

## Tile tops in beauty, least in cost

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ease of cleaning make tile a smart choice for areas where people will be sweating and showering.

- Dining room - More than one picture-perfect dining

room has been spoiled by a spill on the carpet. Tile offers superior ease of cleaning and exceptional design flexibility in this showcase area of the house.

- Family room - Another

high traffic area of the house that benefits from the durability and beauty of tile is the family room. For maximum impact, consider covering the entire floor with a rich ceramic tile. Or, protect the most

used areas by placing a large tile area in the middle of the room and carpeting the perimeter. Tile also enhances the beauty, safety and ease of cleaning for the fireplace and hearth.

## Create a state-of-the-art kitchen with historical-style detailing

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inspired look. As you work to put a vintage stamp on your kitchen, try these simple tips to help accentuate your d(v)c/or:

- Start by selecting fixtures with a vintage style in an antique finish to set the tone for your design. For example, a farmhouse-style sink with a wall-mounted kitchen faucet in a period style is a great way to capture a more rustic look of days-gone-by.

- Don't stop your new look with the faucet. Replacing cabinet knobs to match the finish and styling of your faucets is a simple and inexpensive way to tie everything together.

- Try a new backsplash tile that features an aged finish (such as copper glaze) or a distressed texture to expand your look with an eye-catching display.

- Consider a wood countertop for your center island.

Apart from offering a more traditional look, it will provide a food-safe and heat-resistant work surface.

- Makeover your ordinary dishwasher or other appliances by adding a vintage-inspired door panel. Dishwasher and refrigerator doors are especially well suited to "hide" their functionality.

With today's variety of styles and finishes, kitchens with a vintage flavor don't

need to sacrifice function to get all the current features. Integrating many of these details into your next kitchen project can help you achieve an inviting traditional decor that also reflects your personal tastes.

For more information on the beauty and variety of kitchen plumbing available from Danze, or for a Danze retailer nearest you, call (877) 530-3344 or visit [www.danze.com](http://www.danze.com).

## Installing a new basement bathroom

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septic system. What's more, these fixtures will work up to 12 feet below and as far as

150 feet away from a septic tank or sewer line.

Macerating systems are changing the way homeowners

remodel and helping them maximize their investments.

For more information about Saniflo, the only company

that makes a macerating toilet system, call toll-free (800) 571-8191 or visit [www.sanitflo.com](http://www.sanitflo.com).

## Don't let spring thaw damage your basement

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tional solutions can be expensive - and not very effective. Solutions such as digging, foundation spraying, epoxy injection, saw cutting and jack hammering are the techniques normally suggested by waterproofing companies. These methods treat only the exterior foundation wall coatings.

"They don't promise to eliminate water in your basement, just to redirect it," says Bill Emerick, owner of Sani-tred, a different kind of waterproofing system.

He stresses that the only way to completely waterproof a basement is on the inside of the basement walls and floors, not the outside.

"The Sani-tred basement

sealing system stops all ground water entry, basement humidity, mildew odors and dampness problems by sealing the basement where it needs it most - on the inside," he says.

He explains that Sani-tred has the ability to hold back negative hydrostatic pressure, unlike other coatings or paints.

Sani-tred is a simple three-step process that homeowners can apply themselves in a weekend. The products are solvent free, non-hazardous and non-flammable.

- First, prime the walls and floors with Permaflex liquid rubber coating. Available in light gray or light tan, Permaflex cures reliably even in extremely cold temperatures.

- Next, apply liquid rubber base (LRB) and thickening activator (TAV) at wall to floor junction, cracks and joints.

- Finally, apply a final coat of Permaflex (a third coat on block walls), and enjoy your dry basement. After application and cure, Permaflex leaves a thick layer of smooth rubber approximately four times the thickness of a household garbage bag, (up to 15 mils thick).

"The unique adhesive and penetrative properties of Permaflex allow Sani-tred to provide a complete water tight vapor barrier," says Emerick.

"Poured concrete walls, concrete block, native stone, even treated wood foundations are permanently and effectively

waterproofed with the Sani-tred system, allowing previously unusable basements to be finished and used for prime living space, or finish the basement in the usual methods," Emerick notes.

Once Sani-tred is applied, your basement is dry and maintenance free, meaning you can use and enjoy your basement once again. Another added advantage is that it blocks the entry of problem radon levels into your home.

Sani-tred is backed with a lifetime warranty, and is available directly from Ideal Products, LLC. For more detailed information, visit [www.sanitred.com](http://www.sanitred.com) or call (866) 784-3308.

## Year-round home energy saving tips

ARTICLE RESOURCE ASSOCIATION

With spring in the air, many Americans are ready to breathe a sigh of relief at the thought of warmer weather and lower utility bills.

