

2025 Home Improvement and Garden Guide



A Special Publication by The Pampa News

River A Weed Control

BY GENEVA WILDCAT

There’s nothing quite like stepping out the front door and a crisp, green lawn greets you under the sun. Unfortunately though, the same can be said about a lawn full of dirt patches and pesky weeds that just don’t seem to go away although you swear you sprayed them weeks ago. Maintaining a beautiful yard is difficult, especially if you have a busy schedule and the only time you’re free is when the unpredictable Texas panhandle weather refuses to cooperate with your landscaping plans. But River A Weed Control has you covered and guarantees to keep you covered throughout the year. Daniel Rivera and Shelby Huff, lifelong Pam-pans and servants of the community, have jump-started their own business with the sole mission of providing the best in high quality, pest-free and weed-free lawn care that will last all year long. The idea started last year when Daniel and Shelby delved deep into what it takes to provide

those essential lawn care services on a profes-sional level and quickly went to work on obtain-ing their licenses and certifications. “It’s not just going out and buying a spray ma-chine and just start spraying,” Daniel said. “We actually got all of our ducks in a row before we started. I reached out to a couple of gentlemen who used to do this and they helped mentor me on some of the things I needed to do other than what I already knew. Then we reached out to the TDA (Texas Department of Agriculture) where we took training classes, then reached out to a couple of insurance companies to learn how to get insured, and after we passed our tests and filled out a ton of paperwork, we got started.” “We hit the ground running and it’s been a bless-ing ever since,” Shelby said. Daniel and Shelby put River A Weed Control on the map just this year in February, and right now couldn’t be a better time of year to spring into action to get that yard looking gorgeous for those summer plans. Understanding that every lawn doesn’t have a one-size-fits-all

RIVER A cont. on page 4



Shelby Huff and Daniel Rivera



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Starting Off Right

It can be a little overwhelming as you contemplate embarking on a remodel. There are numerous crucial factors to consider before deciding to expand or enhance your home.

Your worries might pertain to expenses, while others could center on the quality and the return on your investment. As the National Association of the Remodeling Industry notes, it is best to begin with a clear understanding of your requirements, budget and timeline.

In some cases, you might decide to wait to build up more savings — or you may opt to take out a small loan. Either way, this initial planning phase of any project is crucial. Once you're ready, consult with a knowledgeable local home services expert for assistance in transforming your vision into reality.



SET A GOAL

When embarking on a home improvement project — whether you're adding an extra bedroom, building a barn or installing a new hardwood floor — it's critically important to create a detailed plan. Then, you have to adhere to it. Adding additional smaller jobs on top of your original project can easily lead to budget overruns.

By expanding the scope of work, you are increasing the costs of materials and labor, especially if you hire a professional. Collaborate with your contractors to establish realistic expectations before getting started. This will allow you to allocate a specific budget and minimize extra expenses. Additionally, it ensures that you and the contractors are aligned on how long the project will take.

THINKING BIGGER?

Altering the structure of your home will necessitate a lot more design and engineering work ahead of time. Homeowners should expect to see higher expenses and a much longer timeline, according to the NARI. Before embarking on this kind of major renovation, consider the following:

- Can I afford a large project like this one? Will I need additional funds?
- How old is my property? There might be hidden issues that complicate your plans.
- If you're trying to build more equity, will these changes add to the home's sales value?
- Are your contractors capable of handling a multiple-phase project like this one?

Once you have a clear understanding of the cost, timeline and needed contractors, you can then proceed with greater confidence.

River A

Continued From Page 2

solution to the various issues and needs a healthy lawn requires, River A Weed Control offers different plans that are custom tailored to fit your needs and vision you have for your yard. The River A Basic, Core, and Pro plans all include; a lawn assessment by an expert who will make an evaluation of the lawn and create a comprehensible program based on the lawn's needs; fertilization and weed control; and a nutrient plan to keep your lawn healthy. The Pro and Core plans include; insect control that stops pests such as grubworms, armyworms, chinch bugs, and mole crickets from destroying your beautiful lawn and garden. "In May and June, you're starting

to get your grub worms so we treat for stuff like that," Daniel said. "We also treat for fungus, so it's not just weed control and fertilization. We are taking care of your whole yard." "Everything that is going to effect your lawn, we are taking care of it. Especially like the fungi-you never know what is going to blow in your yard with this wind, and it's usually coming from far away," Shelby added. "It's always evolving, so weed control and fertilization is what we do." The Pro plan also includes lawn disease control and winterization, because let's face it, maintenance doesn't (or shouldn't) stop when the seasons change and it's important to ensure your lawn is protected from those colder months in order for it to thrive once the thaw begins. "Every season has a type of weed that grows," Shelby said. "So if you



