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Go Outside and Do SOMETHING!

Anything to get your heart rate up,
and your blood flowing...

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Kandiyohi County



Meeker County



Renville County



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Attorney	231-6200
Auditor/Treasurer	231-6202
Community Corrections	231-6222
Community Services	231-2719
Facility Management	231-7070
Information Systems	231-6204
Emergency Management	235-5133
Environmental Health	231-6283
Extension Services	231-7890
Hazardous Waste	231-3587
Human Resources	231-6215
License Registrar	231-6205
Family Services	231-7800
Public Health	231-7860
Public Works	235-3266
Recorder	231-6223
Recycling Center	231-3487
Sheriff	235-1260
Surveyor	231-2844
Veterans Services	231-6226
Vital Statistics	231-6532
Zoning	231-6229

MEEKER COUNTY

Administrator	(320) 693-5200
Assessor	693-5205
Attorney	693-5220
Auditor/Treasurer	693-5212
Court Administration	693-5230
Court Services	693-5260
Highway	693-5360
Extension Services	693-5275
Parks & Recreation	693-5450
Planning & Zoning	693-5290
Public Health	693-5370
Recorder	693-5440
Sheriff	693-5400
Social Services	693-5300
Treasurer	693-5345
Veterans Services	693-5445

RENVILLE COUNTY

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Attorney	523-2661
Auditor/Treasurer	523-2071
Court Administration	523-3680
Court Services	523-3663
Environment & Community Development	523-3768
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Spring Preparations

1. Test your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms.
 2. Drain approximately 2 gallons from your water heater to eliminate sediment.
 3. Clean your clothes dryer vent duct.
 4. Vacuum your bathroom vent covers.
 5. Replace or clean your furnace filter.
 6. Clean out your basement window wells.
 7. Clean your refrigerator's condenser coils to keep it operating efficiently.
 8. Clean around your air conditioning compressor and make sure that it gets sufficient air flow.
- 
- A close-up photograph of a hand with the index finger pointing towards a white, circular vent cover. The vent cover has a small red mark on its surface. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Gutters

Cleaning

Using a ladder and handheld gardening trowel, scoop out decomposing leaves and other debris. (This can be repurposed as mulch or compost). Use a hose to blast out remaining debris from gutters and downspouts. If you experience a clog in the downspout a plumbing snake can be used to clear the obstruction. This will prevent the weight of water and debris that make the gutters saggy and they will last longer.

Gutter Spikes

Look at all the spikes and make sure they are going all the way through fascia board into the rafters. Sometimes these spikes get worked out of the wood, and cause separation from the house. Replacement spikes can be purchased to prevent gutters from becoming damaged.

Cracks and Leaks

Caulking can break down over time, creating cracks or holes that may cause leaks. It is possible to make the repairs yourself. Using a putty knife or chisel, scrape away existing caulking and let it dry completely. Once dry, apply new caulking to seal the cracks or holes to prevent fascia boards from rotting.



*K*andiyohi County was established in 1858 with the city of Kandiyohi as its original county seat. The area was comprised of Kandiyohi and then Monongalia Counties until 1870 when the two counties were merged. Willmar was selected as the new county seat in 1871 due to its central location and the name Kandiyohi, a Dakota word for buffalo fish, was selected for the new territory. Railroad development allowed for growth and industry was dominated by agriculture. Kandiyohi County continued to grow and by 1900 its population reached 18,146. It has since become a popular region for recreational activities due to the many lakes found within its borders. Today Kandiyohi County is home to approximately 41,123 residents.

ATWATER – pop. 1,036

BLOMKEST – pop. 173

KANDIYOHI – pop. 533

LAKE LILLIAN – pop. 247

NEW LONDON – pop. 1,343

PENNOCK – pop. 500

PRINSBURG – pop. 454

RAYMOND – pop. 771

REGAL – pop. 38

SPICER – pop. 1,098

SUNBURG – pop. 101

WILLMAR (COUNTY SEAT) – pop. 17,907

**Populations are approximate.*

ATWATER

First known as Summit Lake, Atwater was established in 1869. The community was renamed in honor of E.D. Atwater, railroad secretary and the area grew dramatically with the arrival of the railroad. By 1880 the community was incorporated and housed grain elevators and a variety of businesses. A fire in 1891 nearly destroyed the community, but residents quickly rebuilt. Today Atwater is home to approximately 1,036 residents.

BLOMKEST

Blomkest was originally known as Kester and established as a railway village. Streets were platted in 1926 and the community was renamed Blomkest. The name Blomkest commemorates the original townsite and early settler Ole Blomquist. Blomkest was incorporated in 1952 and has remained an agricultural community. Today Blomkest is home to approximately 173 residents.

