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Welcome



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Justin Snyder

Home Show
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Welcome to the 2014 La Crosse Area Builders Association's Home Show!

Our mission is to "educate our members and advocate for affordable housing and responsible government." Our members are willing to help you be on the right track with your projects in all phases. Best of all, using the La Crosse Area Builders Association as a resource is FREE. We are proud that, for no cost, we have helped local homeowners find quality work and sound advice.

By attending our Home Show, you have the opportunity to talk directly to someone who can answer your questions, so please do! They are the experts, and they are here to help you solve a problem, fix something, build something, design something, finance something and bring innovative ideas to you and your home. So as your home projects come up, remember to check our membership directory for skilled, quality work. It's free and easy to use; just go to labaonline.com. We are more than 200 members strong.

Enjoy the La Crosse Area Builders Association's Home Show. For more than 30 years, we have been part the premier home show in the area.

See you at the show,
Brett Werner
LABA President

With spring right around the corner, you may be looking into building your dream home, remodeling your current residence or landscaping. We are looking forward to seeing you at the 2014 La Crosse Area Builders Association's Home Show.

This year, we will see some changes to our show, which will feature more than 90 local, award-winning professionals you can trust to take your project from concept to completion. We have moved the show back to March and are excited to give you the first look at what the housing industry has to offer.

As you stroll through the Home Show—passing builders, landscapers, cabinetmakers, electricians, insulators and experts in home automation, windows, doors and more—you will truly get a firsthand look at how easy it is to work with Coulee Region businesses and how much they can do for you.

Thank you to all of the Home Show committee members and the La Crosse Area Builders Association for your dedication and hard work over the months to make this show come together. We look forward to seeing you at the show!

Justin Snyder
Home Show Committee Chair

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Homes: They Are a-Changin'

Local experts offer a peek at what's new in Coulee Region home design trends.

by Jessie Foss



From open concepts to not-so-open concepts, to the use of stone over brick, to even the location of the laundry room, housing trends in the Coulee Region have changed over the years. Two area building professionals have a front-row seat to these changes and offer their perspectives:

Ryan Rugroden has drawn and designed homes for more than 22 years and has owned and operated Rugroden Drafting & Design since 2002. Deb Kees is the owner of Kees Architecture, a business she started in 2010. She is a licensed architect in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois.

The not-so-open concept

For many years, clients were looking for an open concept floor plan, one in which the kitchen, dining and living/great room are open to one another. Now clients might want the rooms open, but not necessarily together. For example, says Rugroden, in the new concept, the kitchen might be open to the dining room, but the living/great room is around a corner from the kitchen, yet open to the dining room.

Going back to traditions

Many homeowners are using larger trim—anywhere from 3½ to 5½ inches wide. Many times this trim is painted rather than stained to recall the farmhouse feel of the early 1900s. Trim is often wood, but it has become more popular to use material such as MDF, which “tends

to be more consistent, provides a good paintable surface and can take a little more traffic and wear and tear without showing it as quickly,” according to Kees.

Two-person shower vs. whirlpool tub in the master suite

“Today’s busy lifestyle just doesn’t allow for the time to wait for an 80-gallon tub to fill up and then enjoy a 20- to 30-minute bath,” Rugroden says. “Couples are getting ready for work at the same time, so I see the money being spent on an oversized walk-in shower suitable for two.”

Protecting and connecting with the environment

Home materials and finishes are continuing to use more sustainable products such as recycled-paper countertops, LED lighting and VOC paint for walls. Sliding and folding glass doors have made their way into the Midwest, Kees says, due to their energy efficiency. Even when doors aren’t possible, windows can be used because they maximize daylight and offer prime views.

Separate mudroom and laundry room

Homeowners no longer want to walk into their house and immediately see the washer, dryer and laundry. Many are now separating the two areas. The mudroom usually includes a bench,



lockers/cubbies and an overflow closet. Many are also choosing to add a “drop zone” to the mudroom. The drop zone is where cell phones can be charged, keys can be kept and mail can be dropped. The area helps keep clutter out of the kitchen. Laundry rooms are then separate and contain the washer and dryer along with a folding area, hanging area and cabinet storage.

Two-bedroom ranch homes

“For a long time, it was always thought that you had to fit three bedrooms on the main level of a ranch, and now certain demographics, especially empty-nesters, are discovering that two bedrooms on the main level work very well,” Rugroden says. He adds that having two bedrooms on the main floor allows for larger rooms when put into the same square footage of a three-bedroom layout. Many times, the second bedroom acts as both a guest bedroom and an office. A bathroom is typically located nearby that offers easy access not only to the guest bedroom, but also to the home’s entertaining area. The home’s lower level then features two bedrooms and a full bath, making it an ideal space for family visits.

Expanding living spaces outside

Exterior spaces are being treated almost like interior spaces, using staining, stamping and stone to create flooring. Trellis and arbor designs are used for ceiling canopies, and retaining walls or landscape features help define boundaries. Fireplaces or fire pits have become an area for people to gather around. A screen porch is still a popular option for our midwestern seasons as well.

Walk-in pantry

Walk-in pantries allow kitchen cabinets to be used for everyday items and provide space to store bulky appliances that are only used on special occasions. These pantries can be anything from a corner in the kitchen to a small room off the kitchen and also offer space for bulk groceries.

Separate kids’ bathrooms

Higher-end homes are featuring a bathroom with each bedroom, and homeowners who are trying to keep square footage down are featuring a bathroom that is shared between two bedrooms.

Room for lower-level entertaining

People want an area where they can watch the big game. The lower level of a home is great for this and can include a full bar, gaming area and theater room.