don't treat through the whole year and you're not catching the ones in the fall, you have to actually treat those in the spring before they germinate. If you're not treating throughout the whole year, you're not getting all of the weeds that are going to hit your yard throughout each season. So that's what we do. We apply a compound that is going to take care of the ones that haven't started growing and germinating you're not seeing that is still under the soil, and we are also spraying what you're currently seeing." Whatever plan you decide to choose, take comfort in knowing that the professionals at River A Weed Control will remain in contact with you and make regular, scheduled visits to make sure your lawn meets your expectations and remains that way, with every service backed with a satisfaction guarantee. "We are blessed because we have experts on our side," Shelby said. "Usually when you start something like this, you have to have people in your corner because first off, starting a business isn't easy and second, if you are dealing with chemicals and dealing with licens-

ing and people's yards, you need to make sure you know what you're doing. And that's what we did." Although the business has only just started, River A Weed Control has already taken off, and while the appeal of their top quality services can be credited to its early success, the fact that it's owned and operated by two of Pampa's most upstanding citizens plays a big role as well. Daniel has been with Ammons Roofing for six years, also having served on the Chamber of Commerce board for a number of years, and Shelby has been the Regional Service Extension Representative at the Salvation Army for nearly six years, while also having been a member of Altrusa. So it's safe to say that these two will stick by their mission statement, just as they have always done. "We're just excited to continue to serve!" Shelby said, Daniel nodding in agreement. For more information, call 806-662-5572, visit their website riveraweedcontrol.com, or visit their Facebook page.

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How to Avoid Scams

Homeowners need to remain vigilant against unscrupulous contractors who are more focused on making a fast buck than delivering satisfactory outcomes.

About one out of every 10 adult Americans becomes a victim of a scam or fraud each year, according to the Federal Trade Commission. A significant number of these fraud charges involve home improvement scams. Avoid this fate by increasing your awareness and implementing a few basic safety measures.

The FTC provides guidelines to help you select a trustworthy contractor who can achieve the desired outcome for your project. Don't trust anyone who:

- Knocks on your door looking for a job
- Wants to use leftover material from a previous project on your job
- Pressures you to hire them right away for work
- Only accepts cash, wants you to use a lender they know, or asks for the entire payment upfront
- Asks you to take care of securing building permits
- Doesn't have a published business phone number



TRUSTED LOCAL LENDERS

Approach trusted local lenders first when seeking out a home improvement loan. If possible, obtain a loan from a financial institution where you have a prior business relationship. Always be aware of potential scams where fraudsters offer to arrange loans through unfamiliar lenders. Thoroughly research and trust the lending institution before proceeding with any agreements.

DOCUMENT IT ALL

Comprehensive documentation can often help with the early identification of dubious business practices, while also providing proof if anything turns into a legal matter. To safeguard yourself, the Better Business Bureau strongly advises homeowners to avoid participating in cash-only transactions, high-pressure sales tactics, substantial upfront payments and informal handshake agreements without a written contract.

Thoroughly read and understand all documents before signing them. If you find yourself feeling uneasy, seek the assistance of a lawyer who can help you navigate the intricacies of these legally binding documents. There may be a fee involved. Still, it's better to pay now and get a clear understanding of the terms and conditions, than to find yourself entangled in a subsequent legal battle.

Reviewing Your Contract

Once you’ve found a contractor who meets your needs and price, it’s time to enter into a formal agreement to work together.

The contract will describe precisely what is required, lay out payment schedules and define other key parameters of the project. Crafting a successful home improvement contract hinges on details and clarity. Work shouldn’t commence until there is a shared vision, and these agreements provide the framework.

CONTRACT MUST-HAVES

Angie’s List, a website specializing in home services, outlines the following 10 must-have items for home improvement contracts:

- 1. A job description that outlines the project in detail.
- 2. Dates for start and completion that create a reasonable timeline.
- 3. Terms that tie payment to completion milestones.
- 4. Authorization that makes your contractor responsible for securing necessary permits.
- 5. Specific penalties for missed completion dates.
- 6. Clear procedure for work orders and any changes.
- 7. A detailed outline of all costs and needed materials.
- 8. A copy of the contractor’s proof of licensure, bonding and insurance.
- 9. A termination clause outlining how either the homeowner or contractor may exit the agreement without penalty.
- 10. A lien release that will protect the homeowner from liability should the contractor fail to pay their staff.

YOUR PAYMENT TERMS

The amount your contractor asks for as a down payment may vary, since there is no fixed rule governing these transactions.

To ensure compliance with local regulations, research laws in your state to determine whether limits are in place. Be prepared to drive a hard bargain. Keeping the down payment as low as possible can serve as an incentive for your contractor to complete the project more quickly.

WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING

Request a written contract from your contractor, even if it is not mandatory in your state. This will help establish clear definitions for the project, ensuring that both parties are on the same page. You can both follow the specified contract items, keeping track of key timelines meant to ensure efficiency and progress. Whenever possible, try to be present so you can monitor the work being done. Schedule regular meetings to discuss progress. By actively participating as a homeowner, you can minimize surprises along the way.



Ammons Roofing & Construction

By GENEVA WILDCAT

Have you ever requested a service and it was apparent that the entity you were dealing with was focused more on how they could benefit themselves rather than you? Of course many of us have, but have you ever been inspired to do something about it, such as providing the same or related service yourself and operating the business in such a way that is the complete opposite of what you had experienced? Or did you simply move on and find somewhere or someone else to go to?