KANDIYOHI

Kandiyohi was established in 1868 and named after the nearby lakes. As the railroad was constructed in 1869 the community was almost selected to be the state capital for Minnesota, but was vetoed by Governor William Rainey Marshall. Streets were platted, a post office was founded and the community was incorporated in 1904. Today Kandiyohi is home to approximately 533 residents.

LAKE LILLIAN

Lake Lillian was first explored in 1856 and a post office was established in 1868. The community was named after Lillian Whitefield, wife of Edwin Whitefield, an artist and author who had settled in the area. As rail lines were constructed, the area began to grow and in 1926 Lake Lillian was incorporated. Today Lake Lillian is home to approximately 247 residents.

NEW LONDON

The construction of a sawmill in 1856 sparked the development of New London and a post office was established in 1867. The name New London was suggested by Louis Larson in honor of his Wisconsin hometown and the community was selected as a temporary county seat. In 1889 New London was incorporated and construction of the railroad allowed for growth. Today New London is home to approximately 1,343 residents.

PENNOCK

Originally known as St. John's, Pennock was established in 1870 as a railway village. A post office was established the following year with Erick G. Berglund serving as its first postmaster. The community was renamed in 1891 after railway superintendent George Pennock and in 1903 Pennock was incorporated. Today Pennock is home to approximately 500 residents.

PRINSBURG

Prinsburg was founded in 1884 as Martin Prins and Theodore Koch purchased over 35,000 acres of land for the railroad. Prins offered to partially fund a church as long as at least 20 families arrived to stake land claims. Over 40 lots were sold and the community was named in his honor. Streets were platted in 1886 and a post office was established the following year. Today Prinsburg is home to approximately 454 residents.

Kandiyohi County Communities

RAYMOND

Raymond was platted in 1887 and named in honor of Raymond Spicer, son of John M. Spicer who founded Willmar. The community was incorporated in 1897 and the area continued to grow. It is known as being the birthplace of chemist William A. Mitchell, who patented over 70 products including Tang, Pop Rocks, and Jell-O. Today Raymond is home to approximately 771 residents.

REGAL

First known as Lintonville, the community was settled in 1886 as the railroad was constructed. A post office was established in 1887 and the area continued to grow. The name Regal was suggested by George Weidner and the community was renamed by popular vote in 1915 and incorporated in 1940. Today Regal is home to approximately 38 residents.

SPICER

Founded on the abandoned townsite of Columbia, Spicer was platted in 1886 and named in honor of president of the railroad construction company, John M. Spicer. A post office was established with Burton B. Swetland serving as the first postmaster, who also operated the first general store and tourist boat on Green Lake. Spicer was incorporated in 1904 and has since become a haven for recreational enthusiasts. Today Spicer is home to approximately 1,098 residents.

SUNBURG

The community of Sunburg was established by settlers in 1870 that had anticipated the arrival of the railroad. The name Sunburg, suggested by postmaster John Sandvigen, was derived from the Norwegian word sund, meaning a strait between two lakes. Sunburg was incorporated in 1951 and has remained an agricultural community. Today Sunburg is home to approximately 101 residents.

WILLMAR (COUNTY SEAT)

Willmar was founded in 1869 as the railroad was constructed. The community was named by railroad president George Becker, in honor of European investor Leon Willmar. In 1871 Willmar was selected as the county seat and incorporated in 1874. The community continued to develop as businesses were established to meet the growing needs of the community. It has since become a destination for recreational enthusiasts, with its many parks and proximity to a variety of lakes. Today Willmar is home to approximately 17,907 residents.



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Meeker County History



*M*eeker County was established in 1856 and named in honor of Associate Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court, Bradley B. Meeker. Forest City was originally selected as the county seat and the area began to grow with construction of the railroad. Early industry was dominated by agriculture with residents raising wheat, oats, flax and barley. The county seat was moved to Litchfield in 1869 and by 1900 the population of Meeker County had reached 17,773. After 1920 agriculture began to shift towards dairy production with many residents joining the Land O'Lakes Creamery. It has remained a close-knit community and is now one of Minnesota's top poultry and dairy producing regions. Today Meeker County is home to approximately 23,154 residents.

CEDAR MILLS – pop. 53

COSMOS – pop. 553

DARWIN – pop. 308

DASSEL – pop. 1,326

EDEN VALLEY – pop. 951

GROVE CITY – pop. 579

KINGSTON – pop. 120

LITCHFIELD (COUNTY SEAT) – pop. 6,555

WATKINS – pop. 927

**Populations are approximate.*

Meeker County Communities

CEDAR MILLS

Cedar Mills was founded in 1860 and named after nearby Cedar Lake. The community was organized in 1870 with a post office and railroad development sparked growth. In 1922 streets were platted and by 1950 Cedar Mills was incorporated. Today Cedar Mills is home to approximately 53 residents.

