

QUALITY CUSTOM LIVING

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CUSTOM BUILDER AND REMODELER SERVING LANCASTER, LEBANON, YORK AND DAUPHIN COUNTIES SINCE 1979

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Dear Friends,

Can you believe that it is already nearing the end of 2011? The holidays are here and it is a time when families get together to celebrate and rejoice. Unfortunately, it is also a higher-than-normal time for home break-ins and accidents, such as fires. We've included a list of tips to keep you and your family safe this holiday season.

As we move into 2012, many of you look forward to the Home Shows in your area. We've compiled a list of the Shows we'll be at, so mark them on your calendar and please stop by our booth to say hello. It is always nice to see familiar faces at these events.

Finally, many of you have remodeling or addition projects in mind – and we've talked to a few homeowners who want it done before the holidays. If you are thinking about changing-up your space, give us a call at (717) 626-1778. We'd love to discuss your project with you.

Best regards,

Steve Black

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Project Spotlight: Functional Low-Cost Addition



Bob and Kim had their home for many years, and over time their family grew. They knew they needed more space – but they didn't want to move. They loved where they lived – the quaint Lancaster County community is an expansion of “home” for them, as it is for many families. Additionally, Bob and Kim enjoyed a convenient commute to their jobs, and their kids loved the school.

As it is for many families, budget was a concern when it came to adding on to their home. Bob and Kim knew their growing family needed extra room, but they didn't want to spend an exorbitant amount of money to get it. We met with them and came up with a solution

that would meet their need for more space and their budget.

We designed a 350-square-foot addition that included two bedrooms with a “Jack and Jill” bathroom in between. For the addition's foundation, we built a crawl space. It was tall enough for extra storage (like boxes of holiday decorations), yet it kept the cost down.

We also needed to address heating and cooling for the new addition, and their existing system was already at capacity for the square footage of the home. One option was to replace their existing heating and cooling system with a new one to sufficiently handle the extra square footage – but this was a high-ticket renovation. The other option (and the one they elected to go with) was to install a mini-split system. This ductless heat pump system offered the flexibility that the family was looking for, and cost about 20 percent less than replacing their existing system.

Bob and Kim's addition was the perfect example of designing a valuable, yet low-cost solution that many families are looking for. Not all additions have to be grand and costly. We worked with Bob and Kim to develop a detailed list of what they needed from the added space, and then set out to fulfill those needs in a cost-effective way.



Protecting Our Team = Protecting You, Too



This article may be a bit out of the ordinary, but I hope you will give me a few minutes of your time to read this.

One of the biggest advantages of working with our company, Stephen Black Builders, Inc., is the lengths we go to ensure that everyone on the job is compliant and safe: our team, our subcontractors and the homeowners. Complying with OSHA, EPA and other safety-related organizations is a significant expense to our company, but it is one that we gladly undertake because of how important it is. Additionally, showing that we are compliant is time consuming – there are many forms to fill out – and this usually involves sacrificing some of our own family time, including evenings and weekends. But again, we understand how critically important it is; we'd rather be safe than see someone we care about get hurt on the job site (or worse).

The reason this topic came up is because, unfortunately, there have been a number of news articles lately about construction workers falling from rooftops. In fact, in 2008 the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that fatal work injuries involving falls increased by 20 percent in 2008 after a sharp increase in 2007, and the 847 fatal falls in 2007 was a series high.

To ensure that we stay safe, our employees – along with many other contractors in our region – have been attending **OSHA Residential Fall-Protection in Construction** seminars. These seminars are usually hosted by the BIA of Lancaster County and/or other area home builders associations. In short, it is our company's duty to provide conventional fall protection systems to all workers exposed to a fall hazard six feet or more above a lower level.

Another health and safety measure we take very seriously is the proper removal of lead-based paint. This is an issue that homeowners need to be aware of. If you are considering remodeling your home and it was built prior to 1978, you need to make sure that the remodeler you pick is a **certified lead-based paint "abatement" contractor**.

Lead-based paint is extremely dangerous, and during a remodeling project, the dust from lead paint removal can fill the air and be breathed in. For young children, lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, hearing loss and behavior problems. In adults, lead poisoning can lead to hypertension and high blood pressure, and pregnant women run the

risk of passing on the poison to their unborn child. Lead paint is dangerous.

As with the OSHA Fall Protection safety, our team has also gone through the **lead-based paint "abatement" certification** process. If we are working in an area of your home where there is lead-based paint, we know how to properly seal-off the rest of the house so the dust does not harm your family. To protect our crew, we must wear special protective suits and masks. It may look like a scene from a movie, but it is critical that we keep everyone protected.

The safety and health of your family and our team is the number one priority in every job we do. As you consider a remodeling project or building a new home, think about what safety steps will be taken to ensure the job is done beautifully and that tragedies are avoided.

If you'd like more information about OSHA Fall Protection or Lead-Based Paint, please call our office at (717) 626-1778.

SAVE THE DATE

Stephen Black Builders will be at the following Home Shows. Come out and say hello!

February 2-5, 2012
York County Builders Association Home Show at the York Fairgrounds

March 16-18, 2012
The BIA Spring Home Show at F&M College

March 20-24, 2012
The Lebanon Builders Show and Garden Faire at the Lebanon Expo Center



Safety Tip!

