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INSIDE: 2016 HOME, LAWN & GARDEN

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A number of options are available when choosing siding

(BPT) — Selecting new siding is one of the most important decisions homeowners face when building new or remodeling an existing home. With so many options, both classic and modern materials, there's a lot to consider.

Many manufacturers are now combining traditional styles and materials with high-tech finishes, delivering a product homeowners can love for years to come. Among all the options on the market, vinyl siding — with its various styles, textures and colors — remains the most used product. In fact, 2015 marked 21 straight years vinyl siding held the top spot in cladding for new single-family houses, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's annual home report.

Whether you are building a home or remodeling one, there are four key areas homeowners should account for when determining

which siding option meets your needs: durability, design, maintenance and affordability.

Durability

Siding selection is typically a once-in-a-lifetime decision, making durability a key factor for many. Homeowners should look for a siding option that is resistant to every element, including rain, wind and even the sun. Manufacturers now offer siding products with technologies that resist the damaging impact of the sun, preserving color for the lifetime of the home. Options, like Mastic Home Exteriors by Ply Gem SolarDefense, expand exterior home design with darker, on-trend colors that make your home the envy of the neighborhood.

Design

Perhaps the most-overwhelming decision for

most when considering siding options is deciding on a style and color. There are seven primary siding material options available to homeowners — vinyl, metal, wood, brick, fiber cement, stucco, and stone — and countless color and style options within each material type. To guide you in determining what would look best, it is recommended to ask a siding specialist like a contractor, builder or architect for help. They can educate you on color coordination and what would go well with the neighborhood, while still giving personalized options for your home. They will also be able to weigh in on accent pieces like trim and shutters, which can help bring out your style.

"Homeowners are looking for more creative and colorful options," said Pat Verlot, president of Color Services & Associates, an organization that identifies color trends and educates consumers and manufacturers about those trends.

"Whether you're looking for a specific panel texture, such as cedar shake or wood clapboard, or a certain period-specific color scheme to align with historical significance, my recommendation is to look at vinyl. It provides the homeowner the freedom to add low-maintenance color and definition that will never be out of style or need painting or refinishing."

Maintenance

Beyond style and color, homeowners are also seeking siding that is low-maintenance, which reduces or eliminates the cost and personal time expended for proper upkeep. Each siding material type has a different level of care and maintenance required. Vinyl typically requires just soap and water for periodic cleaning. Wood and fiber cement can require repainting every five to seven years. Stucco will need to be repainted and sealed. Brick and stone require re-pointing of mortar. The earlier point about durability plays a part here

too, ensuring the option you select is free from potential time-consuming — even costly repairs — due to storm damage such as wind and moisture.

Affordability

Lastly, set a budget. Do your homework on the options and secure estimates, then compare them with your budget. Don't forget that sometimes investing a little more into the project up front may reduce issues and maintenance costs down the road.

As you look to select new exterior siding, be sure to keep in mind these important factors — durability, design, maintenance and affordability — to make the best choice possible for your home and lifestyle. To get started on siding your house, look to manufacturer websites such as plygem.com for siding choices, as well as home visualizer and color selection tools that help homeowners experiment with different color and textures before making a decision.

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Some steps to allergy relief with spring cleaning

(BPT) — Longing for allergy relief? To stop the endless cycle of sniffles, sneezes and wheezes, it's time to ready your vacuum and rubber gloves. Spring cleaning helps eliminate allergens so you can relax, breathe easy and enjoy the season.

"People who suffer from allergies may not realize there's a direct connection between cleaning your home and reducing allergy symptoms," said allergist Bryan Martin, DO, president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI). "The more you can rid your home of dust mites, mold, cockroaches and pet dander, the easier you'll breathe."

ACAAI recommends seven spring cleaning steps to remove allergens in the home and avoid accidentally letting more in.

To sleep, perchance to dream and breathe.

Start in the bedroom where you spend eight to 10 hours a day. Dust mites can flourish during cold, dreary months, so wash your sheets and comforter regularly. Most mites die by drowning, but if you want to use hot water (which

will kill slightly more mites) don't use water that's over 120 F because it can scald.

Remember to also wash decorative pillows. Finish by adding allergy-proof casings to the mattress, box spring and pillows. Keep pets out of the bedroom as their dander can cause symptoms to flare.

Gaze out, but don't open.

Window treatments are a magnet for dust and allergens. Pull them down and dry clean, or vacuum each thoroughly. Don't forget to vacuum blinds and windowsills as well. Tempted to open the windows to let the spring breeze in? Don't. Unwanted pollen can enter your home and spread everywhere.

When the dust settles, wipe it off.

Suit up to win the war on dust by wearing protective gloves and a face mask so you don't breathe in microscopic mold spores. Next, ditch cotton cloths and feather dusters that kick up allergens, and instead use microfiber cleaning cloths which trap and remove triggers.

Nature abhors a vacuum. You shouldn't.

Move all furniture, and vacuum the dust and dander that collects underneath. Use a cyclonic vacuum, which spins dust and dirt away from the floor, or a vacuum with a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter. Additionally, clean vents and return registers to limit dust recirculating. Consider shampooing carpets to remove deeply embedded allergens.

Scrub-a-dub the mold.

In bathrooms, basements and tiled spaces, scrub any visible mold and mildew from surfaces with bleach, or borax mixed with water, then dry completely. The key to reducing mold is moisture control, so use bathroom fans and clean any standing water immediately.

You can also help ward off mold by keeping home humidity below 50 percent.

Change is good — for filters.

Keep the air that circulates through your home's ventilation system clean by

using filters with a MERV rating of 11 or 12. Change the filter at the change of every season, or every three months. (Set a calendar reminder to remember). Additionally, change filters in HEPA appliances. This helps eliminate allergens, and prohibits mold growth.

Get out! And about.

Check your home's exterior for any concerns that may have emerged due to cold weather. Chipped paint, roof damage or cracked siding can lead to mold problems. Make repairs as necessary.

These seven spring cleaning steps may take a few weekends to complete, but they'll help reduce allergens all season long. For more information, or to find an allergist in your area, visit AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org.