COSMOS

Cosmos was first settled in 1867 and the community was named by Daniel Hoyt, a local resident and surveyor, after the Greek word for harmony and order. The first post office was established in 1870 and the community began to develop with the arrival of the railroad. Streets were platted in 1923 and the community was incorporated in 1926. Today Cosmos is home to approximately 553 residents.

DARWIN

First known as Rice City, Darwin was organized in 1858. In 1862 a post office was founded and the construction of the railroad allowed for growth. Streets were platted in 1869 and the community was renamed in honor of railroad promoter and stockholder E. Darwin Litchfield. Darwin is now widely recognized for having the world's largest ball of twine, built by Francis A. Johnson. Today Darwin is home to approximately 308 residents.

DASSEL

Settled in 1856, Dassel was first recognized as Swan Lake. Streets were platted in 1869 by Parker Simmons and the community was renamed in 1871 after Bernard Dassel, railroad secretary. A post office was established and the area continued to grow as the railroad was developed. By 1890 Dassel housed a hotel, sawmill, general store and a variety of specialty shops. Today Dassel is home to approximately 1,326 residents.

EDEN VALLEY

Located in Meeker and Stearns Counties, Eden Valley was settled in 1856. The community was first known as Pappelbush and was renamed by officers of the railroad. Eden Valley was organized in 1867 and streets were platted in 1886. By 1894 the community was incorporated and housed a post office, general store and assortment of specialty shops. Today Eden Valley is home to approximately 951 residents.

GROVE CITY

Grove City was first settled in 1869 and recognized as Swede Grove. Streets were platted in 1870 and as the railroad arrived, the community was renamed Grove City. In 1878 Grove City was incorporated and businesses were established to meet the growing needs of the area. Today Grove City is home to approximately 579 residents.

KINGSTON

Settlers arrived to the Kingston area in 1856 as they traveled along the Crow River. The first post office was established the following year and the name Kingston was suggested by George A. Nourse, a lawyer from St. Anthony. Streets were platted in 1871 and the community was incorporated in 1961. Today Kingston is home to approximately 120 residents.

LITCHFIELD (COUNTY SEAT)

First recognized as Ripley and later Ness, Litchfield was founded in 1856. The community was renamed Litchfield in honor of the Litchfield family who helped finance the construction of the railroad in 1862 and were avid with the development of the area. Streets were platted in 1869 and the community was selected as the county seat. A post office was established and Litchfield was incorporated in 1872. Litchfield continued to grow as the fertile soil and ample water of nearby Lake Ripley attracted new residents. Today Litchfield is home to approximately 6,555 residents.

WATKINS

Watkins was established as a railway village in 1886 on land owned by Danville D. Spaulding. The community was named by the railroad company and the first post office was established in 1887. In 1893 Watkins was incorporated and the area continued to develop. Today Watkins is home to approximately 927 residents.

LARGEST BALL OF TWINE

Francis Johnson, son of a U.S. congressman, began rolling what came to be the largest twine ball in the world in 1950. Johnson kept the twine ball rolling even when it became so huge and heavy that he could no longer move it by hand. At that point, he used railroad jacks to push the ball and add more twine! Completed in 1979, the impressively rounded ball of twine now sits in a large gazebo in Darwin's Twine Ball Museum, where visitors can pose for snapshots near the quirky accomplishment.

Join Darwin's Twine Ball Days festival on the second Saturday of August for loads of additional family fun! The festival features a Minn-e-Rods tractor pull down Main Street, a parade, live music, sand volleyball tournaments, and more! Don't miss the souvenir shop, which is a sight to see as well.





Renville County was established in 1855 and named in honor of Joseph Renville, a local explorer, trader, scout, interpreter and soldier. Beaver Falls was originally selected as the county seat and the region began to develop upon construction of the railroad. Agriculture led the area's industry and due to the marshy soil, drainage ditches were built to make the land more tillable. By 1900 its population had reached 23,693 and the county seat was moved to Olivia after much controversy. The area is now comprised of over 3,000 miles of drainage ditch to allow for better farming and is home to one of the oldest known rocks in Minnesota, the Rainbow Gneiss. Today Renville County is home to approximately 15,718 residents.

BIRD ISLAND – pop. 1,100

BUFFALO LAKE – pop. 725

DANUBE – pop. 472

FAIRFAX – pop. 1,195

FRANKLIN – pop. 461

HECTOR – pop. 1,062

MORTON – pop. 398

OLIVIA (COUNTY SEAT) – pop. 2,341

REDWOOD FALLS – pop. 5,088

RENVILLE – pop. 1,194

SACRED HEART – pop. 487

**Populations are approximate.*

BIRD ISLAND

Attracted to the ample timber, Bird Island was first settled in 1872. Its name was derived from a nearby island that was a refuge for birds and streets were platted in 1878. The arrival of the railroad sparked growth and a post office and general store were established. As ditches were constructed, the island for which it was named slowly disappeared, leaving behind fertile soil. Today Bird Island is home to approximately 1,100 residents.