For Kerry Ammons, he did something about it. "I started out 30 years ago as a roofing contractor, and it wasn't probably three or four years later that I decided to do siding and windows, and that started because I called to do an estimate for myself, and they wanted to hard sell me," Kerry said. "They weren't going to show up at my house unless my wife was there and they were really going to put the hard sell on. I didn't like that, so I learned and got taught and trained on how to do siding and windows." A hard sale is when a business or contractor wants to work around their time rather than at your convenience, and when presented with a "it's a now or never" situation, the potential customer isn't given the necessary time to make a well-thought out decision or to explore other options and is es-

entially pressured to say yes. Kerry wanted the experience to be straight and to the point—a simple estimate and price quote without the added pressure and talking points. Kerry started Ammons Roofing & Construction in 1996 with the sole intention of providing a service that was focused on the customers' needs and vision. For a business to rely mainly on word-of-mouth by the community and afar, and to have lasted nearly three decades, it's clear that Kerry and his crew have always stood by their mission. "We are going on 30 years, so I've been doing this for a long time. The fact of the matter is we're pretty referral based. I started building houses probably 25 years ago and very seldom do people in town even know it. Me and Daniel have a computer there where we can draw up floor plans, 3D models of the house and all of that stuff. But we do lots of remodels and roofing jobs all over the Panhandle."

Daniel Rivera has worked for Ammons for the last six years, and it's a place where he feels like home.

"Daniel is like family to me," Kerry said. "He's been here for nearly six years and that's a long time for what we do here. In our kind of business, it usually ends up being the owner and you have some salesmen come in and they work a while and leave, but Daniel has been

AMMONS cont. on page 8



Daniel Rivera and Kerry Ammons

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Ammons

Continued From Page 7

here. He's learned and knows how to do almost everything we do here."

"I've been well-taken care of," Daniel smiled. "When I first started, I always felt bad for asking Kerry or Zach for something, but the feeling you get when you ask for help and you get what you're asking for. If I ever need anything, I just come in here and talk to Kerry."

Although they want no credit for any good, altruistic deeds they do, it must be mentioned that both Kerry and Daniel have stepped in a time or few when members of the community were in need, such as the case when Ammons put on a free roof for Bea Taylor last year.

"We got as much out of that as she did," Kerry smiled. "That was a good day."

"The day we went and announced it to her, it was like the publisher's clearing house when you've won \$1,000 a week for the rest of your life," Daniel laughed.

"She was jumping around while she was on the phone with her daughter, and that right there alone gives you excitement."

The Ammons name can be seen and heard spanning over many miles, as both of Kerry's sons, Zach and Andrew, have kept the family legacy going in their own way, with Zach operating his own commercial roofing and consulting business in Lubbock, and Andrew operating his own property management company in Lubbock that is in charge of the current development of the housing being done at Northridge on the east side of Pampa.

Whether you're looking to invest in a new roof or give your home a complete makeover, Ammons has you covered and you're guaranteed to keep them on speed-dial for your next big project.

"I have been blessed for 30 years," Kerry said. "The fact of the matter is we're always honest and we're not trying to pull the wool over your eyes. My customers are as loyal to me as I am to them, and when you have that loyalty, you go and take care of them."

"I think the company reflects my personality-I try to take care of people and the rest will take care of itself."

For more information about Ammons Roofing & Construction, visit their website, www.ammonsroofing.net or Facebook page, or call 806-440-0696.



Kerry Ammons and Bea Taylor, the day Bea was gifted a new roof by Ammons Roofing & Construction



Hiring a Plumbing Pro

We tend to overlook the convenience of plumbing — that is, until the moment it stops functioning properly.

In the best of circumstances, everyday schedules can be disrupted. In more complicated, longer-lasting cases, you and your family's health could be threatened.

It's best not to rely on inexperienced individuals when it comes to the maintenance of this system. Establish a connection with an accredited plumber before a situation becomes urgent, so you're not forced to make hasty choices in a time of crisis.

Verify the credentials of available plumbers in your vicinity, ensuring they possess the necessary licenses and insurance, along with positive recommendations. Then select a few candidates and schedule initial assessments of your plumbing system. Hire the pro who offers the best value mix of experience, customer service and price.



ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

The Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety reports that plumbing system failures result in an average cost of more than \$5,000 per incident.

To prevent such failures, they recommend having a licensed plumber conduct regular inspections and maintenance on your system. Here are some things that they will be looking for:

- Blockages, slow draining, corrosion and signs of swelling in pipes or joints
- Consistent performance of appliances like sump pumps or water heaters
- Tight connections and any leaks in the fitting areas

APPLIANCES

Water heater malfunctions can lead to significant inconvenience and lots of damage. Beyond the discomfort of a cold shower, the potential for catastrophic water intrusion is a real concern — especially if a leak goes undetected in a tank holding a substantial amount of water.