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Garage door 101: Program offers homeowners peace of mind

(BPT) — Spring is here, and so are the chores that come with it, like spring cleaning and tuning up the lawnmower. Here's a tip — don't forget your garage door.

Don't feel badly if you have; most people don't give their garage door a second thought until something breaks, then it's too late.

Repairs can be expensive, especially if you haven't taken the time to find a trusted professional to make those repairs.

GarageDoorCare.com offers a free three-step program to help homeowners achieve garage door peace of mind in 2016:

- Lubricate your garage door twice a year (it's easier than you think).

- Sign up for a free twice-a-year email garage door lubrication reminder.

- Find a trusted, local garage door pro well in advance of a problem.

Most homeowners have never lubricated their garage door, and that's why you may hear squeaks and groans. Over time, that could lead to trouble. But lubricating a garage door is easy.

A quick visit to GarageDoorCare.com will show you how to lubricate the door, rollers and hinges.

Five minutes of your time and a \$5 spray can of garage door lubricant, which is available at your local hardware store, are all you need to potentially save a costly service call down the road.

The site also demonstrates several other easy steps homeowners can take to keep their garage door in peak operating condition.

You don't need to wait for the squeaks and groans to start before lubricating your door. A good rule of thumb is to lubricate your door twice a year, when you change

your clocks, for example.

The International Door Association (IDA), a worldwide trade association of garage door and access professionals — and the sponsor of GarageDoorCare.com — invites consumers to register for twice-a-year emails that will remind them it's time to lubricate the garage door.

And signing up doesn't mean a flood of emails or sales calls: Two simple emails a year, that's all.

Following these maintenance tips will extend the life of most of your garage door parts, but sometimes, despite your best efforts, your garage door will need professional attention.

Unfortunately, no amount of lubrication can keep a worn out spring from breaking, and when your garage door stops working you'll need a professional.

It is not something a homeowner should try to repair themselves.

A garage door is the largest and heaviest moving object in a home, and can cause severe injuries or even death if damaged or misused.

That's when identifying a



Photo courtesy of Brandpoint

A regular maintenance program of lubricating your garage door twice a year will help to prevent problems in the future.

pro well ahead of time will pay off.

Chances are you have a plumber or heating and cooling professional with whom you've developed a relationship over the years, but where do you go to find a garage door repairman you can trust?

You can, and should, consider doing so ahead of time.

GarageDoorCare.com offers a "Find a Qualified Professional" page through which homeowners can find experienced, local garage door service and repair businesses that are IDA members committed to operating their businesses by the IDA Code of Business Conduct.

This commitment to professionalism and safety goes a long way in helping home-

owners avoid unscrupulous firms that sell unneeded parts and overcharge customers.

You may have seen stories on the local news or even national investigative news programs where so-called garage door repairmen are caught on camera allegedly bilking customers.

Knowing how to access a trusted pro can save you stress, money and ensure that your garage door is repaired properly the first time.

So as you plan out your spring chores, don't forget to add your garage door to the list.

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first home** page 11

Five home-buying trends for this year's market

(BPT) — If you're in the market for a new house this year, don't be fooled by the brisk chill in the air. The spring house-hunting season is actually closer than you think. That means now is the perfect time to start your planning.

Space requirements such as bedrooms, bathrooms and square footage are essential, but a house is more than just shelter, it's your home, and the great ones not only have everything you need, but everything you want.

"Each family lives in their home differently," said Beazer Homes senior creative manager Michael Phillips. "Some buyers prefer a private dining room, while others want an open-concept kitchen with a more casual eating area. Where one buyer might prefer an owner's suite on the main

level, others may want all their bedrooms on the upper level."

Although every home buyer's needs are unique, the market is often dictated by common trends. To better understand your own buying preferences and to see if you're aligned with others in the real estate marketplace, take a look at these five home-buying trends.

- **Function over aesthetics.** When you think kitchen trends, you probably think of design features like granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. While both these options remain popular and are common in new construction, surveys by the National Association of Realtors and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) found that buyers were extremely interested in functional attributes like new appli-

ances, eat-in layouts, walk-in pantries and double sinks.

- **Living rooms are no longer a must.** Given today's diverse home-buying population, the formal living room is becoming less prevalent.

"Many buyers would rather use traditional living room square footage in a new way," said Phillips. "We're seeing families using the living room as a home office or choosing to forgo the space altogether in exchange for extra square footage in other areas of the home."

- **New is number one.** According to the NAHB, more than half of surveyed buyers want to purchase a new home. It can be a challenge for buyers to find everything they desire in a resale home, and because renovations are often costly



Photo courtesy of Brandpoint

Beazer Homes' Choice Plans program allows home buyers to personalize the most frequently used living spaces in their home according to what they need.

and time consuming, it's hard to deny the appeal of purchasing a brand-new home that is move-in ready.

- **Let there be (energy-efficient) light.** Home buyers have coveted homes that make good use of natural light for years and that trend is continuing in 2016. In addition to large windows, NAHB research shows homeowners are putting an increased emphasis on the energy savings that accompany the installation of high-performance windows.

- **Make it your own.** Personalizing a new home is easier and more affordable than ever before, thanks to offerings like Beazer's Choice Plans, which are flexible floor plans that allow you to personalize

the most lived-in spaces in your home at no additional cost. Whether you want a kitchen for entertaining or a breakfast nook for family dining, an office space instead of an extra bedroom, you choose ... and Beazer won't charge you for selecting the best layout for your lifestyle. You can learn more about your options and how to create your own dream home at www.beazer.com/choice-plans.

It's never too early to start preparing for shopping for a new home.

The more work you do ahead of time, the more time you can spend exploring the market. So start your research now and you'll be moved into the home of your dreams before you know it.

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Decluttering home put forgotten treasures back on display

By **BETH J. HARPAZ**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Reading Marie Kondo's best-selling books about decluttering is intimidating. I have a complicated relationship with many of my possessions: souvenirs from favorite places, gifts from loved ones.

Even if I never use them, how could I part with them? And how could I face my overflowing cupboards and scary closets?

But I got over my fears. Ultimately, Kondo's books, "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" and "Spark Joy," are not so much about throwing things out as they are about "choosing what we want to keep," as Kondo puts it.

Here's what it felt like going Kondo.