FAIRFAX

Fairfax was founded on land owned by Edmond O'Hara and first known as Cairo. Streets were platted in 1882 and the first post office was established by Luke T. Grady. The community was incorporated in 1888 and as the railroad was constructed, the community was renamed Fairfax by Eben Ryder, railroad president. Today Fairfax is home to approximately 1,195 residents.

HECTOR

Hector was settled in 1873 and first known as Milford. The community was renamed after Hector, New York, the birthplace of many settlers. The first post office was established in 1875 with John Baker serving as postmaster. As the railroad arrived in 1878, streets were platted and Hector was incorporated in 1881. Today Hector is home to approximately 1,062 residents.

OLIVIA (COUNTY SEAT)

Settlers arrived to the Olivia area in 1878 as they were attracted to the fertile soil. Streets were platted and the community was named by Albert Bowman Rogers, a railroad engineer. The development of the railroad allowed for growth and businesses were established to meet the growing needs of the community. Isaac Lincoln served as the area's first postmaster in 1879 and in 1901 Olivia successfully battled Beaver Falls. Olivia is now widely recognized as the Corn Capital of the World, celebrating Corn Capital Days annually. Today Olivia is home to approximately 2,341 residents.

REDWOOD FALLS

Located in Redwood and Renville Counties, Redwood Falls was first settled in 1864 by Colonel Sam McPhail. Streets were platted the following year and the community was named after the falls of the Redwood River. Redwood Falls was incorporated in 1876 and the area grew with the development of the railroad. By 1900 the area boasted a post office, newspaper, a variety of businesses and was selected as the county seat for Redwood County. Today Redwood Falls is home to approximately 5,088 residents.

RENVILLE

Renville was established as a railway village and platted in 1878. The community was named in honor of Joseph Renville, whom which the county is also named. By 1900 its population had reached 250 and in 1906 Renville was incorporated. It is now widely recognized as having the largest sugar beet processing plant in the world. Today Renville is home to approximately 1,194 residents.

SACRED HEART

Sacred Heart was first settled in 1866 and a post office was established in 1870 with G.P. Greene serving as the area's first postmaster. Railroad development sparked growth and in 1878 streets were platted. By 1883 Sacred Heart was incorporated and housed grain elevators, general stores, hardware stores, hotels and a saloon. Today Sacred Heart is home to approximately 487 residents.

Spice Up Your Garage



Storage

Once you have established the room needed for vehicle storage, it's time to consider storing other things. A hanging bike rack is a great way to free up space on the floor. Open shelving for tools and building materials can also be very convenient and cost friendly.

Insulation

If you plan on working in the garage during the winter months this will be very important for keeping down heating costs and staying comfortable.

Internet

Since we are living in the future now and internet is everywhere, why not have it in the garage? If your wireless from the house does not reach, you may want to get a range extender. It is very helpful to have access to tutorials or online music playlists when working on projects and spending long periods of time in the garage.

Plumbing

If your garage is heated, then you may have water running to the garage. If so, why not install a utility sink and possibly a bathroom? These additions are very convenient when it comes to not dragging a mess from the garage into the house.

Furnishings

Sometimes the garage is a great place to get away. There are a lot of different ways to make the space a little more comfortable. It is pretty easy to find an old television, an old couch or futon, and a fridge. If you are looking for a way to get out of the house without leaving home, these few things that could have you relaxing in no time.

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Home Improvements

You have a better chance collecting on your investment when spending money toward basic home maintenance such as new siding rather than remodeling a kitchen or bathroom. Siding replacement has been known to recover approximately 93 percent of its cost, according to studies. The only home improvement that may be likely to return more at resale is a minor kitchen remodel, which has been known to return roughly 93 percent. Replacing roofs and windows have also been known to have a high return, returning 80 percent or more at resale.

Kitchens and Baths

Spending the money for a kitchen or bath remodel is a solid investment, often returning more than 100 percent of the cost. Minor kitchen remodels also provided returns of more than 100 percent in certain areas upon resale.

When it comes to decide exactly what to improve in your kitchen or bathroom, think traditional. Wood cabinets, commercial appliances, natural wood or stone floors and stone countertops. Walk in showers have replaced whirlpool tubs as the necessity in bathroom remodeling. Most people would rather have a shower than bath if they can only choose one.

Written By: Jonathan Peterson



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Swimming Pools

There are two types of pools; above-ground and in-ground. A pool is a very big investment no matter which direction you go with it. Both above-ground and in-ground pools are a pretty big commitment. However, if comfort and convenience is what you are looking for, a swimming pool is money well spent.

