

Home Equity Wins CotY Award

HEB is proud to announce the company's win of yet another Contractor of the Year Award from the National Association of Remodeling for a project completed in Great Falls. The award was in the "Residential Interiors Over \$100,000" category. HEB remodeled a master bedroom and bath suite in the client's home. Be sure to check out our website at www.hebinc.com to see this award-winning project

and some of our other honored work.



Photo by Hi-Tech Photo



HEB Mourns the Loss of a Friend

Amid a week of joyous yuletide of ethnic and religious celebration, Great Falls lost one of its hardest workers and greatest supporters; a friend to many and a believer in the goodness of raising a family in a town that's small and caring.

Pam Smith worked hard within the small community of Great Falls to bring many families' dreams to fruition, finding just the right house to make a home, to raise our kids in a small community that has parades, fireworks, a safe Halloween, and Christmas tree lighting. Whenever a project, task force, or committee needed help within our community we could count on Pam to sign on, lend good advice, and help to make it happen. Pam was a hard worker with plenty of heart.

When Pam walked in a door everyone knew she was there; a huge smile and great laugh and a warm, friendly comment to all she would meet. Great Falls will miss her, her friends will miss her and the many lives she touched will feel sadness for quite some time. Our prayers remain with Harold, their family, and the team at Long & Foster. We have all indeed lost a true friend. - Jeff and Sharon Rainey

YOU are the Source of Our Business!

In reviewing our 2003 figures, we found that:

- 66% of our business was from REPEAT CLIENTS, accounting for 62% of our income;
- 17% of our business was REFERRAL, accounting for 28% of our total income;
- 7% of our business came from the FYInetwork members, totaling 2% of our income.

Thank you for choosing to use HEB again and again and for referring us to your friends and neighbors!

Eighty percent of our income was remodeling revenue, with 42% kitchens, 32% baths, 16% additions, and 10% other.

The remaining 20% of our income came from handyman jobs. We can't do it without our clients! Thank you for your continued patronage!

What Impressed HEB Clients the Most:

"Skills and tools to install stair rails."

"Quick, clean, methodical, knowledgeable, capable."

"Staff is polite and professional."

"Personal contact, responsiveness, cost."

"Pat's work."



This project earned us the 2003 Chrysalis Award for Kitchen Over \$75,000. Note the handmade curved millwork on this wall. Photo by Hi-Tech Photo.



In accordance with the rise in materials and cost of living, Home Equity has raised its handyman rates to \$90 per hour per man.

HEB is Technology Savvy!

Make sure we can communicate with you so you can learn all about what we're up to in your neighborhood! To be positive we have your correct email address, just drop us a line at Sharon.Rainey@hebinc.com from the email address you would like us to use as a contact option for you. We respect the privacy of our clients and prospective clients. We will **NEVER** share your information with a third party.

Client Evaluation Forms Are Important For Us

Hopefully, all of our HEB clients have received a company evaluation form in the mail. We have asked that you return it to us as quickly as possible so we may know what we are doing right and what we need to change. If you have received the form, but have not yet returned it, please do so at your earliest convenience! If you have not received a form and have used our services in the past 12 months, please just drop us a line at kendall.wondergem@hebinc.com and we'll get one to you ASAP. We will let you know the results in our next newsletter! We can't change anything if you don't tell us what needs to be fixed, so we want to hear it. Of course, it's always nice to hear what we are doing right as well! For those of you who so quickly returned the form already, THANK YOU!!

What You Have Said So Far:

"I don't have to look for other people to do the work. I know your services and trust you and your workmanship!"

"It's important for me to have one source — someone I can trust who knows my home."

"The owner's character, integrity, etc. are great!"

"Emails are good connectivity—Sharon is helpful about scheduling."

*Another kitchen by HEB.
Photo by Hi-Tech Photo.*



Kitchen Trends in the Remodeling Industry

This past month we have been interviewed by magazines, invited to focus groups and taken more online questionnaires than ever before. The remodeling industry is trying to put the client into the round hole or the square hole with the right peg. The problem is that the Designers and Architects are saying one thing and we, the remodeling industry, are seeing quite another. I think this is another reason that design/build is so popular and continuing to grow at an astounding rate.

It is our job as remodelers to create a design that enhances and compliments the existing architecture of the home. This seems to be the logical deciding factor in designing any area within your home be it the kitchen, bathrooms or additions.

One appearing trend is more men are cooking; and we want industrial strength commercial grade appliances. Stainless steel appliances are most popular. Double wall ovens and extra ovens for entertaining is a must. Lighting is the next item. We are tired of too much light, undirected and unfocused.



Under-cabinet lighting which illuminates the work area is top on the list as well. So, for a kitchen you should incorporate the following:

- The kitchen should be a showcase.
- It should be open and light.
- It should open to other areas.
- You should consider an eat in breakfast area.
- Islands are great for preparing and talking with guests.
- Cherry or maple cabinets are the choice today.
- Stone, stone and more stone for counter-top areas.
- Butlers' pantries and customized cabinets.

No matter what you design it needs to be beautiful, functional and it should appeal to your emotional needs as well. Your design should never be risky from a resale standpoint! Remember, you will spend a great deal of time in your space with family and friends.

Kitchen by Home Equity Builders. Photo by Hi-Tech Photo

Get Rid of That Honey-Do List!!

The holidays are over and things are settling down. It's the perfect time to complete your New Year's Resolutions! We can't help you drop those last few pounds but we can definitely give you all the help you need to complete the household repairs on your list. Just give us a call at 703-759-2530 or email us at info@hebinc.com.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors Vital to Homes

Estimates of the number of carbon monoxide victims vary: Some say tens of thousands suffer annually from low-level exposure to the invisible gas but don't seek treatment because the symptoms -- which most often strike during heating season -- mimic the flu. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 2,000 people die from carbon monoxide exposure every year, and that the gas, which can come from a furnace, stove, water heater, fireplace, generator, or even a barbecue grill used indoors, is the leading cause of accidental poisoning.