THE BATHROOM WAS EASY

Kondo said sentimental things should be left for last. So I started with the most unsentimental place: the bathroom. There's no emotion in tossing expired medication, used Ace bandages and unclaimed toothbrushes, or in consolidating half-empty boxes of Band-Aids.

Those baby steps strengthened my discard muscle. Next I said goodbye to fragrances and lipsticks I never use.

In cleaning out, I unearthed a cache of skin creams and cleansers that I like. I now keep some handy for daily use, and store others in a beautifully decorated gift box I'd been reluctant to part with. Keeping and using the box this way fit several Kondo principles.

First, she says, "Everything you own wants to be of use to you."

Second, she said, don't buy storage containers. Instead, use things you already own: shoeboxes, stationery boxes, decorative

bowls.

Third, Kondo is no minimalist. "Adorn your home with the things you love," she urged. My pretty box now brightens a shelf.

Folding is also critical. Kondo said every foldable object has its own "sweet spot ... a folded state that best suits that item." I'm still working on folding the bathroom towels just right, but after studying her techniques, I get the origami-like art of folding shirts.

SORT BY CATEGORY

Don't clean shelves and drawers one by one, Kondo says. Instead, sort by category to "compare items that are similar in design, making it easier to decide whether you want to keep them."

In the kitchen, I surveyed all the bakeware at once, shedding excess cookie cutters and muffin tins. A dozen random mugs and two teapots were given away. I counted a dozen vases and kept four. I was stunned to find nearly 40 portable water bottles tucked in cupboards; I kept

two.

I also stacked items by shape, as Kondo suggests, transforming cluttered shelves.

Then I gathered decorative platters and bowls, many of them gifts that weren't to my taste, and employed her ritual: "Take each item in one's hand and ask: 'Does this spark joy?' If it does, keep it. If not, dispose of it."

As I proceeded, I contemplated the gift-givers' kindness. "You don't need to feel guilty for parting with a gift," Kondo wrote. "Just thank it for the joy it gave you when you first received it."

Along the way, I found things I love, like a carved wooden dish I now use to display fruit. I hesitated over my mom's ornate, silver-plated sugar-and-creamer, which I'll never use. But I cleaned the tarnish off and a friend pronounced them "shabby chic." They now decorate a windowsill.

As Kondo said, "If you have items that you love even though they seem useless, please give them a turn in the spotlight."

SCARY PLACES, BEAUTIFUL SPACES

I have a dark, scary closet under the ceiling that I've been throwing stuff into for 20 years. Kondo emboldened my excavation.

Crumbling 1970s luggage? Out! Subzero military boots bought second-hand for a winter trip to Alaska? Donated to the Salvation Army.

My outdoorsy son's camping equipment stayed, but Kondo's folding techniques helped reduce the space needed for his weatherproof clothing and bedding.

Once again, forgotten treasures emerged: artwork from Morocco, a carved wooden bowl that belonged to my late mother-in-law. Both are now on display.

"By the time you finish, you'll see something you love everywhere you look," Kondo wrote.

And that's her real genius: "You are not choosing what to discard but rather what to keep."

TACKLING CLOTHES

I dumped all my clothes on my bed and dove in. Some didn't fit, or were stained or damaged. Some were gifts, or I'd bought them on vacation.

I sent the rejects off with Kondo's blessing: "Thank you for giving me joy when I bought you," or "Thank you for teaching me what doesn't suit me."

"By acknowledging their contribution and letting them go with gratitude, you will be able to truly put the things you own, and your life, in order," she wrote.

Kondo is fine with keeping things you don't use, as long as "you can say without a doubt, 'I really like this!'"

So I kept the flowered confection of a hat I bought in England, although I'll never wear it. She also said nothing is too special for everyday wear. So now I wear a favorite black velvet top to work.

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Seven ideas to remake your bedroom into a serene place



Photo courtesy of Brandpoint

The color green is restful and calming which is why it is often used in a bedroom for a serene effect. Other ideas to make

your bedroom restful might include new blinds or lowering the lighting.

(BPT) — As life gets busier, a bedroom becomes more than a sleeping space. It's an escape to a calmer, more serene world that rests the mind as well as the body.

To create your own in-house getaway, use these easy tips to "calm-ify" your bedroom and transform it into a more beautiful and restful retreat.

Sink into some silence

Create white noise to block out sounds that disturb the solitude. Install a stylish ceiling fan with gently whirring blades to give the room a languid, tropical ambiance that will help you relax.

Paint the room green

Studies show green has a calming effect when used as a main color for decorating. A recent homeowner study conducted by Sherwin-Williams found that more than 60 percent of homeowners would consider adding shades of green into their home, with more than half saying they would use

it to paint an entire room.

"The color green is symbolic of balance, nature, spring and rebirth," said Sue Wadden, director of color marketing at Sherwin-Williams. "Because it has such positive connections in the mind, I especially like to see Gallery Green (SW 0015) used in spaces seeking balance and harmony, such as bedrooms."

Treat yourself to new window treatments

Add to the easy-breezy feel of the room by purchasing fresh, flowing curtains or sleek new blinds that can be easily adjusted to block out the daylight.

Add fresh houseplants

Living things, like leafy or flowering plants, make a bedroom feel more down to earth. Visit your local garden center and purchase a variety of houseplants, large or small, to freshen the air.

Fluff up your bedding

Give your bed a fresh new look and feel. Buy yourself some soft, cool white sheets. Add a featherlike, comfortable bedspread or quilt, and top it with multiple pillows of all shapes and sizes for a well-rested night's sleep.

Lower the lighting

Adjusting the lighting can completely alter the atmosphere in a bedroom. Install a light dimmer or add a programmable timer that turns lights off and on automatically, to help lull you to sleep, yet brighten the room when it's time to get up.

Simplify for serenity's sake

Eliminate clutter to keep it out of sight — and out of mind. Add cabinetry with built-in organization features like drawer inserts. Add more shelving in the closet. Use baskets and pottery to keep small items contained.

Having everything in its place will help you feel free to relax in your beautiful new bedroom.

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Smart ways to boost a home's energy efficiency



Photo courtesy of Brandpoint

When renovating a home it is smart to consider replacing old windows and doors with new ones that are energy efficient. The most efficient insulation should also be used.