Upkeep

Both above-ground and in-ground pools will require all the same general maintenance such as chemical balance and filtering. Now, thinking in long term, an above-ground pool can be torn down for storage or an up-grade or you can even reposition it at your convenience. In-ground pools are more permanent and may require structural maintenance at some point, so keep in mind that an in-ground pool is a big commitment.

Appearance

In-ground pools can be built to have a lasting, very attractive appearance. This can dramatically change the appearance of the yard. There are many directions you can go with lighting and landscaping. Above-ground pools can be a nice addition to the house by building a deck, and can also be tucked away into a corner so you still have a yard.

Customization

If you are looking for a very unique custom made look, the in-ground pool is the way to go. There are two options, you can have a concrete pool custom designed to look any way your imagination can come up with. Or if you are looking for something a little easier you can go with the pre-manufactured fiberglass style. The above-ground pools have fewer options available as far as custom shapes, however, there is still plenty that can be done by building a structure around it, or doing some landscaping. Zoning regulations/ordinances dictate that fencing around swimming pools is required by most communities.

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Whirlpool Installation

How do I know what will fit?

Now, before you even go shopping and get your heart set on something, know your limitations. Measure the space you want to fill with the whirlpool. Most come in three sizes ranging from 5-6 ft. in length. You also need to consider that there is going to be extra machinery and tubing going into this project. Also, consider how big you want the deck of the tub to be in case you like candles and that sort of thing close to you while you're in the water. Also, get the measurements of any doors or hallways you will have to pass through.

Will the existing floor support the extra weight?

If you're working with a wood joist floor type of construction, you will need to consider tub weight plus how much it will weigh full of water and people, then possibly add support or bracing as necessary. If you are replacing a standard cast iron tub this will probably not be an issue for you. Any time you're remodeling in the bathroom, especially in an older home, you may uncover rotted or water damaged floors that must be repaired and reinforced before you can safely make any improvements.

What about the plumbing?

First things first. The plumber must be able to access the entire area in order to properly install the plumbing, as well as the motor box for the whirlpool's jets. This motor has to be easily accessible in case it breaks down. Some type of door is recommended as opposed to tile. Get the specs from the store for the model you are interested in before even calling a plumber. Make sure the plumber you hire is licensed and show them the specs and they will be able to tell you what you will need to do to make it work.

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Energy Savings Tips

Summer Energy Saving Techniques

Conduct an energy assessment to find out where you can save the most. This will allow you to see where the biggest problem areas are.

Windows

- Close curtains during the day to block sunlight and open them at night.
- Plant trees, shrubs, or vines to help shade your home.
- Apply solar window film to windows.

Adjust Your Thermostat

- When you're home and awake, set your thermostat at the highest comfortable temperature.
- When you're out of the house, turn your thermostat up. You can save 1-3 percent per degree, for each degree the thermostat is set above 72 degrees, depending on the outside temperature.
- You can set a programmable thermostat to keep the temperature where you want day and night.

Maintain Your Cooling Systems

- Schedule service for your cooling system.
- Do regular maintenance to keep your cooling system operating efficiently.

Fans and Vents

- Keep inside air vents clear from furniture and other objects.
- Run energy efficient ceiling and whole-house fans to circulate the air.
- Use the bathroom vent to remove the heat and humidity after showering.

Appliances and Electronics

- Try not to use the oven on hot days. Cook on the stove top, microwave, or grill outside.
- Keep your fridge and freezer full. The refrigerator will run less often.
- Air dry dishes in the dish washer.
- Wash laundry with cold water and air dry.
- Unplug electronics when not in use.

Lighting

- Use light emitting diodes "LED's". They use less energy and have a longer life span, plus they produce less heat than incandescent and CFL bulbs.

Winter Energy Saving Techniques

Windows

- Open curtains during the day to allow sunlight in and close them at night.
- Tape a clear plastic sheet or film to the window frames.
- Install insulating drapes or shades on windows.

Adjust Your Thermostat

- When you are home and awake, set your thermostat at the lowest comfortable temperature.
- When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat down about 12 degrees for eight hours and save around 10% a year on your heating bills.
- You can set programmable thermostats to keep the temperature where you want day and night.

Air Leaks and Insulation

- Seal the air leaks on the inside and outside walls of your home. These can be holes for pipes and wires, gaps around chimneys, or unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.
- Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.
- Check your attic's insulation. Depending on what climate you live in, there are different insulating products and thickness that work best for your area.

Maintain Your Heating Systems

- Schedule service for your heating system.
- Do regular maintenance to keep your heating system operating efficiently.
- Furnace - Replace your furnace filter once a month or as needed.
- Fireplace - Clean the flue vent regularly and the inside of the appliance with a wire brush periodically to ensure that your home is heated efficiently.

