



# ON THE HOUSE

Ideas for Improving Your Home

SUMMER 2008 Volume 1 Number 1



## Client Focus

# Creating an “Open” House

Homes built in the late 60s and early 70s featured rooms that tended to be closed off from other rooms, as well as dark finishings. As the original owners of these homes move out, however, we are seeing that the new owners prefer a more open layout, and an airier, lighter feel. That occurred with a recent client, who had purchased a 40-year-old, 3500-square foot ranch home in Chicago’s northern suburbs.

“Nothing on the inside had been modernized or redecorated in years,” the client said. “The kitchen was very dark. There was a wall that separated the kitchen and family room and another wall separating the family room from the living room. We were looking for a more open and modern type design using the same room sizes.”

The client retained Forde Windows and Remodeling to make these changes. To meet the owners’ needs, Forde removed walls separating the various rooms, and also remodeled several rooms, according to Maurice Forde, owner of Forde Windows and Remodeling. Among the key improvements:

- The wall separating the family room and the kitchen was opened, and the door separating the family room from the living room was enlarged.
- Skylights were installed in the family room.
- The ceiling in the living room was raised by two feet.
- The kitchen was completely redesigned. Old cabinets and a Corian countertop were removed and all new cabinets and countertops were put in.



Additional electrical work was also done.

- Three bathrooms were completely remodeled. In the master bath, a master closet was added for increased storage. A new sink, whirlpool tub and shower were also installed. The hall

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From Maurice

## Welcome to "On the House"

As the owner of Forde Windows and Remodeling, I would like to welcome you to this first issue of *On the House*.

The objective of *On the House* is to provide you with information that can make your home a more comfortable, enjoyable place to live. We'll tell you how we have helped other homeowners improve their homes. And we will also provide you with tips on things you can do in our "You Can Do It" section. For example, in this issue, we will provide you with tips for making your home more energy efficient during the summer months.

These tips are in keeping with a request we are seeing more and more frequently from our customers – requests for "green remodeling."

There are four areas of "green remodeling:" waste disposal; air quality issues; carbon footprint (where supplies come from and the energy it takes to get them to the site); and energy efficiency.

People are concerned with energy efficiency for environmental and cost reasons. You probably already know that you can purchase energy-efficient air conditioning units and furnaces to help you save a significant amount of money on energy costs. But you may not know that if your house is not properly sealed, you probably are wasting excessive amounts of energy that even the most energy-efficient units cannot make up for.

In every house, there is a certain amount of leakage that allows air to come in from the outside. In the summer, that is warm air; in the winter, it is cold air. As this air comes in, it forces the air conditioning unit or furnace to work harder to keep the house comfortable. In some houses, these units have to work 30% harder because of this leakage. Even if the house is properly insulated, it will only be effective if there is no potential for air to leak in.

Where does this air come from? The obvious answer is doors and windows. But there are other areas. These include the basement right under the floor joist, entry areas for plumbing pipes and dryer vents, and the area where the first row of wood sits on top of the foundation.

There are certainly things homeowners can do, such as placing plastic over windows. But there are also things we do routinely as part of our project. We look to identify areas that potentially waste energy. We use candle tests and smoke tests and other methods. When we find areas of leakage, we seal them.

If you want more information about making your house "green" or if you have other ideas for this newsletter, please e-mail us at [info@fordedesignbuild.com](mailto:info@fordedesignbuild.com)

Think green.

*Maurice*

## "Open" House (continued from page 1)



bath was also completely gutted. More modern fixtures were installed, and tile was put on the floor and walls. In the powder room, a pedestal sink was installed to open up the room. The wood floor from the family room was extended into the bathroom. And a fan was installed for improved ventilation.

- Additionally, the laundry room was redesigned, all trim in the house was redone, and new windows and doors were installed throughout the home.

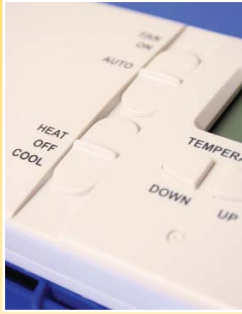
As with all projects such as this, there were challenges. For example, removing walls created challenges to make sure the room would be adequately supported. "We had to use some special framing techniques," Forde said. "It took a lot of engineering."

The client offers this advice for people considering a similar project. "In a long project such as this, you want to select a contractor who fits your personality because you will have a lot of face time with them. You want to make sure you like them and trust them because there are a lot of things that may not be apparent when you are going into the project. So we were fortunate that we could trust Forde that they were steering us in the right direction."



## Save Energy This Summer

The average homeowner spends about \$1,900 a year on energy costs. In the spirit of going “green” and saving money, here are some energy saving tips you can employ this summer.



**Turn up your thermostat.** For each degree your thermostat is set above 72 degrees, you save 1% to 3% of energy per degree. And keep your thermostat set higher when you are away.



**Replace air conditioner filters.** You should replace your filters (or wash them) monthly for maximum benefit.



**Use your drapes and window shades.** Blocking the sunlight from entering your home will keep your house cooler.



**Use electric lawn mowers and grass and hedge trimmers** instead of gas-powered products. Many professionals even use manual trimmers.



**Use your microwave oven.** It will use less energy and produce much less heat waste than a regular stove.



### New Product Corner

## Dryerbox Saves Energy and Space

Homeowners frequently complain that they lose valuable space in their laundry room because the hose connecting the dryer to the exhaust pipe just sits on the floor. Often, more than five inches of space is wasted.

In designing the laundry room for a recent project, Forde used an innovative new product called Dryerbox that allowed the client to put the dryer flush against the wall, thus gaining valuable space in the laundry room.

The dryerbox installs right into the drywall, and the hose fits into the dryerbox, allowing the dryer to be placed flush against the wall. In addition to the enhanced space, other benefits include:

- Increased energy efficiency and resulting cost savings, as the hose is not “squished” to save space
- Increased safety, eliminating service calls
- Less chance that socks and other laundry will drop behind the dryer

More information is available at [www.dryerbox.com](http://www.dryerbox.com)



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Meet the Forde Team

## Meet Steve Johnson



When you work with Forde, chances are you will be spending a lot of quality time with production manager Steve Johnson. Steve is the day-to-day face of our company. He runs every project, working with the subcontractors, coordinating with inspectors and, most importantly, constantly talking to our clients.

“Many of our jobs are very complex,” Johnson says. “So it is important to keep up regular communications with our clients to let them know exactly where we are in the process, and to assure them their needs are top of mind.”

Steve joined Forde six years ago, and has worked as a carpenter for six years. In addition to being a certified lead carpenter, Steve is accredited by the National Kitchen and Bath Association, and is a certified window and door installer. Steve lives in Plainfield with his wife of 13 years and two sons.

### **Congratulations Steve and Anthony**

Congratulations to Steve Johnson and Anthony Bernal, two members of the Forde team who were just certified as InstallationMasters™ by the American Architectural Manufacturers Association. The designation means Johnson and Bernal have joined a select group of certified window and door installers for new construction and remodeling projects.