(BPT) — Since spring is here building industry experts say now is an ideal time to carefully consider and prioritize home renovation plans.

Most homeowners will opt to address the cosmetic features of a home when completing a renovation project to add comfort and value. However, it's often what you can't see that can have the biggest impact.

Before diving into any home renovations, consider the "skeleton" of your home, known as the building envelope, rather than just the cosmetic features such as chrome fixtures or granite countertops.

For instance, high efficiency windows are an excellent investment for any home renovation to help drive down excessive energy waste and high utility costs. The U.S. Department of Energy suggests that traditional windows contribute to as much as 10 percent of the total amount of air escaping from a typical home, while improperly sealed doors can contribute a further 11 percent.

energy systems, as well as Energy Star-rated appliances, can reduce energy consumption and your overall carbon footprint while maintaining a comfortable, enjoyable living space for you and your family.

Investing in an effective insulation solution also can make a noticeable impact on reducing household utility costs.

Building experts suggest that homeowners completing a home renovation should be as involved as possible in determining the best insulation type for their home. This means that homeowners should actively research the types of materials available and how well they perform over the long term.

Spray foam insulation, available from Icynene, is growing in popularity among homeowners since it is an energy-efficient insulation material that delivers year-round benefits. Spray foam insulation works well in all types of homes across the country, regardless of climate, to curb air loss and retain the conditioned air within your home to maintain a consistent, even temperature.

Spray foam insulation performs for the life of the property, ensuring that

homeowners can enjoy comfortable indoor temperatures all year round without overrunning their heating and cooling equipment and accumulating high heating and cooling costs every month. More infor-

mation on the effectiveness of spray foam insulation is available online at www.icynene.com.

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2016 HOME, LAWN & GARDEN

Five qualities of an expert contractor



Photo courtesy of Brandpoint

A professional contractor will work with you to be sure your goals are possible to achieve in remodeling your home.

(BPT) — Are you one of the more than 3 million people planning to renovate your kitchen or bathroom this year? Or perhaps you're adding on a room or finishing your basement. If you're going to hire a contractor for any home remodeling project, make sure you know the difference between a great contractor and an "OK" one. In other words, learn what separates a professional from an amateur.

A quick Google search on "remodeling disasters" or "renovation mistakes" returns an endless number of nightmare remodeling projects and scams, where the homeowner is left dealing with unfinished projects or unsafe conditions, and ultimately spends more money rectifying the issue.

When making such a significant investment, you want to make sure you're

getting a reputable and dependable professional so your project doesn't become another horror story. It's important to do research, read reviews and check references before you put a home in the hands of someone else. So, now that you've narrowed down your list of potential contractors, how can you weed out the amateurs from the tried and true professionals?

Look for these qualities:

Focus:

- Professional: Puts clients first and will work with you to make sure your goals are feasible and that the project can get done on time and on budget. Treats customers, their families and their homes with respect.

- Amateur: Focuses on finishing the job as quickly as possible, with little regard for your family's personal

needs and schedule.

Livability:

- Professional: Well-equipped to deal with the No. 1 threat to livable remodeling — dirt and dust. Protects you and your family from annoying and potentially dangerous air particles by using the most effective tools and processes for dust elimination, such as the BuildClean Dust Control System.

- Amateur: Doesn't have a proactive strategy to manage indoor air quality and jobsite dust. "Brushes it under the rug" without concern for your indoor air quality, your belongings and the short-term and long-term health of you and your family.

Ethical:

- Professional: Proactively addresses challenges head-on, immediately notifying you of any unexpected issues.

- Amateur: Ignores problems uncovered during the project in order to keep it moving. Leaves behind things like hidden mold, leaky pipes or structural issues, putting the safety of your family at risk.

Risk:

- Professional: has a license, certifications and insurance. Obtains all necessary permits, protecting

you against unsafe work and legal issues. Guarantees his work.

- Amateur: Unaware of, or doesn't care about, building codes, required permits and health and safety regulations. Leaves you liable for any improper work, mistakes and in a potentially dangerous situation.

Value:

- Professional: Communicates with you to establish an estimate and negotiate a fair contract and payment schedule.

- Amateur: Underbids a project by thousands of dollars and is likely to cut corners to meet the budget or overwhelm you with costly change orders.

When beginning your remodeling projects this year, remember professional contractors will put your interests first. They will proactively address potential issues and discuss a livability strategy with you that includes timeline, logistics, dust control and safety. With an amateur, there are no guarantees, so you're putting yourself and your loved ones at unnecessary risk.

For more information on selecting a professional contractor, visit: livableremodelling.com.

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- Dryer Vent Cleaning
- Foreclosed Property Cleaning



How to decorate your first home

(BPT) — Buying your first home? Congratulations! Now you get the pleasure of decorating and deciding where everything should go in your new residence. But arranging furniture to optimize room layout in a home can be very different from placing furniture in an apartment. You have a lot more to consider than just deciding where to put your sofa or which wall to nestle your bed against.

“Smart furniture placement can make a well-laid-out room even more appealing and functional,” said Susan Yoder, a designer for manufactured home builder Clayton Homes.

Yoder offered tips for optimizing room layout:

First, plan the purpose of your room.

The design features of your room will heavily influence the arrangement of furnishings and artwork, but you also need to consider how you’ll be using the room. Will your living room be where the family gathers to watch TV and movies? A spot for family meetings and conversations with guests? Somewhere you’ll go to relax quietly with a good book?

Plan your room layout to accommodate the different uses to which you’ll put the room. One way to do this is to create zones for different purposes. For example, a sofa and some chairs might face the TV while a small table and wing chair in a corner could be perfect for quiet reading.

Then, find your focal point.

Every room should have a focal point, that spot that automatically draws the eye as soon as you walk into the

room. In a living room, this may be a fireplace, picture window or a great view of the interior. The layout of furnishings in the room should flow toward the focal point without blocking it from your view when you enter the room.

If your room doesn’t have a focal point incorporated into the design, you can create one in a number of ways. Many people use a large TV as a focal point in living rooms, but you could also paint one wall in an accent color, hang a large eye-catching piece of artwork or use a striking piece of furniture.