Lower Your Water Heating Costs

- On average 18% of the energy consumed in your home is from the water heater. Turn down the temperature of your water heater to a setting around (120°F). This will save energy and can help prevent burns.

Lighting

- Use light emitting diodes "LED's". They use less energy and have a longer life span.

Kitchen Make-over

Countertops are Important.

Look for materials that have properties such as durability, stain resistance and ease of cleaning. You may also want to consider something like slate, limestone or Soapstone to achieve the look you are going for.

Install a Functional island.

Islands should have an open, airy look to them. Ideally, avoid using it for appliances, islands are a great place for doing prep work, especially if you have multiple cooks, it also makes a great gathering place to gather and have conversations whether you are cooking or not.

Consider maintenance and cleaning.

Try to stick to natural surfaces with an inherent texture such as slate, terracotta, brick and tumbled marble. They are a little more difficult to clean but will camouflage small imperfections or maybe a spot you may have missed. Keep in mind that smoother surfaces in light colors, like white laminate counter tops or ceramic floors, may be easier to clean but show flaws very easily. Stainless steel is great, however very hard to keep streak free.

Lighting is everything.

Under-cabinet lighting is a must have wherever possible. This eliminates restricting shadows, they also give the room a very warm feeling when they are the only lighting in use. Track Lighting for the open space gives a very contemporary and bold look, and for functionality sake they can be moved and pointed in any direction you like.

Your stove makes a Statement

your stove is arguably the most important appliance in the kitchen. It makes a statement about how much you like to cook. For the sake of efficiency, consider wall ovens and countertop stoves. And whenever possible choose gas over electric, the heat is more even.

Ventilation

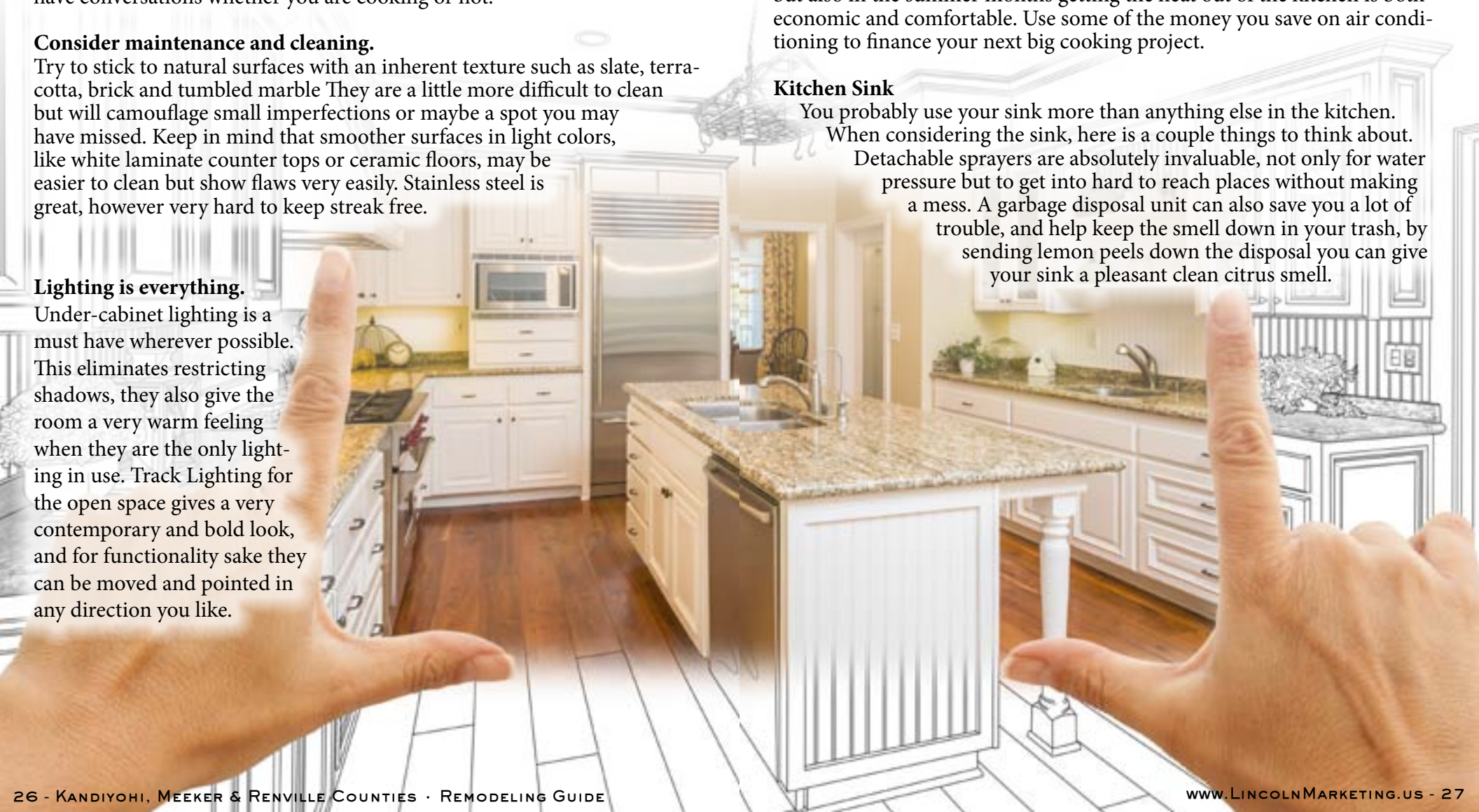
Not only does it give your kitchen a dynamic look, an oven hood is very functional for a couple reasons. Mainly for when you forget to set a timer, but also in the summer months getting the heat out of the kitchen is both economic and comfortable. Use some of the money you save on air conditioning to finance your next big cooking project.