Four-car garages

Homeowners also want room for toys such as boats, campers and motorcycles. Rugroden says that, when designed correctly, a garage’s size doesn’t have to overwhelm the rest of the house.

Don’t forget the entryway

“Paying a great deal of attention to an entryway is also very important,” Kees says. “Although we usually live from our vehicle to our garage and often never use a formal entryway, the entry still plays a significant role in how a home is recognized or navigated by others.” She says an entryway acts as a transition that makes a home welcoming. A successful entryway provides shelter, is comfortable and defines itself with character as it announces itself at the entry point to a home.

Stone accents

Rugroden is seeing more requests for stone accents versus brick accents. “With this beautiful area we live in and call the Coulee Region, stone accents tend to tie the new home into its natural surroundings,” he says.

Staying put

Many homeowners love where they live, but need more space or are ready to give their home a new look. Remodeling is the answer.

Jessie Foss is a freelance writer who lives in La Crosse.

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Assess Your Home's Efficiency with an Energy Audit

National Association of Home Builders

Conducting a do-it-yourself home energy audit is a fast, relatively simple way to assess how much energy your home consumes and how you can make your home more energy efficient.

A home energy audit will show you where your home is losing energy, how efficient your heating and cooling systems are and ways to conserve electricity. Just inspect the areas listed here and keep a checklist of the problems you found.

Air leaks

Stopping or minimizing drafts can save 5 to 30 percent of your annual energy costs. Some places to inspect where air commonly seeps from homes include gaps around baseboards, wall and ceiling junctures, electrical outlets, switch plates, window frames, weather stripping, fireplace dampers, attic doors, window-mounted air conditioners and foundation seals.

On your home's exterior, look at the areas where two different building materials meet, such as corners, and areas where siding or brick come together with chimneys or the foundation. If you can rattle windows or see daylight around door or window frames, you likely are losing air.

Once you've identified the leaks, seal them with caulk, weather stripping or the same material as the original seal. Replacing windows with new, high-performance ones will improve your home's energy efficiency and can give you a break on your taxes. An inexpensive alternative is to attach plastic sheets around your windows.

Insulation

In older homes especially, the amount of insulation in the ceiling and walls may be insufficient for current standards. See if your attic

door is insulated and closes tightly. Openings around pipes, ductwork and chimneys should be sealed. Look for a vapor barrier—tarpaper or a plastic sheet—under the attic insulation. To check your walls, make a small hole in a closet or other out-of-the-way place and probe into the wall with a long stick or screwdriver. The area should be completely filled with an insulating material.

Fill the gaps in any openings with expanding foam. Flexible caulk should be used to seal any electrical boxes in the ceiling. If your home lacks a vapor barrier, consider painting interior ceilings with vapor barrier paint. This reduces the amount of water vapor that can pass through the ceiling and reduce your insulation's effectiveness.

Heating and cooling equipment

Inspect your heating and cooling equipment. See if ducts and pipes that are located in unheated spaces and your water heater and hot water pipes are insulated. Have your equipment checked and cleaned by a professional annually. If you have a forced-air furnace, replace your filters every 30 to 60 days. Consider replacing units that are more than 15 years old with new, energy-efficient ones.

Lighting

Look at the bulbs in your home and determine if a lower-watt bulb would work just as well for your needs. If you have an area where lights are on for extended periods of time, a compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) can save up to 75 percent of the lighting energy of an incandescent bulb.

A home audit is a great way to find out your home's energy deficiencies and make simple improvements that will save you time and money in the long run.

LABA—YOUR HOME-BUILDING RESOURCE

WHAT LABA IS

The La Crosse Area Builders Association is a nonprofit trade organization uniting 210 building-related companies in western Wisconsin. We educate our members on the latest in the building industry, are advocates of the building industry, provide networking opportunities and run the Parade of Homes and Home Show.

WHAT LABA DOES

The La Crosse Area Builders Association works to better the building industry; we are watchdogs for changes that can affect home building and remodeling. We offer a membership of trained, qualified and insured builders and tradespeople to the consumer. We do the homework so consumers can build, remodel or repair their homes with confidence in our members. From builders to electricians, plumbers, concrete, roofers, landscapers, fireplaces, stone work, heating and air, they and so many more affect the work on your most expensive purchase ... your home.

WHY USE LABA

LABA members are insured, sign a code of ethics and do continuing education to keep up with industry standards. One phone call can open doors to having a better experience when doing home projects. When choosing to work with a LABA member, you can feel confident that they are not a fly-by-night business. You can feel confident that they have ties to the community and often do service projects to help build a better community in which to work and live.

We get calls all the time from consumers who are having issues with their builder or someone doing work on their home who is not a member of the La Crosse Area Builders Association, and all the calls end the same way: "Next time I am going to call LABA before I hire someone." Our list of members is FREE to everyone and is available on our website at www.labaonline.com. We are your first call or place to search for help with your home!



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The La Crosse Area Builders Association will be presenting their new DIY (Do It Yourself) Expo on Friday and Saturday, May 9 and 10. This first-time expo will give you the chance to learn from experts. This expo is for those who want to learn to “do it themselves”—or who think they do! This is your chance to ask questions and see demonstrations.

The expo will feature local businesses who will present on topics like flooring, gardening, window installation and curbside appeal. The expo will also feature ways to improve health and wellness, explore hobbies and learn basics in many different industries. This new expo will showcase those on the cutting edge of the DIY movement. Thrifty home repairs are all the rage right now—let our DIY Expo show you just how to do it yourself!

Learn more about the DIY Expo online at www.lacrossediexpo.com.

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