Tailor for traffic flow.

Modern floor plans tend to be very open in the current market. Even in older homes, where rooms may be more separated from each other, living areas will typically have more than one doorway. It’s important to keep ease of movement in mind when you’re arranging your furniture.

Avoid blocking natural traffic patterns, such as the line from door to door, or the space between areas like kitchens and breakfast nooks. Never obstruct a door or window by placing a piece of furniture in front of it. Generally, straight



Photo courtesy of Brandpoint

Basic ideas for decorating a room should include not blocking a doorway when arranging sofas or chairs. Creating a focal point in a room can be done with a large TV, a fireplace or a great painting.

lines facilitate movement, so imagine straight paths throughout your rooms and place furniture accordingly.

Keep scale in mind

Finally, a word about scale — ensure the size of your furnishings matches the size of your room. A large sectional sofa or king-sized four-poster bed will overpower a small room and leave you little space

Likewise, too many pieces in a snug space will make the room feel even smaller.

and cluttered. Conversely, a large, open

room can withstand the presence of some larger furnishings, whereas very small pieces will look lost in a big space.

“Decorating your new home is one of the great joys of home ownership,”

Yoder said. “With a little thought and planning it’s possible to create a room layout that really works for your lifestyle and the room’s design.”

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Five ways you can improve the look of your yard today



Photo courtesy of Brandpoint

Some ways to improve the look of your yard might include aerating the lawn and making sure your mower blades are sharp.

2016 HOME, LAWN & GARDEN

(BPT) — You've waited all winter for the chance to transform your lawn from that drab, frozen tundra into the lush, green oasis you know it can be. But this transformation doesn't happen overnight, and you can't expect Mother Nature to take care of everything herself. Getting your dream yard is going to require a little work on your part, but the rewards are worth the efforts and as you'll see, even the smallest changes can have a big impact. Follow each of the five simple tips below and you'll be enjoying your yard all season long.

- Water more heavily, less often. When it comes to watering your lawn, less is more, provided you're talking about watering frequency and not water

amount. Instead of several light sprinklings, give your lawn one thorough watering (about an inch a week) and you'll ensure more of the water is absorbed by your lawn instead of being lost to evaporation.

- Trim back overgrown trees and bushes. The most beautiful yard in the world can be quickly overshadowed — literally and figuratively — by unkempt trees and bushes. How far you trim back your trees and bushes is a matter of preference, but any dead branches should be removed. After that, make sure you trim uniformly and clean up when you're done to finish that polished look.

- Take the time to aerate. One of the most effective ways to support new grass

growth is to aerate your lawn. Using a mechanical or manual aerator, you can punch small holes in the soil, allowing much-needed water, air and nutrients to make it down to the root structure, supporting future grass development and long-term yard health.

- Get motivated to mulch. Regular mulching reduces weeds while promoting the health and growth of your lawn by returning needed nutrients back to the soil. In addition, because mulch clippings are comprised of 85 percent water and just 5 percent nitrogen, leaving

them on your lawn can satisfy as much as 25 percent of your fertilizer needs. So the next time you feel the need to bag, opt to mulch instead.

- Cut right, cut smart. When it comes to lawn care, having the right mower makes all the difference. Husqvarna lawn mowers with high performance cutting decks will give superior cut quality and performance and most are capable of bagging, mulching or straight discharge. If your lawn is rough or hilly, a self-propelled drive system can take the work out of mowing. Some models

now even have capability of four-wheel drive to further reduce effort.

After months of winter weather, you're ready to relax on your beautiful green lawn once again.

, and getting there is easier than you think. Apply the tips above and you'll be able to create the yard that's perfect for everything you have planned for the season. For more tips on improving your lawn and to learn more about Husqvarna mowers and dealer locations, visit www.Husqvarna.com/us.

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Area Events - April 1 - 7

FRIDAY

Humane Society Fur Ball — The Henry County Humane Society will hold its fundraising Fur Ball from 5:30-10:30 p.m. on Friday at the Armory, 127 E. Clinton St., Napoleon. The cost is \$15 and includes a chicken or lasagna dinner, live dessert auction, silent basket auction, 50/50 raffle, a DJ and more. For information, call the humane society at 419-592-3777.

"The Little Mermaid" — Hicksville High School will present "The Little Mermaid" on Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and again on April 7 and 9 at the Huber Opera House in downtown Hicksville. For ticket information, call the school at 419-542-7636.

SATURDAY

Men's fellowship breakfast — The last Northwest Ohio Men's Fellowship Breakfast of 2016 will be held Saturday morning at 7:30 a.m. at St. John Catholic Church, 510 Jackson Ave., Defiance. The breakfast will be a salute to area veterans with veteran and office manager Tanya Brunner of the Defiance County Office of Veteran's Affairs speaking. Former Defiance County veteran's affairs officer Mike Williams will also speak. The breakfast is available for a freewill donation and all are welcome to attend. Call George Westrick at 419-784-3975.

Alzheimer's Symposium — A free Alzheimer's Symposium will be held at the Defiance Eagles from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. This program is for families, caregivers and friends of persons with Alzheimer's or other dementias. Pre-registration is requested, but not required. Call 800-272-3900 to pre-register or for information.

Camp Palmer clean-up day — Clean-up day is set at 4-H Camp Palmer from 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Participants will be helping to clean up the camp prior to its opening. All volunteers will be given a picnic lunch at 12:30 p.m. Volunteers are asked to bring their own work gloves and scrap rags. Call 419-237-2247 for more information. The camp is located at 26450 County Road MN, Fayette, right next to Harrison Lake State Park.

Barbershop music event — The Northwesterners will hold two performances on Saturday at 2 and 7:30 p.m. at the Defiance Community Auditorium. They will perform "Mississippi Cabaret" with performances from the barbershop groups "Instant Classic" and "Forefront." Tickets are \$15, \$12 and \$10. Call 419-899-2702.

SUNDAY

Fire department barbecue — The Holgate Volunteer Fire Department will hold its spring chicken barbecue on Sunday, starting at 11 a.m. until meals are sold out. The menu will include 1/2 barbecue chicken, baked beans, potato salad and dinner roll. Cost of a full meal is \$8, a child's meal is \$5, and chicken only is \$5.