Kitchen Sink

You probably use your sink more than anything else in the kitchen.

When considering the sink, here is a couple things to think about.

Detachable sprayers are absolutely invaluable, not only for water pressure but to get into hard to reach places without making a mess. A garbage disposal unit can also save you a lot of trouble, and help keep the smell down in your trash, by sending lemon peels down the disposal you can give your sink a pleasant clean citrus smell.



Painting Tips from an Expert

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1. You must clean the walls

Any kind of dust, dirt, or grease spots will ruin a smooth finish, so with water, a little mild dish soap, and a sponge, lightly scrub the surface. Then rinse walls with clean water to remove the soap residue.

2. Tape off the trim, window, and the door frames

Painter's blue tape is what is recommended for this part of the process, and can be applied up to a week ahead. Immediately after painting, remove the painter's tape before the wall dries, that way you won't peel off any paint with it.

3. Prime the walls

Primer helps maximize the sheen and coverage of the paint and gives the finish coat a much more uniform appearance.

4. Brush where you can't roll

Use a brush to paint around trim and in corners, wherever your roller can't reach, with an angled brush. Extend brush painting out two to three inches from windows, moldings and doors.

5. Use the "W" technique

For maximum efficiency, start in the corner of a wall and roll on a three-by-three-foot W style pattern, then fill it in the W without lifting the roller off the wall. Continue this pattern in sections until you're finished. Remember to paint only one wall at a time.

6. Paint the trim

When the walls have completely dried, tape where the trim meets the wall. Paint the moldings and the window and door frames with an angled brush.

Landscaping Ideas

Save Money on Plants

If you wait until the end of the season to make purchases, you are likely to get some pretty good deals. Trees, plants, shrubs, and flowers will be going out the door at clearance sale prices. Even if the plants look a little beat up or the leaves look a little brown and tattered, as long as there is a healthy looking green stem, the plant is salvageable as long as it is planted quickly and watered properly.

Homemade Walkways

To give your yard a little character, consider creating a custom walkway. This type of project can be done inexpensively using leftover materials from a previous project. Consider using excess bricks from a retaining wall project, or if you just took down a retaining wall, you could repurpose the bricks into a sidewalk. Or if you have some leftover concrete mix, you can make custom shapes using cardboard. This can give your yard a very unique and personalized look.

Perennials or Annuals

This probably seems like a no brainer, however, choosing something that will re-grow year after year will save you a lot of work and money in the long run. Annual plants can be purchased at a lower cost and you can leave a little room between and around your perennials to switch things up every year and have a fresh new look every season.

Make your own Compost

A compost bin can be easily made from scrap materials such as broken pallets or scrap lumber, or if you are not very handy with building things, you can purchase a compost bin for a reasonable price on the internet or a hardware store. By recycling organic waste materials in the compost bin and mixing with equal part soil, you can make a very healthy environment for your plants to grow in.

Access

If you are building a fence or some type of wall, remember that you will probably need to get equipment and or materials through your yard, this will be handy for situations like tree trimming/removal or building or demolishing a structure. If you are hiring someone to do the work, be prepared to encounter additional costs if there is no access or something has to be removed and replaced, having sufficient access could save you a huge headache in the future. Remember a survey as well as a building permit may be needed.

Landscaping

Whether flowers or shrubs, perennials are a wise choice as they do not have to be replaced annually and ultimately can save you money. Consulting an arborist for guidance would be helpful if adding a tree is desired. A young tree will probably be the least expensive choice. A pathway using stepping stones can be a nice touch. Professional advice would be recommended. Tired of lawn maintenance? Rocks, pebbles and boulders can be a possibility. Choose the type to compliment your home.