Additionally, the failure of a sump pump, which is crucial for draining storm- or wastewater, can result in mold growth or, in the worst-case scenario, house flooding. It is essential to regularly check and maintain these appliances to safeguard the well-being of your family and the value of your property.

DURING AN EMERGENCY

Establishing an early rapport with a plumbing service could prove beneficial when the worst happens, since you may get priority assistance as a loyal customer. Upon their initial evaluation, ask the plumber to show you the whereabouts and demonstrate the operation of your primary water shutoff valve. This can be invaluable knowledge when trying to mitigate early damage from a leak while help is still on the way.

Inside Home Warranties

New to the area and don't know any maintenance techs? Consider getting a home warranty for peace of mind.

They're also a great option if you are anxious about buying an older home.

DEFINING THE TERM

Home insurance provides coverage for property damage caused by fire, wind, theft, hail or vandalism, along with liability protection when someone visits your property. On the other hand, a home warranty is designed to reduce the financial burden of major expenses when major systems or household appliances fail. They can also be put in place to prolong the coverage of an expiring manufacturer warranty. Home warranties may be purchased at any time, but they're commonly included in real estate deals. They might serve as an additional selling point or to increase buyer trust.



INSIDE WARRANTIES

These warranties provide coverage for repairing, servicing or replacing major appliances and home systems, offering protection in case a high-value item malfunctions. You won't need to search for separate repair professionals yourself. Instead, you will be linked with nearby affiliated technicians who will manage service requests to assess the covered items. A contractor sent by the home warranty company will arrive to identify the problem and proceed with repairing or suggesting a replacement for the item.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Older systems or appliances that are no longer under manufacturers' warranties are prime candidates for home warranty coverage, since replacing a refrigerator, air conditioner, water heater or furnace can be expensive. Sellers may want to add a home warranty to cover the cost of things breaking down before the sale closes, or as a selling-point incentive. Buyers can purchase the home with confidence that a big bill isn't looming if something fails. Those who have limited mobility, are on a fixed income or in their senior years may also want peace of mind.

ANNUAL REVIEW

If you opt to invest in a home warranty, bear in mind that most are marketed on an annual basis. Although some companies present two- or three-year options, it is wise to evaluate the coverage each year. What was effective in 2023 may not be as suitable in 2024. Your manufacturer's warranty might be coming to an end, or you could have purchased a new appliance. Alternatively, if you have not used this coverage and prefer contacting local repair services as necessary, ensure that the plan satisfies your current needs.

B&G Floral & Events

BY GENEVA WILDCAT

One of the best ways to spruce up any space, whether it be livening up your home for the holidays or adding a bit of color and flair to any event, is through the use of beautiful floral arrangements and greenery.

B&G Floral & Events has just what you need to brighten up those common areas and special occasions, and manager and designer Angela Porter, has the creative vision to bring any idea to life.

For the past six years, Angela has taken the stress out of finding and creating that perfect piece to accentuate and personify an individual's unique request. Taking the time to gather the details of the customer's needs and preferences, she gets to work on creating a piece that not only meets, but exceeds expectation, making the overall experience something truly special and personal.

Before coming to B&G Floral, Angela spent many years working as a registrar at the junior high, and while she enjoyed working at the school, her passion for all things floral had already been ignited

from years prior and had stuck with her ever since.

"I worked for two years in a floral shop in Dumas back when my 25-year-old was a baby, and I loved it," she said. "I worked there for about two years and we moved to Guymon when my husband worked for Conoco Phillips and we lived there for a year and a half before we came back home."

"My sister is the accountant for B&G Electric and she had asked me a couple of times if I wanted to manage this store. I was working at the junior high at the time and my kids were at the junior high, so I said no. But finally my kids and my husband said, 'it's time for you to do what you love.'"

"I loved my people at the junior high and I loved the kids, so that was hard, but man, I love this job. I love this job," she smiled. "I get to play with flowers and create things and I enjoy it so much."

Angela takes tremendous joy in planning and creating beautiful works of art for special events such as weddings, birthday parties, and quinceaneras, but when asked what her favorite thing to do is, it's designing Christmas

FLORAL cont. on page 12



*Manager and designer at B&G Floral,
Angela Porter*



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Floral

Continued From Page 11

designing them, it's fabulous. Taking them all down, not so much," she laughed. "So the first Saturday of every November, we have our open house and this place has nothing in it but Christmas trees. You can come in and pick out which one you want and we will go to your house or business and put it up for you and after January 1, we come and take it down. I think I did 62 trees this past year."

Angela creates new trees every year while also featuring some of her most popular ones from previous years and during the open house, people can vote for their favorite design, and every year the winner is different, speaking volumes about Angela's expansive and impressive creativity.

Designing and decorating Christmas trees is no small feat, so Angela begins the process as early as March so by the time the season rolls around, she is ready to share them with the community. As a matter of fact, many of Angela's Christmas

trees that makes her giddy with excitement.

"I am all about the Christmas trees and

trees have been showcased in many homes during the Christmas Tour of Homes event organized by the Twentieth Century Cotillion Study Club.

