

re-!novate™

winter 2008

Put the Green in your Wallet Why Every Home Should Be ENERGY STAR® Certified

If you live in the typical American home, you are literally throwing money (and heat) out the window. Heating costs are going "through the roof." This is in part because most houses are built like a sieve. You might decide to improve your energy-efficiency to feel good about the environment, but you would be missing the point. Energy-efficiency saves money, period. When petroleum was cheap, we could ignore our wasteful habits, but not anymore. Failing to build or remodel to high standards of efficiency is simply irresponsible, and yet, most builders, remodelers, and homeowners are making this unwise choice.

Let's consider the math: The typical \$250,000 new home could be constructed to meet ENERGY STAR® standards and, to cut heating costs in half, by investing an additional \$10,000. This extra cost adds \$50/month to the typical loan and saves an average of \$100/month in heating and cooling costs. (*Energy Smart Homes, Winter 2008, p. 116, The Taunton Press.*) This saves the owner about \$50/month, which, over the life of a 30 year loan, adds up to \$18,000! In exchange for this savings, your home is more comfortable, and produces less greenhouse gas emissions.

Wal-Mart understands the math. To improve their image, and more importantly to improve their profit margins, Wal-Mart has embraced an ambitious energy-efficiency protocol for its stores that will net the company additional savings in the Billions of dollars! "Now, with oil, gas, and electricity prices soaring, companies are beginning to realize that saving energy can translate into dramatically lower costs. That means higher profits and happier shareholders—not to mention a cleaner planet," writes Leila Abboud and John Biers. "So, companies are beginning to pour more money into making old equipment energy-efficient or upgrading to cleaner models. And they're starting to streamline their operations to cut down on waste." (*Wall Street Journal, August 27, 2007.*) Wal-Mart will be adding lots of skylights and utilizing bio-diesel fuel in their massive trucking fleet. I don't shop at Wal-Mart for a variety of other reasons, (Believe me, I could go on and on about the "high costs of low prices!") but I do applaud this giant step towards embracing more sustainable practices.

For the typical homeowner, a \$10,000 investment not only leads to reduced utility costs, but additional incentives such as rebates and tax breaks will make the return-on-investment for these improvements even more attractive. Focus on Energy offers generous rewards right now in Wisconsin and the State and the Federal government will add additional tax credits to help provide incentives for a decision that is already a no-brainer. So what are you waiting for?

(Continued page 3 - Investing in Energy Efficient Improvements)

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Old house renovation and restoration since 1992



Sustainable Design
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Guest Column

Philip Ashby



Since 2006, Philip Ashby has offered architectural design services to the clients of Chad's Carpentry. His company, Ashby Architecture, LLC, specializes in residential projects such as interior remodels, additions and custom design houses.

With 15 years of design experience, Philip continues to enjoy the design and construction process, especially the collaboration between homeowner, builder and architect. The result of this collaborative process is creating a healthy and aesthetic environment that is tailored to the homeowner's vision.

Philip's design philosophy states that every design problem has an elegant solution worth pursuing. Each project has its own circumstances and he designs accordingly; but the result is always creating a sense of place that is familiar, safe, and beautiful.

For more information about Philip and his services please visit www.ashbyarchitecture.com.

Continuous Improvement

What's New at Chad's Carpentry

While some companies become complacent when business is good, at Chad's Carpentry we continuously challenge ourselves to find new ways to improve our business and improve our customer satisfaction. Here are a few of our latest improvements.

Better communication

Check out our new phone system! In order to provide more responsive, customer-friendly service, our new phone system will immediately direct your call to the appropriate staff member. If they are unable to take your call, the voice mail system instantaneously sends your message as an email attachment. The new system helps us all to connect the dots and keeps everything well documented. Now our old number connects you to our staff in a much better way! We hope you like this new system. Please let us know if you experience any problems.

Better Customer Service

We really appreciate your feedback on customer evaluations. While our goal is to provide complete customer satisfaction, sometimes we fail to deliver and we need to know about it. We review customer evaluations at our weekly production meetings. Right now we are in the process of and making changes to overcome some of the scheduling problems you may recently have encountered. We love getting rave reviews when we have earned them and are equally grateful when we get good honest criticism.

Continuous Improvement

Our goal is to provide the best customer service in the remodeling industry. We can't address a problem or concern unless we know about it. If a particular team member, product, or service is not meeting your expectations, let us know. Our designated Continuous Improvement Manager is Sue, so please send your feedback directly to her at Sue@ChadsCarpentry.com

Thank you for your feedback!

Our New Year's resolution is that all phone calls and emails will be returned to you within 24 hours.



