



DID YOU KNOW? – July 2009

This month includes:

- **Universal Design Primer**
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Universal Design Primer

In the 1980's, architect Ron Mace coined the term Universal Design. The idea behind Universal Design is very simple ... a home that makes day-to-day living and home tasks possible and safer for everyone, allowing a person to remain independent for as long as possible (Source: Residential Rehabilitation, Remodeling and Universal Design, NC State College of Design). With an aging population, Universal design is becoming more important. According to the AARP, there will be 40 million Americans over the age of 65 in 2010 and more than 85% of older Americans plan to stay in their homes for the rest of their lives. Using Universal Design helps allow a person to remain in their home for as long as possible or handle life changes, including health issues, aging, or assuming responsibility for elderly parents.

Features of Universal Design can be as simple as lever handles for doors, soft-touch light switches, and nonslip bathtubs. In the kitchen, there are a number of items to help make the space as usable as possible, including:

- Varied countertop heights to accommodate multiple cooks
- Easily accessible storage is accessible, whether standing or seated
- Undercounter refrigerator/freezer drawers for better accessibility
- Increased use of drawers, rollouts, and lazy susans to improve access (right)
- Walk-ways between cabinets should be 48" wide



- Cooktop or Range with front or side-mounted controls for ease of use and eliminating reaching over burners
- Cabinets with additional kneespace at sink and near cooking appliances (left)
- Countertop height Microwave with uninterrupted counter surface to support the transfer of hot/heavy cookware

Additional information on Universal Design can be found at www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/ .

Design Trends

Based on a recent trend survey by the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the housing market continues to be sluggish and many upscale products/features are losing their appeal. In spite of these challenging times, there are a number of items in continuing demand by the homeowner. Pantry space remains highly desirable in the kitchen. With the growing interest in recycling, a dedicated recycling center in the kitchen is becoming popular. With the ongoing increase in electronic devices (internet, phones), kitchen designs are integrating a work space for computer use and recharging. Conversely, the inclusion of wine refrigerators, built in espresso/coffeemakers, and double-islands are becoming less popular than a year ago.

Features promoting accessibility (Universal Design), energy saving devices, and environmental initiatives continue to gain in desirability. This includes water saving plumbing fixtures, flooring/countertops made from renewable and recycled material, and water filtration devices.

Granite Myths – Part One

Myth #1 - Granite is Expensive: Most homeowners think of granite as a beautiful countertop option, but also a very costly one. In fact, the price of granite has dropped significantly in recent years ... approximately 20%. Today, it's often priced lower than some engineered stone (quartz). Considering its durability and natural beauty, granite is a legitimate option for many home improvement projects.

Myth #2 – Granite will Stain: This is perhaps one of the more enduring myths surrounding granite. Granite is exceptionally stain resistant, more so than many synthetic materials, including laminates and solid surface plastics. For years, architects have used granite as an external cladding surface in commercial buildings because of its ability to withstand nature's elements and retain its original beauty.

Myth #3 – Granite will Lose its Shine: Granite is an extremely dense substance. Diamonds are one of the few materials harder than granite, which is why diamond pads are used to polish it. Normal household activities simply do not introduce sufficient abrasion to dull the surface. Rest assured that your granite countertops will maintain their brand new shine for decades to come.

Myth #4—Granite Cannot be Repaired: Granite can indeed be repaired, it just doesn't break very easily or very often, so no one is making a living repairing it. If granite chips or cracks (which can happen if it is struck with a heavy object), it can often be refinished or repaired with colored epoxies.

We hope you find our newsletter helpful. If you have any questions about Universal Design, the latest trends or would like to talk about a kitchen, bath, or home office redesign, please give us a call (317-848-1111), stop by our showroom in Carmel Indiana, or send us an email at info@theKitchenWright.com.