When asked where her inspiration comes from when designing any work of art, Angela says it's all based on a customer's likes and interests, and if there's no specifics given, she takes in the surroundings of where the piece will be located and builds a design around that, taking in the atmosphere of the space and the colors she sees.

"Inspiration comes from what the customers love, the colors they want, and just anything they may want to see." Everybody's opinion of beautiful is different and nobody is wrong. So what I may think is beautiful, they may not. That is one thing I really want is for my customers to be happy, and if they're not, I'll do it 100 times if I have to. I just want them to get what they want, especially on their special days. My main goal is to make them happy."

Visit B&G Floral Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM, located at 103 S. Hobart, and chat with Angela about an idea you may have for a decorative piece, or just stop in to see all the other wonderful gifts the store carries.



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Small Renovations That Make A Big Impact



Homeowners may think they have to tear down walls or build room extensions to transform their homes with renovation projects. But small projects can yield impressive results, and that's something homeowners working with limited budgets can keep in mind. There's no shortage of small projects that can change the look and feel of a home. Many of these undertakings can be achieved with a modest investment.

- **Front door replacement:** A new front door instantly improves curb appeal and can make a home more secure and energy-efficient. Painting the existing front door is an even smaller project that still offers appeal.

- **Lighting addition:** Whether a homeowner enlarges a window or adds skylights, natural light

can produce incredible results. Investing in new lighting can feel like expanding a space without pushing out walls.

- **Kitchen and bath fixture upgrades:** Faucets and door pulls are used every day. Swapping existing fixtures for something a little more modern can unify spaces and provide subtle changes that enhance these popular spaces.

- **Wood floor restoration:** Scuffing and scratches can adversely affect the pristine look of a natural wood floor. Homeowners can polish a floor to restore its shine. A professional service will sand down and refinish older floors at a fraction of the cost of a new floor installation.

- **Exterior lighting:** Lighting isn't just important inside. A welcoming glow in the yard is awe-inspiring. There are many energy-efficient lighting op-

tions, including ones that do not need to be hard-wired to the circuitry inside the home.

- **Staircase renovation:** Coordinate the staircase to the style in the home with a decorative carpet runner. A secure runner is attractive and can help reduce slipping down the stairs. Tighten shaky railings or replace them while upgrading the stair treads.

- **Interior paint:** Change the color of walls, doors, cabinets, or even furniture with paint. All homeowners need is a paint color that inspires them and a little bit of time.

- **Replace outlet covers:** Upgrade outlet covers with screw-

less options. Screwless plates for outlets and light switches can make walls look more sleek.

- **Entry organizer installation:** Banish clutter from the home by catching it at the door. An entry organizer with spaces for shoes, coats, backpacks, and shopping bags can be eye-catching and functional.

- **Carpets cleaning:** Soiled carpets can look drab and dingy. Homeowners can rent carpet-cleaning machines or hire services to revitalize carpets with a deep cleaning.

Small changes around a home can create a big impact without breaking the bank.



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BY GENEVA WILDCAT

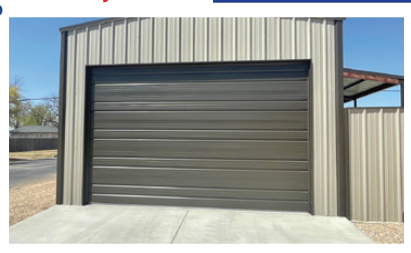
a daily basis, but I would drive up and down Price Road and hand deliver my business cards. A lot of those places had their door people already established, but I kept going and now, thank God, the phone keeps ringing and we've been blessed by a lot of great customers and great contractors."

Like most local businesses, a customer base is usually built by word-of-mouth and when one person takes a chance on a new business, the foundation that is established can quickly build up into something lucrative, which is exactly what happened for Roberto.

"When I first started, I had no



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idea how to set up my business with Google or anything like that and it wasn't something I had really even thought about, so thank goodness it was the word-of-mouth that got us out there. Obviously now we're on Google and Facebook, but our customer base started out by word-of-mouth and I'm so thankful for that."

Roberto admits that he started out rather blind to the trade, only gaining a little bit of knowledge through watching videos and learning through each job he took on.

"There was a lot of looking stuff up on YouTube," he laughed. "I was 23 years old when I started this and I was so naive, but one of the greatest things I have now is the experience."

"I learned as I went, and the crazy thing is when you start like that, you get the jobs that nobody else wants and thank goodness now we get the jobs that every-

body wants. For the first four years, we took all the stuff that nobody wanted and I think that's the reason why some of it grew, because while other companies were busy with bigger and better things, those jobs that nobody wanted got thrown at us and we just smiled and took them on." "There's some stuff that I did in my first two years of business that I've yet to do again, but what I learned in those moments with some of those hard jobs you will never take back."

With ten years under his belt and a loyal customer base, Roberto stays constantly busy and provides his services to folks all over the Texas Panhandle, even with previous customers who have since moved away still requesting his services to which he happily obliges.