Pancake, sausage breakfast — A pancake and sausage breakfast, sponsored by the Tiffin Township Fire Department, will be held on Sunday from 7 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Tiffin Township Fire Station, 1258 Main St., Evansport. Pancakes, sausage, sausage gravy, biscuits, coffee and milk will be served. Cost is a free will donation. Funds raised will be used for the purchase of equipment.

Monday
Zumba exercises — The Defiance County Senior Center, 140 Broadway Ave., Defiance, holds Zumba exercises at 10 a.m. Mondays and Thursdays.

Literacy program — A free literacy program for students from kindergarten to sixth grade is being held at the McClure Branch Library from 4-5:30 p.m. Assistance with homework is offered along with snacks and games. Call the library at 419-748-8922.

TUESDAY

Hamler library fundraiser — Friends of the Hamler Public Library will hold a fundraiser on Tuesday from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. and from 5-8 p.m. at Clubhouse Pizza, Holgate.

Teen Tuesdays — Teen Tuesdays are held at the Napoleon Public Library each Tuesday at 3 p.m.

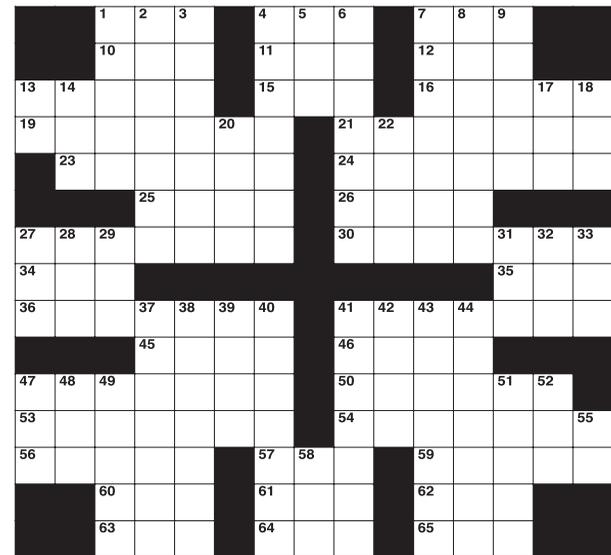
WEDNESDAY

Storytime — The Napoleon Public Library offers baby storytime for preschool children on Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

THURSDAY

Tuttle Museum — The Andrew L. Tuttle Memorial Museum is open to the public free of charge on Thursdays, except holidays, from 1-5 p.m., or by appointment, and on the first Sunday of the month from 1-4 p.m. "The City Engineer and You" exhibit will run through the Lilac Festival, which is May 14. A special exhibit of the Simplex Aircraft Corp., which was a Defiance company from 1927-32, will be on display through December. The museum is at 514 W. Third St., Defiance.

Crossword EXTRA



CLUES ACROSS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Engine additive | 36. Blood clot |
| 4. Recipe measurement (abbr.) | 41. Route |
| 7. Tooth caregiver | 45. Reach a higher position |
| 10. Hawaiian dish | 46. American state |
| 11. Retirement account | 47. Erases |
| 12. Basketball player Ming | 50. Expunge |
| 13. Say suddenly | 53. Waits around idly |
| 15. Carbon isotope ration (abbr.) | 54. Came into |
| 16. Frasier Crane's brother | 56. Nikolai __, Bolshevik theorist |
| 19. Framework over oil well | 57. 007's creator |
| 21. Edible mollusk | 59. Dravidian language |
| 23. Handy | 60. Central nervous system |
| 24. Japanese banjo | 61. Male child |
| 25. Microwave | 62. Born of |
| 26. Double-reed instrument | 63. A period of history |
| 27. Covered | 64. A major division of geological time |
| 30. Leaseholders | 65. Doctor of Education |
| 34. Master of business | |
| 35. Herb | |

CLUES DOWN

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Prods | 31. 7th letter of the Greek alphabet |
| 2. Tempest | 32. Records electrical activity |
| 3. Miserable | 33. Car mechanics group |
| 4. Excited | 37. Speaking |
| 5. Temindung Airport | 38. A formal permission |
| 6. Provides shade from the sun | 39. Exploiter |
| 7. Generators | 40. Affixed |
| 8. Newspapers | 41. External genitals |
| 9. Unaccompanied flights | 42. Deity |
| 13. Bahrain dinar | 43. Eat these with soup |
| 14. Romanian currency | 44. Swerved |
| 17. Between northeast and east | 47. Connects two pipes |
| 18. London Southend Airport | 48. Challenger |
| 20. Cucumber | 49. Ranch (Spanish) |
| 22. Lovable pig | 51. Righted |
| 27. Woman (French) | 52. Fatty-fleshed fish |
| 28. Defensive nuclear weapon | 55. Prosecutes alleged criminals |
| 29. Clutch | 58. Swiss river |

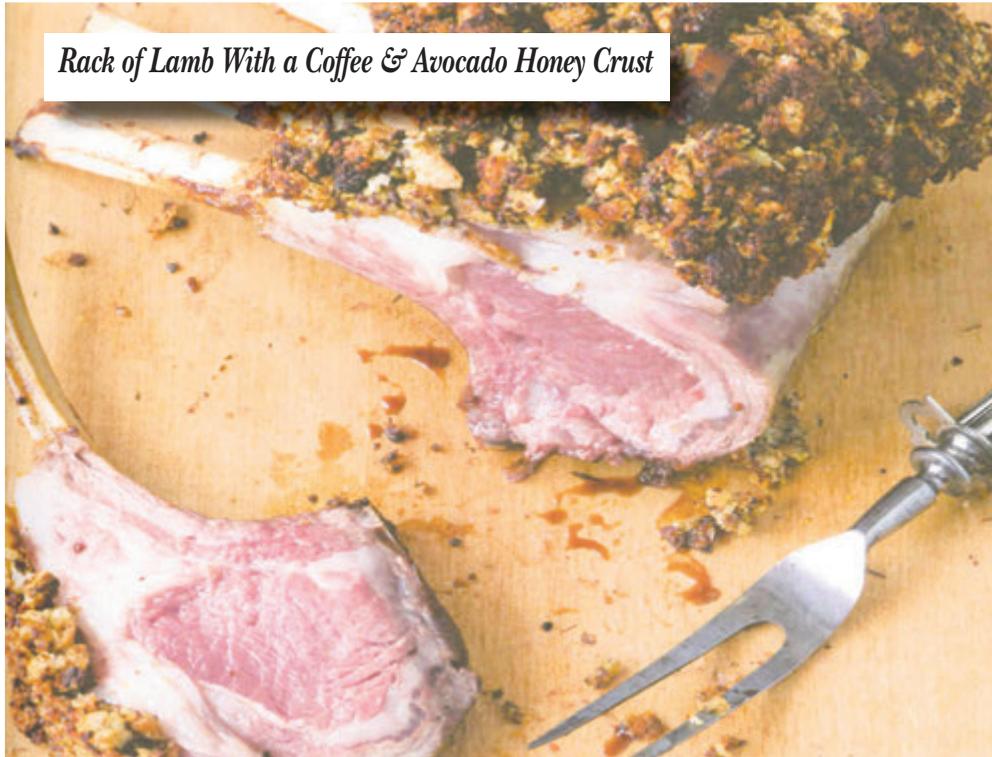
Answers in this weeks CLASSIFIED section