Dryer Vents

A dryer vent with a build-up of lint can cause your dryer to run hotter and take more time to dry clothes ... **and it can also be a fire hazard.** Other causes for a dryer to run hotter include: a thermostat failure, lint inside the dryer, a damaged or missing lint screen, or a crushed dryer hose behind the dryer. To reduce the fire hazard, make sure you clean out the dryer vent often.



HOME TIPS:

Keep Safe This Holiday Season



Planning for the holidays is a busy and joyful time, but the extra decorations, electrical cords and the parade of people going in and out of your home calls for more safety precautions. To help you make this holiday season safe, we have put together this holiday home safety checklist:

- ✓ **Away over the holidays?** Ask a friend to watch your house, and take in your newspaper and mail. Put lights throughout the house on timers so they turn on and off in your normal living pattern.
- ✓ **Cut your Christmas tree base at a 45-degree angle.** Place it in a container with water or wet sand to keep it green.
- ✓ **Lock doors and windows.** 'Tis the season for more break-ins, too, so make sure everything is locked, even if you are leaving the house for just a few minutes
- ✓ **Carefully inspect holiday lights.** Defective, worn or frayed electrical wiring should be thrown away. Also, be sure to use fixtures specifically designed for outdoor use if you decorate the exterior of your home.
- ✓ **Use no more than three light sets on any one extension cord.** Also, don't run electrical cords under rugs, and be sure all lights are turned off before you go to bed or leave the house.
- ✓ **Know where your fire extinguishers are.** There are lots of opportunities for fires – with fireplaces burning, candles lit, trees decorated and extra cooking in the kitchen. Make sure your fire extinguishers work and that you know where they are.
- ✓ **Keep candles and other open flames away from decorations and other flammable objects.** Never leave burning candles unattended, and always supervise children when using candles.
- ✓ **To avoid tripping accidents,** keep decorations away from doorways, stairways or other major walking paths.
- ✓ **Never burn wrapping paper and evergreens in a fireplace or wood stove.** They could flare out of control, and send flames and smoke into your house.
- ✓ **Test detectors.** Since you are buying batteries for holiday toys and gifts, pick up extras for your smoke detectors and test them.

The team at Stephen Black Builders, Inc. wishes you and your family a joyful and safe holiday season!

Q&A's



Q. I never got water in my basement until Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee blew through this fall. Can a sump pump be installed into an existing basement?

A. Yes, and after this extremely wet year, many homeowners are seeing the importance of installing a sump pump in their basement – even if it is usually dry. This is how it is done: We find a low-spot in your basement and we cut a hole into your concrete floor to install the sump-pump tank. We run piping from the ground into the tank, and also from the sump pump to the outside of your home. Ground water drains into the tank and once it reaches a certain level (determined by a float that looks similar to the one in your toilet), it kicks on the sump pump to push the water to the outside.

Note: If you already have a sump pump, it is important that the piping leading to the outside of your home pushes the water far away from your foundation. If the outside pipe is too short, the water will continue to circulate back into your home – and could cause flooding anyway and/or burn out your sump pump motor.



Q. We are thinking about building an addition to our home. How does the process work?

A. The process is quite simple. The first step is to meet with a registered contractor, who will take the time to uncover the answers to these questions:

- What changes would you like to see?
 - What do you like and what do you dislike about your home?
 - What do you hope to accomplish by adding on?
 - Do you have any ideas or pictures from magazines you'd like to share?
- From there, the contractor will work with you to develop your priority list. A priority list will distinguish between what would be nice to have (a want) with what is necessary (a need). The contractor will then create drawings to fit your needs, priorities and budget. Once you agree to the drawings, work can begin.



Q. Even though my house isn't that old, I still feel drafts and cold air coming through the walls. Any suggestions on how to fix this?

A. One of the best ways to increase your home's energy efficiency is by improving your home's insulation. According to PPL, over 45% of a home's heating and cooling costs can be lost through the walls, roof and floor. It only makes sense that if you improve your home's insulation in these areas, you can significantly reduce your utility bills and also keep your family comfortable all year long.



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Our Neighborhoods

Featured Neighborhood: Hunters Gate

This cul-de-sac neighborhood of only 19 lots has plenty of open space, which gives you the feeling of living in the country when in reality you are only a few minutes away from shopping, entertainment and highway access. This beautiful neighborhood is located in Hampton Township, Cumberland County. Homes begin at \$450,000. Come visit us during our weekend open house: Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00pm.



Are you or is someone you know looking for a new home? We have some great homes conveniently located for you to check out. We also can custom-design a home that is right for you. Discover all the details on our website, www.stephenblackbldr.com



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About Stephen Black Builders, Inc.

Stephen Black Builders, Inc. (SBB) has been building custom homes and additions for more than 30 years.

Over the years, our use of quality materials and skilled craftsmen has become the SBB signature. To complete the atmosphere of warmth and hospitality, our interior designer will work closely with you, room by room, so that when you take possession of your new home, you'll find a décor that reflects your style and taste – a home where your friends feel like family, one that is filled with warmth.

The real treasure cannot be measured in price or square footage, but in the individual attention we give each of our projects.

Let us build or renovate your home. Call us at (717) 626-1778 to discuss your project today.

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~ Beverly & Daron
 "We hired Stephen Black Builders to finish our basement, and two years later, we hired them again to add an addition to our house. From the very first meeting, we felt as though our job was as important as any other job they were also working on. We plan on having them back in the future to remodel our master bath. We would recommend them for new construction or remodeling in a heartbeat."

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