And although he is now well-versed and has a ton of experience, he still finds opportunities

ALPHA2 cont. on page 17



Alpha 2

Continued From Page 16

to provide better and longer-lasting services, such as taking preventative measures that will keep your garage door from sustaining the wrath of the unforgiving wind the panhandle is notorious for.

"There are things called struts on garage doors that go on the panel that helps, and when I first started, I didn't know what a strut was," he laughed. "I made a decision about four years ago, because it feels like these winds have gotten stronger and stronger, that we needed to start strutting every panel. Today actually we did a door that had gotten blown in by the wind and we went ahead and put two struts per panel and went up to a three inch track so now it can withstand a lot more. It's something I believe

has to happen going forward with how strong these winds are and most of the doors that get blown in don't have that bracing, so we don't even ask anymore, we just put it in because they need it to keep the winds from damaging the doors."

Roberto is thankful and blessed for his business to have not only lasted, but to have thrived for the last ten years, and he shows no signs of slowing down.

"We appreciate all of our customers. Without them we wouldn't be where we are today, and we've had a lot of great of employees over the years because they've all been a part of this journey too."

"God has been good and I look forward to another ten years!" Alpha 2 Overhead Door, LLC offers garage door repair, installation and everything in between for both commercial and residential. For more information, call 806-669-1188.

Did You Know?

Home renovations are wildly popular, and that popularity can be traced to a number of factors. Some homeowners renovate their homes with their own comfort in mind, while others do so to improve the resale value of the property. For those in the latter group, a recognition of renovations that yield the highest return on investment may help them decide which projects to pursue.

According to the housing market research and analytics firm Zonda Media, a garage door replacement offered the highest return on investment in the American real estate market in 2024, earning a whopping 194 percent return on homeowners' initial investment.

An entry door replacement with steel door offered the second best ROI at 188 percent of homeowners' initial investment, while replacing siding with stone veneer was third on the list with an average ROI of 153 percent.



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The Benefits Of Lighting Up Your Landscape

Homeowners know there’s no shortage of ways to tweak a property. Some homeowners may lament that the work associated with home ownership is never done, but owning a house also provide endless opportunities to upgrade the spaces people call home.

Landscape lighting has become increasingly popular in recent years. That popularity is undoubtedly due to a number of variables, and each highlights a benefit of installing landscape lighting around a property.

- **Affordability:** Some may think of big budget projects like kitchen remodels or room additions when pondering home renova-

tions. Such projects can have a dramatic impact on the look and feel of a home, but landscape lighting can be equally transformative at a fraction of the cost of larger undertakings. The home renovation experts at Angi.com estimate the average landscape lighting project costs around \$4,000, making affordability a notable benefit of the project.

- **Appearance:** There’s no denying the aesthetic appeal of a well-lit landscape at night. Landscape lighting can be utilized to draw attention to awe-inspiring components of a landscape, whether it’s natural features like gardens and foliage or manmade components like architectural



features. Improved appearance can increase curb appeal, which is often associated with how a home looks during daylight hours. But photographs of a well-lit nighttime landscape can impress buyers as well.

- **Cost savings:** Landscape lighting might help homeowners reduce the cost of their homeowners insurance. Researchers at PolicyGenius.com found that insurance companies typically offer a discount of 2 to 5 percent to homeowners who install a home security system. Insurance providers may offer additional savings to homeowners who pair such systems with landscape lighting, which can be a deterrent to burglars who prefer to operate under a cloak of darkness.
- **Safety:** Insurance firms may discount premiums because of landscape lighting because they view it as a deterrent to potential criminals. But landscape lighting also makes moving around a property at night safer for resi-

dents and guests. Lighting can be used to illuminate walkways, outdoor living rooms, patios around pools, and other areas where residents and guests will be walking at night, which can reduce the risk of falls and injuries that may result from such spills.

- **ROI:** Savvy homeowners consider a renovation’s return on investment before deciding to go forward with a project. Studies vary, but the National Association of Realtors indicates landscape lighting can recoup as much as 70 percent of homeowners’ investment in the project at resale. When viewed through the lens of ROI, the cost of installing landscape lighting is even less.

Landscape lighting adds notable aesthetic appeal to a home at a fraction of the cost of other renovation projects. The benefits such lighting provides make the project one every homeowner can consider.



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Four Things To Know About Kitchen Renovations

Kitchens are often described as the most popular room in a home, and that's not mere conjecture. A 2022 survey from House Digest asked participants to identify the room they consider most important in their homes, and roughly 41 percent chose the kitchen.

Residents tend to congregate in kitchens in the morning and then again in the evening when meals are prepared and, in homes without formal dining rooms, eaten. With so much time spent in the kitchen, it's no wonder that the 2022 U.S. Houzz & Home Study: Renovation Trends found kitchens to be the most popular interior room to upgrade. With so many people interested in kitchen renovations, the following are four things homeowners should know about these popular improvement projects.

