it works for everyone, young and old.
- Decide how living space in your home will be used. It's important that grandparents and grandchildren have their own places—bedrooms; sitting rooms; a place for favorite chairs, watching TV or studying.

PHI Project Update: The Brownlee Home in Belleville

We first reported on Planned Home Improvement’s remodeling of the Brownlee house in Belleville in our Fall 2007 newsletter. In our Winter 2008 issue, we told how we successfully completed the expansion and updates in just five months.

A year and a half later, we are proud to report that Minette and David Brownlee and their family continue to enjoy their much larger, more versatile home along a serene and beautiful section of Belleville Lake.

“We are so happy with the results and the extra room,” Minette tells us. “The house is big but cozy. Now our grandkids have room to run.”

The project involved a massive tear-down; and the Brownlees lived on site while the work was being done.

David applied his architectural background to work with Mark on the design end. He also worked closely with Mike to figure out and construct other elements of the project.

PROJECT HISTORY

- The original structure was a log cabin built in 1941
- David Brownlee’s father purchased the cabin and built an addition around 1968
- David and his dad did more remodeling over the years
- David and Minette hired PHI in 2007 to make improvements that would double the size of the existing house.
- This project included: an attached walkout basement; new living space that includes a kitchen and great room; and a new half bath.

RIGHT: The Brownlee house today, with upper deck and walkout basement facing the lake.

BELOW: PHI at work on the addition in the Spring of 2007.



“We like our home so much we hardly go anywhere any more. On the lake is the nicest place to be.”

David Brownlee

The Brownlees are a perfect example of families who are “staying put” and enjoying and making the most of their current home.

At PHI, we are as proud of our work on this project as we are of the relationship we have built with the Brownlees. We couldn’t agree more with Minette when she says, “We are so happy with the results. It couldn’t have come out any better.”



ABOVE: Front porch of the Brownlee house with Belleville Lake in the Background.



LEFT: Spacious family room where David and Minette frequently entertain family and friends, including a first birthday party for their grandson this past fall.

Sign up for Planned Home Improvement’s E-mail Newsletter at: mkpla@sbcglobal.net

Transforming Homes Since 1968



35923 Ford Rd.
Westland, MI 48185
www.plannedhomeimprovement.com

(734) 729-3200

PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 220
PLYMOUTH, MI



**Win \$100! SEND US
YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS**

and we'll enter you in a July 4 Drawing
for a chance to win \$100.

Sign up at: mkpla@sbcglobal.net
to receive future PHI e-newsletters
& promotions

**Free Planning & Estimates
Financing Available
(734) 729-3200**

House Beautiful

"To everyone who hesitates that decorating is a luxury at this unsettled (economic) moment, I'd like to say that home is more important than ever, not a last priority in your budget, but a first. Now is the time to set a beautiful table and invite friends for dinner, rather than go to a restaurant. Now is the time to get a deal on that big TV and create your own home theater, time to renovate a kitchen or bath, as contractors become less busy and more eager to please. Home isn't a luxury; the money you spend, you'll enjoy every day."

Stephen Drucker, Editor in Chief
House Beautiful magazine

Stimulus Bill Includes Energy Efficiency Incentives You May Want to Look Into

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, also known as the "Stimulus Bill," signed by President Obama this past February includes significant changes to federal tax credits already available to homeowners who improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

This could be a great time to make your home more energy efficient.

Here are some highlights:

- The federal energy efficiency tax credits that were previously effective for 2009 have been extended to 2010 as well.

- The tax credit has been raised from 10% to 30%. The maximum credit has been raised from \$500 to a \$1,500 total for the two-year period (2009-2010). You can spend up to \$5,000 during this two-year period on a single or multiple improvements, and get 30% or \$1,500 back as a tax credit.
- The \$200 cap on windows has been removed, but the requirements for windows have been increased significantly.

Find more information at:
energystar.gov/taxcredits