However, a newly released energy report paints a chillier picture. The U.S. Energy Information Administration released its Annual Energy Outlook 2006 (AEO2006) report, which evaluates and projects a wide range of trends and issues that could have major implications for U.S. energy markets through the year 2030, if Americans do not adopt more energy-efficient lifestyles.

One of the trends mentioned in the report notes that beginning this year, total energy consumption is projected to steadily increase every year through 2030. As case in point, energy prices jumped five percent in January according to the U.S. Labor Department's consumer price index.

A majority of consumer energy costs go toward home heating and fueling our vehicles. The Alliance to Save Energy estimates that today over 40 percent of Americans' energy bills goes toward home heating. Combine that with gasoline prices being 25 percent higher than last year and you have a formula for increased energy costs year-round.

In an effort to promote year-round energy efficiency, the Alliance to Save Energy web site, [www.ase.org](http://www.ase.org), offers consumers a variety of simple energy saving tips including:

1. Turning down the thermostat by just one degree can reduce home heating energy costs by four percent, which



can be between \$30 and \$60 a year, depending on the fuel being used to heat the home.

2. Plug leaks or gaps in windows and doors with caulk or other materials.

3. Installing proper insulation, especially in the attic and crawl spaces, can reduce household energy costs from \$70 to \$460 per year.

4. Closing vents in unoccupied rooms and using small space heaters to heat occupied areas can save a significant amount of energy and money. There is usually about 80 percent of space that is not being used at any given time in the home.

5. Set the water heater at 120 degrees.

6. Use pipe insulation to insulate the first six to ten feet of the hot water supply pipe.

7. Washing clothes in cold water can save households up to \$63 a year.

8. Using a programmable thermostat can help consumers reduce their home heating bills by \$35 to \$230 a year.

9. Replacing the four most used bulbs with compact fluo-

rescent bulbs can save households about \$195 over the lifetime of the bulbs.

10. Purchase new heating and cooling equipment with the Energy Star label.

Rinnai Corporation, the world's largest gas appliance manufacturer, has been at the forefront of the energy conservation issue. Following passage last August by Congress of President Bush's Energy Bill, the company launched a Web site, [www.tanklesscredit.com](http://www.tanklesscredit.com), to educate consumers on ways in which they can benefit from a variety of tax credits for installing energy-efficient products in their homes such as tankless water heaters, windows, insulation, doors, roofs and heating and cooling equipment.

"We are committed to providing consumers with the education and resources needed to make individual, year-round, energy-smart decisions that will in turn change our country's course and provide for a safer, more secure tomorrow," says Ervin Cash, senior vice president of Rinnai North America.

"Becoming energy efficient does not require making huge sacrifices, but it does involve each one of us doing our part by taking advantage of the energy efficient technologies available today."

Rinnai's tankless water heaters provide a never-ending supply of hot water while simultaneously reducing energy consumption and operating costs by up to 70 percent over standard storage tank water heaters.

Unlike antiquated water tanks that heat and reheat water 24 hours a day, today's tankless water heaters only heat water when it senses a demand from an open hot water source. When the hot water tap is closed, the system automatically shuts off saving consumers money and energy since they don't have to pay to heat water that is not being used.

And now, thanks to the Energy Bill, consumers can receive a one-time tax credit of \$300 specifically toward the full purchase price of a high-efficiency tankless water heater such as those manufactured by Rinnai.

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### OWNING YOUR FUTURE

Homeownership is a national priority. HUD is the nation's housing agency committed to increasing homeownership and dedicated to helping first-time buyers and minority families become homeowners. Each year, HUD programs and services help tens of thousands of families accomplish the dream of a lifetime: owning a home.

Most likely, you'll need to borrow money to buy a house. Getting a fair deal will help you to keep your home and boost your home equity wealth. Home equity is the part of the value of your home that belongs to you—the value of your house minus what you owe on the mortgage. Your goal is to get a loan that doesn't include high fees or a high interest rate. With low fees and a low interest rate, you can pay down your debt more quickly and own more of your house.

### Watch Your Wealth

The wealth you accumulate in a house is no different than money in a checking or savings account. Be as careful and attentive to your home equity as you would be to your bank account. Be cautious about refinancing or borrowing against your home equity. Remember, refinancing isn't always a good idea. Don't let someone sell you a loan you don't need or can't afford. Be wary of pitches like "NO CREDIT, NO PROBLEM" or random mail promising favorable mortgage rates. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

For more information, call 1 (800) 569-4287 or go to [www.owningyourfuture.gov](http://www.owningyourfuture.gov) and select "Buying a Home."