1. Expect to spend some money. Most home improvement projects require a significant financial investment, but kitchen renovations are among the more expensive undertakings. The overall cost of a project will depend on a host of variables unique to each home, including homeowners' preferences, but HomeAdvisor estimated the average kitchen remodel in 2023 cost between \$14,611 and \$41,432. Homeowners considering an upscale kitchen remodel may receive six figure estimates for such projects.

2. Expect a good return on investment. If sticker shock settles in when receiving an initial kitchen remodel estimate, perhaps it can help homeowners to know that such a project may provide a strong return on investment (ROI). According to Remodeling magazine's "2024 Cost vs. Value

Report," a minor kitchen remodel provides a 96 percent ROI. A major kitchen remodel mid-range (49 percent) and a major kitchen remodel upscale (38 percent) did not provide as notable a ROI.

3. Expect the project to take some time. Kitchens are large rooms with a lot of components, so renovating these spaces can take some time. Estimates vary depending on the size of the room, the scale of the remodel and the materials chosen, but Angi reports a kitchen remodel for most homes takes six weeks to four months. That's a sizable window, and it reflects the likelihood that unforeseen issues like supply chain interruptions or the discovery of mold will arise at some point during the renovation. Though it's impossible to determine precisely how long a project will take before it begins, homeowners renovating their kitchens may want to plan for the project to take two months if not longer.

4. Expect to use your kitchen during the renovation. If the timeline of a renovation is scary, homeowners should know they will likely be able to use their kitchen even after the project begins. Though the room might not remain a popular gathering space once the work starts, Angi notes kitchens are typically out of commission for around six weeks during a renovation. That still requires some pre-planning in relation to meals, but it also suggests homeowners won't be without a kitchen for months on end.

Kitchen renovations are popular projects. Homeowners who know what to expect before such projects commence can make it through a renovation more smoothly.



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Tips For The Gardening Beginner



Gardening is a popular hobby all over the world. Ruby Home Luxury Real Estate estimates there are 71.5 million gardening households in the United States alone. That translates to around 185.9 million people engaged in some form of gardening, which places the U.S. among other countries where gardening is wildly popular, including Australia and China.

A greater number of people are showing interest in gardening, which is a rewarding hobby that's good for the mind and the body. Those who are new to gardening may need a crash course to get started. These pointers can help anyone foster a newfound passion for gardening.

Choose the best location

Spend time in the yard and decide where to house a garden. A far-off corner may get the most sun, but will you forget about the garden if it is too far away? Ideally, the garden should be located where it will get at least six to eight hours of sun each day. There also

should be a water source nearby. The spot also should be convenient so that it is easy to go and pick vegetables or prune flowers.

Start small

If you're new to gardening, begin with a small garden footprint so that you can get your feet wet. A raised garden bed can be a good starting point because it is contained and easy to maintain. As your experience (and garden) grows, you can add to the garden size the next time around.

Amend the soil

It's possible but unlikely that the soil in the backyard is the perfect mix to grow healthy plants. It's more likely that the garden will need some soil modification. You can test the soil makeup with do-it-yourself kits or work with a garden center. A garden typically requires a mix of compost to add nutrients to the dirt; peat moss or coconut coir to help with water retention and to make the soil lighter; and vermiculite that helps to retain water. A compost bin set

up at the same time as the garden allows gardeners to continually produce nutrient-rich food to add to the garden.

Plant starter guide

It's best to keep a few things in mind when planning the garden. Think about what will grow well in your climate. Consider how big the garden will be and the size of mature plants. A small garden will not be able to accommodate corn, for example. Also, how would you like the space to look and what will be its function? Is this a purely aesthetic garden or one that will be food-bearing?

Start seeds inside

If you'll be starting a garden from seeds, it's best to start indoors before your region's frost-free date.

This way the delicate plants will get the needed care and can establish before they go outdoors in the ground. Keep them humid by covering the seedlings in plastic wrap. You can start the seeds in different containers, even empty egg cartons. Transplant to larger containers after the seedlings grow a second set of leaves. Once you're free from overnight frost, you can place the established, strong seedlings in the ground. An automatic watering system, such as a timer hooked up to the sprinkler, can keep the garden well watered, which increases the chances of success. Then it will only be a matter of weeks before the garden can be enjoyed throughout the season.



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Reaching Out for Help

Even the handiest of handypersons sometimes needs assistance.

Lots of people fancy themselves as expert DIYers, standing at the ready with the tools and know-how to tackle most everyday jobs around the home. Still, some projects are simply too large and complex to handle all by yourself. That's when it's time to hire a professional.

HOME ADDITIONS

Home projects always come with an investment of money and time, but some of them may prove to be more trouble than they're worth. Creating a home addition is one of them. This is a complex endeavor that often requires a diverse set of skills beyond the capabilities of an average do-it-yourselfer. There may be bureaucratic red tape and insurance implications. Stumbling into one of these challenges as a novice might put off the completion of your project indefinitely.

DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES

Some things are easier than others, like removing a portion of drywall. Others, however, are hardly a straightforward task: You shouldn't try to deal with or manage the removal of hazardous materials such as asbestos, mold or lead. These substances pose significant risks to your health, and necessitate the use of specific, often complex safety precautions during their handling and removal.