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NEWS and RE-!NOVATIONS™ from CHAD'S CARPENTRY

SAVE SOME MONEY!

Winter months are slooow in the remodeling industry. Once again we are offering a substantial discount for any interior remodeling that is completed before March 31st. Deduct 5% off any project—big or small—completed this winter.

2008 CotY Awards

Joe Stahl and Chad Speight, along with 11 other local NARI (National Association of the Remodeling Industry) members, were awarded the CotY Image Award for their efforts in the Gulf Coast last year to help rebuild after Hurricane Katrina.

Project Spotlight

(See photos page 4)

The owners of this home wanted to create an open and inviting kitchen, connected to the dining and living room areas. The original home was chopped up, with many small doorways and closets, so walls were removed.

Additional living space was desired on the main floor to include a family room/office, a bathroom, a laundry area, and a mudroom entry. The attached garage was converted to meet these needs. The old garage was only used for storage, thanks to a 2-car detached garage which had been built prior to our arrival.

We suggested creating a diagonal flow through the home, leading from the new back entry and mudroom into the new family room/office, through the kitchen, and finally into the original living room. The new layout accomplished this beautifully.

The new bathroom is tucked in the corner, making excellent use of space.

Extra framing was installed to enable proper chases under the new floor system, avoiding the existing basement stairwell.

The original plaster ceilings and oak floors in the living room and dining room are blended beautifully to the remodeled kitchen space.

Energy improvements were made throughout the home.

The homeowners love their remodeled home. They always comment that friends and neighbors cannot believe just how beautiful and functional their home has become.

(Continued from page 1)

Investing in Energy Efficient Improvements

What exactly does a \$10,000 energy efficiency investment include?

- Upgraded insulation and air sealing to your home,
- Upgraded heating and cooling systems
- Improved ventilation systems - providing ample fresh air with an HRV or ERV unit;
- Expanded natural lighting (such as Solatubes);
- Upgraded windows and glazing; and
- Added design features to reduce thermal gain in the summer months.

A larger investment (an additional \$10,000 to \$20,000) would allow for solar hot-water or photo-voltaic systems. These systems; however, compared to current energy costs, are not likely to cash-flow as quickly. If you're building a home, all of these improvements are easily justified by their pay-back. If you're remodeling, the extra investment makes the most sense when certain items, such as a new furnace or new windows, need to be replaced anyway.

Typical additional costs of these improvements or upgrades to a new home or existing home renovation project, compared to the cost of doing things in a typical (careless and inefficient) manner:

Insulation upgrades and air-sealing:

Using dense-pack cellulose.....	\$0 – \$1000
Upgrading to R50 in the attic	\$300 – \$800
Adding 2” R10 styrofoam exterior	\$1000 – \$3000
Air-sealing detailing.....	\$500 – \$2000
High-efficiency furnace (94% or better, compared to 80%).....	\$500 – \$1500
Installing ERV or HRV unit (Designed to provide pre-conditioned fresh air.).....	\$2000 – \$4000
Install energy-efficient air conditioning unit (16-SEER compared to 13 SEER standard)	\$1000 – \$1500
Install low-SONE bath fans (3) (with sealed and insulated ductwork)	\$300 – \$600
Installing high-efficiency windows(10).....	\$1000 – \$2000

So, if the marketplace is rational, how do we explain why houses are built so poorly? In fact, less than 5% of new homes in Wisconsin meet the ENERGY STAR Homes standards. (Homes tested to assure compliance and performance.) Blame the builders, blame ourselves (consumers and voters). We should demand better. Building codes are the bare minimum, and most builders barely comply with those standards. Given the obvious economic and environmental payback of higher standards, shouldn't we demand that all homes be tested to meet ENERGY STAR standards? The higher cost of construction would certainly be offset by reduced energy costs and consumption.

Your small investment, amortized over the life of your mortgage, will start to pay you cash even without the added incentives.



**2008
NARI
Remodeling
Expo**

Visit the 2008 NARI Remodeling Expo for ideas for your next remodeling project!

2008 NARI Remodeling Expo

Friday, January 18th, 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Saturday, January 19th, 9:00 am to 7 pm
Sunday, January 20th, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Marriott Madison West

1313 John Q Hammons Dr.
Middleton, WI 53562

Visit www.ChadsCarpentry.com for a list of programs that Chad will be facilitating.



Believe it or not, these photos were taken from the same view of the same kitchen!

See page 3, *Project Spotlight*, for more details.

This kitchen remodel and garage conversion presented many challenges, yet just as many opportunities. Read more about this interior remodel on page 3 of this issue of **re-!novate**.™



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NEWS and RE-!NOVATIONS from **CHAD'S CARPENTRY**

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