To advertise in the Crescent EXTRA, call 419-784-5441 - 13

Homemade eats

Take lamb to another level

Leg of lamb is a popular dish at family outings. Whether it's a holiday meal, anniversary dinner or a double date at home with friends, lamb can set the tone for a memorable night. Hosts who want to experiment with a less traditional take on lamb can try the following recipe for "Rack of Lamb With a Coffee and Avocado Honey Crust" courtesy of Laurey Masterton's "The Fresh Honey Cookbook"



Rack of Lamb With a Coffee & Avocado Honey Crust

Rack of Lamb With a Coffee & Avocado Honey Crust

Serves 4

- 1/4 cup toasted fresh bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup honey, preferably avocado honey
- 1/4 cup coarse-ground mustard
- 1 small rack of lamb (about 2 pounds)
- Sea salt
- Coarsely ground black pepper
- Granulated garlic
- 1 cup strong brewed coffee or espresso
- 1/4 cup white wine

1. Preheat the oven to 375 F.
2. Make a paste of the bread crumbs, honey and mustard in a small bowl, mixing until just combined.
3. Season the lamb rack with salt, pepper and granulated garlic. Spread the honey-mustard paste on the meat side of the rack. Place the lamb rack in a baking dish just large enough to hold it, preferably one that can also be placed directly on the stove top. Pour the coffee into the bottom of the baking dish.
4. Bake for 10 minutes, or until the crust is set, then baste with the pan drippings, trying not to dissolve the honey-mustard mixture. Continue to bake until a meat

thermometer reads 130 F, 20 minutes or longer. Keep a careful watch. If your racks are small, this may take less time. Similarly, larger racks will take longer. When the proper temperature is reached, remove from the oven. Transfer the lamb rack to a warmed plate to rest while you prepare the sauce.

5. Place the baking dish on the stove. Simmer the drippings over the medium-high heat and add the wine to deglaze the pan, stirring with a wooden spoon. Add any additional juices that might have collected on the plate from the resting lamb. Stir until the drippings and wine are well mixed and slightly thick, about 5 minutes.
6. Cut the rack into rib portions and serve with the warmed sauce.

Note: To make fresh crumbs, simply cut a few slices of bread into tiny pieces or pulse a few slices in a food processor for a few seconds. You are looking for coarse crumbs, not grains of sand. To toast, toss in a dry saucepan over medium heat for a few minutes, until the bread dries and turns golden brown.

Crescent EXTRA CLASSIFIEDS

35 In Memoriam

In loving memory
Tim Meyer
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Time slips by and life goes on But from my heart you're never gone. I think about you always, I talk about you too. I have so many memories But I wish I still had you.
Always missed by Daughter Tiffany

55 Notices

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105 General

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105 General

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105 General

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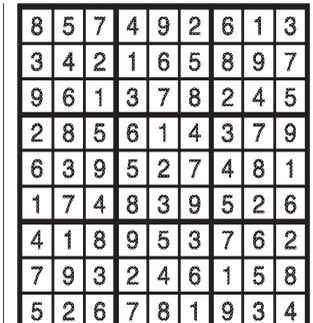
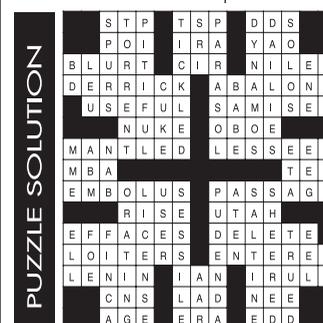
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450 Auctions / Public Sales

PUBLIC AUCTION SATURDAY April 9th @ 10 AM

PROPERTY LOCATION: 28394 Ayersville Road, Defiance, Ohio 43512
DIRECTIONS: East of Ayersville School. Watch for auction signs.

AUTOS: 2007 Ford Ranger pick-up truck (Blue) w/ 92,350 Miles, w/ Tonneau Cover 2 wheel, 2.3 liter, 2007 Mini Cooper S 6 Speed, Sunroof, all leather, 4 seater w/ 45,750 miles. Both vehicles are in excellent condition.. Auto's sell @ NOON..

SHOP & GARAGE ITEMS: Porta Cable 6" Joints, Delta 12" Planter # 22-560, Craftsman 10" Table Saw, Ridged Drum & Belt Sander, Carsean Seam Heater, Jet Mini Lave Wood Working Hand Tools, Jig Saw, Hand Planner, Hitachi 10" Compound Saw w/laser, Delta Shop master Band Saw, Ryobi 10" Bench Drill Press 5 Sp., Delta Portable Duct Collector, Delta Scroll Saw, Route Table, Delta Bench Grinder, Tool Boxes, Troy Belt Pressure Washer #500, Hammers, Misc. Wood, Tora Snow Blower(sm), Troy Bilt Garden Tiler (sm), Wheel Barrel, B&D Weed Eater/ Leaf Blower, Ladders, Craftsman 6.25 Push Mower, Gas Cans, Pipe Clamps, Rakes Hoes, Shoves, Fuji Biker, Items for Stain Glass making. Items for making pens, Garrett Metal Detector, Elite Inverter, Baseballs, Bats & Gloves, Lawn Chairs, and much more.