MAJOR ELECTRICAL

Many DIYers can quickly and safely install a new light fixture or replace an outlet. But it's important to recognize that larger electrical projects require the expertise of a licensed professional. Connecting power to a new addition, for example, is a major job that should not be attempted by an untrained individual. There are inherent personal dangers associated with this type of work, not to mention the potential that faulty wiring might lead to a fire hazard. Hire a qualified electrician for these jobs.

FOUNDATION REPAIR

Significant structural problems require both expertise and heavy equipment. Don't take chances with the safety of your home and loved ones. Seek out a pro if your foundation is in need of repair due to cracks or a deteriorating structure.

MAJOR PLUMBING

As with electrical tasks, some home projects are well within the grasp of do-it-yourselfers — including changing a toilet or updating fixtures. But other related projects demand a higher level of skill and understanding, including things like water-main issues or installing new plumbing. Should they be incorrectly replaced or installed, there's a potential for significant damage throughout the entire house.



When It's Time to Pay

It is crucial to have a clear payment schedule in place before finalizing a contract.

This is particularly important for extensive renovation projects, as financial discrepancies can lead to delays or even abandonment of the project. Collaborate with your contractor to establish a mutually agreeable plan. Prior to initiating negotiations, establish a budget. In case funding is required, it's best to explore various options to secure the most favorable terms. Exercise caution before agreeing to interest rates or monthly payments that could pose challenges in the future. Once these decisions have been made, contact regional contractors to obtain estimates and move forward. Then it's time to settle the bill. Here are some things to keep in mind:



CASH OR CARD?

If a bidder insists on being paid in cash during negotiations, it might be best to consider other options. Without the documentation provided by credit card payments or checks, there is no evidence of payment being made. This could have serious implications in the future. The Federal Trade Commission also advises against contractors who demand full upfront payment or encourage the use of a specific lender that they are affiliated with.

The most convenient way to keep track of payments is through credit card transactions. However, if you choose to write a check, retain copies of all financial records, including a copy of the payment, a clear explanation in the memo section, and proof of deduction from your account.

PAY AS YOU GO

The amount you need to put down for a down payment will vary depending on the scale of your project. For extensive renovations, a substantial sum may be necessary to cover the cost of materials.

Once the initial payment is made, establish subsequent payments based on milestones achieved rather than on any specific date. This approach incentivizes your contractor to closely follow the agreed-upon construction timeline.

FINAL PAYMENT

Prior to submitting the last remaining payment, conduct a thorough inspection of the project to verify that the work has been completed according to your specifications.

The Federal Trade Commission recommends a sign-off checklist that includes:

- Obtain proof that subcontractors and suppliers were paid.
- Inspect and approve all completed work.
- Make sure the job site is clean and that tools, equipment and other materials have been removed.

Drought-resistant plants and trees

A beautiful landscape adds considerable aesthetic appeal to a property and an awe-inspiring lawn and garden can greatly improve resale value. In fact, the American Society of Landscape Architects claims landscaping can increase a home's resale value by as much as 20 percent, a contention that supports the notion that a lush landscape is something buyers want and are willing to pay for.

Maintaining a lush landscape is no small task, but that job is notably easier when homeowners pick the right plants. The right plant for a property depends on where a home is located, but it's worth noting that drought-resistant plants and trees may be especially worthy investments. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, 54 percent of the contiguous United States ex-

perienced moderate or exceptional drought over the first 10 months of 2024. The NASA Earth Observatory notes that even the southeastern United States, where Hurricane Helene struck and dropped considerable rainfall in the final days of September, was affected by drought, experiencing no precipitation in the month after that devastating storm struck.

When planning a landscape renovation, homeowners must take variables such as climate into consideration, particularly if their end goal is a lush, awe-inspiring lawn and garden. With that in mind, the following are some drought-resistant plants and trees homeowners may want to consider adding to their landscapes.

Trees

The National Arbor Day Foundation

notes that drought-tolerant trees are ideal as summer temperatures rise in many parts of the world. Drought-tolerant trees can survive in dry conditions, and they also provide great shade that allows people to enjoy their yards even when temperatures rise. The ADF notes that the following are some drought-resistant trees homeowners can consider:

- Eastern redcedar
- Bur oak
- Northern red oak
- Kentucky coffeetree
- Hackberry
- Scots pine
- Northern catalpa
- London planetree
- Shumard oak
- Live oak

Plants

Trees add ample aesthetic appeal to a property, but colorful plants

also help to create a stunning setting. Homeowners concerned about drought can consider these plants that various garden experts note are tolerant of dry conditions.

- Aster
- Beardtongue
- Black-eyed Susan
- Bugleweed
- Catmint
- Lantana
- Lavender
- Purple coneflower
- Russian sage
- Stonecrop

Homeowners are urged to work with local lawn and garden professionals when picking trees and plants for their properties. Such individuals can provide insight about species that are accustomed to local conditions and capable of thriving in them even when precipitation is low.

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