Manufacturers say both home builders and buyers are largely unaware that so many common appliances can poison a home's occupants if they malfunction, or that a simple alarm can warn them when the so-called "silent killer" has invaded their indoor air.

"It's a tragedy-driven business, hand-in-hand with a legislation-driven business," says Jeff Smith, vice president of sales and marketing for Ontario-based NADI Distribution, which sells American Sensors.

In the United States, the issue made headlines in 1994 when tennis ace Vitas Gerulaitis died while at the New York home of a friend whose swimming pool heater malfunctioned, leaking carbon monoxide inside the poolside bungalow where he was sleeping. Many credit his death for the launch of the carbon monoxide detector industry, whose members estimate the devices, similar in size and appearance to smoke detectors, grace the walls of fewer than 20 percent of American homes.

According to a 2002 study for the Gas Research Institute performed by Mosaic Industries, many CO detectors are unreliable. Of the 70 alarms from 10 brands tested, only three brands always alarmed in the presence of dangerous CO levels and didn't produce false alarms.

Carbon monoxide detectors measure the amount of CO in the air and how long it has been present. They are designed to sound an alarm before the level of the toxic gas becomes unsafe. They range in price from around \$15 to \$60. Electric models plug into any outlet, but do not operate if the home loses power. More sophisticated units are hard-wired into the home's circuitry. And several manufacturers have introduced a combination smoke detector/carbon monoxide detector, a convenience installers like. Premium models display on a lighted, digital screen how many molecules of carbon monoxide are present in 1 million molecules of air -- measured in parts per million. Some record CO levels over several hours. A unit by Kidde even has a "voice" that cues the home's occupants:

"Warning! Carbon monoxide!" Today's detectors are more accurate and less likely to sound their alarms in error than the ones that hit the market a decade ago when the industry was new.

First Alert. This 120-volt AC plug-in carbon monoxide detector can be tested using a standard TV or VCR infrared remote control. A back-up 9-volt battery keeps the unit running during power outages. Its peak memory feature allows it to record its last highest CO level reading until reset, even if the air clears, the maker claims. 630-851-7330. www.firstalert.com.

Invensys. Using one interconnect wire, the Firex 7000 carbon monoxide detector can be connected to additional smoke and CO alarms. The Smart Quiet Alarm locator silences all interconnected smoke and CO alarms except the trigger alarm for up to 10 minutes to help identify the alarm source, says the company. A ramp-up horn starts out at a low volume during tests to protect the user's hearing. This combination smoke/CO detector is available in both battery-operated and 120-volt AC versions. 630-260-3402. www.icca.invensys.com.

GE Interlogix. The 240 series SafeAir carbon monoxide alarm has a low current draw and does not need an additional power supply, according to the manufacturer. Electrochemical based, it's de-

(Continued on page 6)

Carbon Monoxide Detectors (continued from page 5)

(Continued from page 5)

signed for use as part of a monitored home security system. An "end of sensor life" indicator warns when alarm replacement is needed. When detecting CO, the device sounds an 85-dB alarm. 800-547-2556. www.geindustrial.com/ge-interlogix.

American Sensors. A plug-in system, this carbon monoxide alarm can be installed in any socket and requires no batteries. CO levels are monitored with semi-conductor sensing technology. This model features a low-level CO warning and an 85-dB hazard alarm with a "move to fresh air" light signal. The circuitry is self-diagnosing and has a five-year warranty. 416-493-9169. www.nadi.com.

Aprilaire. The battery-powered carbon monoxide detector features an electrochemical sensor that is accurate across all temperature and humidity ranges and is resistant to common household chemicals, the maker says. It self-tests every 60 seconds for functional integrity and, after five years, will automatically shut down and signal that it needs to be replaced. Installers test the system with actual carbon monoxide. 608-257-8801. www.aprilaire.com.

BRK. Combining fire and carbon monoxide alarms into one unit, model SC6120B is hardwired into the home's structure, but has a 9-volt battery as backup in case of a power failure. Separate visual and audio alarms clearly distinguish between a fire or a CO problem, the firm says. The alarm latch indicator automatically identifies the initiating alarm even after the emergency is over. The unit, which automatically performs internal system checks, has a five-year limited warranty. 630- 851-7330. www.brkelectronics.com.

Qtronics. Model 2002 detects both carbon monoxide and fire. When CO is detected at high levels, a digital readout alternates between "CO" and the amount of CO in the air, the firm says. Audio and visual alarms warn residents during a dangerous CO buildup. The unit calculates the CO accumulation over a period of time with an algorithm that duplicates the human body's reaction to CO. If the detector is connected to an alarm-monitoring service, the monitoring company will be notified that an alarm condition has occurred. 888-397-4427. www.qtronics.ca.

Senco Sensors. Model 1 is a portable home carbon monoxide detection system that monitors for high levels and the prolonged presence of carbon monoxide. This battery-powered alarm has a digital readout that according to the manufacturer quickly alerts the homeowners to carbon monoxide in a room and displays "action icons" until reset. It has a simple test/reset feature. 800-858-0158.

www.sencosensors.com.

Source: BUILDING PRODUCTS Magazine

Our Services

Here's a taste of what we have to offer to the discerning homeowner:

Appetizers

Handyman Services
Pro-Active Maintenance

Our Specialties

Kitchen Renovations
Bath Renovations

Main Courses

Additions
Other Renovations
Painting
Tile Work
Rotten Wood Repair
Decks

If you don't see what you're looking for, just give us a call. We're almost always able to accommodate any request!