ANTIQUES: Quilt, Marbles, Banks, Ayersville Yr. Books (1959-1966), Tiffany Style Lamps, Corning ware (LOTS), Cedar Chest, Cookie Cutters (lots), Toy Tractors, Oil Lamp, Toy Fire Trucks, View Master, Lincoln Logs, Games, Fenton, and more.

HOUSEHOLD & APPLIANCES: Sansui Flat Screen TV, TV Stand, Magnavox DVD/CD Player, Vizio Sound Bar, Smoke Gray Leather Sofa, Chair & Ottoman, La-Z-Boy Leather (Black) Rocker /Reclines, 4 Bookcases, Hot Point Washer, Whirlpool Elect Dryer (both Like new), Gibson Fridge, 2 Small Bar Stools, GE Elect Stove(white), Singer Portable Sewing Machine, Futon, Wooden Table & 4 Chairs, 2 dressers, 2 night Stands, Full Size Head board & Rails, Metal Filing cabinets, Tom-Tom, iPad, Sm. DVD Player, Cleaning Supplies, Eureka True Clean Bagless Sweeper, Dirt Devil Shampooer, Floor Lamps, Office Supplies, Computer, Printers, Telephones, Table Lamps and more.

OWNER: Michael Browns Estate, Williams Probate #20161021- Jessica Clark Administratrix, Jilene Richard Attorney for the Estate.

NASCAR ITEMS: Lots of 1/24 & 1/64 Scale Jeff Gordon, Jeff Gordon, Jeff Gordon and others.... Bobble heads, Cups, Mugs, Plates, Trading Cards, Steins, Cereal Boxes, Coke Bottles, Boxes of Shirts & Hats, Coat, Programs, Pictures, Banks, belt buckles, Brick Yard Programs, Telephones, Lighters, Cigs, and more.

COLLECTIBLES: Comic Books (Archie, Walt Disney, Spiderman, Metrddlis & more), Aviation Books, Boy Scout Books, Scout Badges, Pins, Hats, Vest Scarfs, Tiger Yr. Books, Nasa Plates, Presidents Plates, Hummel Plates, Freedom Train, games, Campaign Buttons & Pen & Pencils, Hat Collection, Baseball card (a lot unopened..) Football cards, Basketball cards, Nascar Cards and more.

HOUSEHOLD: Wooden Table & Chairs, Radio Fence, 2 pair Cowboy Boots, Tupperware, Coffee Pots, Blender and general household.

COINS: 1oz, 5oz, 10oz, silver and a few other coins.

OWNER: Ken Wilcox

NOTE: This is a very nice auction, come out and find a treasure..

TERMS: Cash or Good Check. **MUST SHOW ID!!**

AUCTIONEERS: Dan Limber, Jeff Mock, Kendra Limber

www.auctionzip.com #7377 for pictures
Conducted by: **Dan Limber CAI, Auctioneer**



Discussion: railroad crossing obstructions

Defiance County commissioners discussed possible lengthy CSX Railroad crossing obstructions during their Monday meeting.

Commissioners also opened bids on road paving and other pavement repairs during their Monday meeting.

Sheriff David Westrick and E-911 Center director Chris Farrington met with commissioners along with Engineer Warren Schlatter to play

a recording of a 911 call on Saturday regarding a train blocking the Hire Road CSX Railroad crossing in Richland Township.

According to commissioners, a CSX employee stated that the lengths of the trains have increased to 12,000 feet, and blocked crossings will be occurring regularly.

A call was placed to Rusty Orbin of CSX to inform him of the situation and voice con-

cerns about the impact of closures on the general public and safety vehicles. A meeting will be scheduled at a future date with Orbin to discuss the impact of train lengths and blocked crossings.

The county sheriff's office has cited CSX numerous times for blocking the Hire Road crossing, but the effort apparently has had little impact.

Westrick said doubling the length of trains would only exacerbate the problem.

"I don't know what we're going to do," he said. "We want to see if they are in fact going to double the length of trains. That's why we are going to meet with them ..."

In another matter, commissioners opened bids with Schlatter on the paving of various roads, pavement markings and road crack sealing.

Only one bid was received for paving and patching of various roads. Gerken Paving Inc., Napoleon, offered a quote of \$986,889.50, well below

the engineer's estimate of \$1,364,000.

Gerken was also the low bidder from among three contractors on the paving of Cicero Road at \$519,386. Other bidders were Brooks Construction Co. Inc., Fort Wayne, Ind., \$534,928.98; and API Construction Corp., Laotto, Ind., \$624,745.05.

The engineer's estimate was \$612,000.

Ward Construction, Leipsic, was the only bidder for chip sealing work at \$219,047.69 while the engineer's estimate was \$207,000.

Meanwhile, the following bids were received for 130,985 pounds of type IV crack seal: DG Slurry Seal of Toledo, Toledo, \$132,949.78; M&M Asphalt, Edon, \$137,403; Buck Pavement Restoration, Perrysburg, \$138,000; J&A Construction, Greenville, \$142,642.67; and American Pavements Inc., Plain City, \$204,336.60.

Pavement marking bids

were received from Aero-Mark, Streetsboro (\$74,747.74) and Oglesby Construction, Norwalk (\$79,289.14). The engineer's estimate was \$74,000.

Bids for paving parking lots at the airport and county highway garage were received from Gerken Paving (\$26,175.00) and Ward Construction (\$33,050.75). The engineer's estimate was \$36,000.

Commissioners took the above bids under advisement and will award contracts at a later date.

In other business, commissioners:

- received an update from assistant county prosecutor Russ Herman on pending and imminent legal matters.

- met with county wastewater supervisor Greg Reinhart for his update.

- received a monthly update from county economic development director Jerry Hayes and his assistant, Jennifer Ort.

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8	7			2				
			1					
		1		7				
					4		7	
6				2		4		1
1						5		6
				5	3	7		
	9					1		8
5						9		4

Level: Advanced

Answers in this weeks CLASSIFIED section



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