Fencing:

Check local building codes for maximum height requirements.



10 Tips for Green Thumb GARDENING

Don't like all the dirt in your fingernails while you work in the garden? Before you go out, run your fingernails across a bar of soap and you'll effectively seal the undersides of your nails so dirt cannot accumulate. Then, after you are all done gardening, use a toothpick or nailbrush to remove the soap and your nails will be sparkling clean.



Spray vegetable oil on your string trimmer to help prevent jamming or breaking (Treat before installing string in trimmer).



Make a convenient measuring tool out of a long handled garden tool by laying it on the ground next to a tape measure. Use a permanent marker to copy the inches and feet. Next time you are spacing plants you already have a dual-purpose measuring tool in your hand!

Write the names of your plants (with a permanent marker) on the flat parts of stones of any size and lay them in front of your plants for natural looking markers.



The next time you boil or steam vegetables, use the leftover water to water potted patio plants, and you'll be surprised at how the plants grow with "vege-soup."

You can use leftover tea and coffee grounds to help acidify the soil of acid-loving plants like azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, gardenias and blueberries. A light sprinkle of about 1/4 of an inch applied once a month will help keep the pH of the soil on the acidic side.



You can use chamomile tea to control damping-off fungus, which often attacks young seedlings quite suddenly. Just add some tea to the soil around the soil of seedlings once a week for healthy plant.

Here is a really quick way to dry out your herbs: Just lay a sheet of newspaper on the seat of your car, arrange the herbs in a single layer, then roll up the windows and shut the car doors. Your herbs will be dry in no time!



Use your blender to grind up egg shells. Just like a mother bird chews up worms for the baby birds making the food easier to digest, grinding eggshells makes it easy for your garden to absorb the calcium egg shells retain.

Animals (cats especially) seem to think all of the hard work you've put into your garden looks like a huge litter box. To keep them from pooping on your basil and other plants, strategically place a few plastic forks around your plants to deter them from destroying your fresh herbs, fruits, and vegetables.



Remodeling Safety Tips

Keep your Children Safe

Take note of potentially toxic materials you will be using for your project. Lead paint, asbestos, mold, and even dust are health hazards during a remodel, especially when the project includes demolition.

Keep children and pets out of areas where those hazards exist and away from toxic chemicals, such as paint strippers.

Power Tools

When using power tools be sure take out for use and put away when finished for the day. Don't leave them laying around for your children to stumble upon.

Materials

Building materials—such as adhesives, paints, sealants, and varnishes—can emit volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, even when stored. Exposure to VOCs as well as other pollutants can cause immediate symptoms, including respiratory irritation, headache, dizziness, and memory impairment. Some organic compounds may pose a cancer risk.

Keep your Pets Safe



Remember to separate your pets from your project.

Using Ladders Safely

Using a ladder is not always 100% safe. Use these practices when using a ladder:

Always open a stepladder to its fullest position, lock the spreader braces on each side in place, and pull down the bucket shelf.

Whether you are going up or coming down, always face the ladder head-on, and use both hands to hold onto the side rails or rungs.



Don't climb higher than two rungs from the top; don't sit or stand on the top or the bucket shelf.

To keep yourself from overreaching and getting off balance, never let your navel go beyond either of the ladder's side rails.

If you must work on a ladder in front of a door, lock the door.

Put the paint can or tray on the bucket shelf before you climb the ladder. And don't go up the ladder with tools in your hand or in your pockets.

If possible, get someone to stabilize the bottom of the ladder with both hands on the lower legs of the ladder.

Take it slow. It is not a race to the top. Use both hands and plant your feet carefully on each step.



Safety Tips

FIRST AID FOR BURNS & CHOKING

BURNS

For minor 1st and 2nd degree burns smaller than 3" in diameter: Cool the Burn. Run cool water over the burned area for 5 minutes, or until the pain diminishes. Never put ice on a burn!

Bandage the burn with sterile gauze:

It is important to use loosely wrapped gauze. This will avoid pressure and the bandage protects blisters. NEVER put lotions, vaseline, ointments or butter on burn. Do not break any blisters, which can cause infection.

Take Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Naproxen or Acetaminophen to relieve pain:

Minor burns usually heal with these basic treatments. Be aware for signs of infection which may include: increased pain, redness, fever, swelling or oozing. If symptoms develop, seek medical help. Avoid tanning the burned area for at least a year. Protect the area with sun-screen outdoors. Avoid giving aspirin to children.

For 3rd degree burns/all major burns - DIAL 911

DO NOT run cold water over large severe burns - this can cause shock.

DO NOT remove burnt clothing.

Check for signs of breathing/coughing/movement.

If there are no signs of breathing begin CPR.

Elevate burned areas above heart level, if possible.

Cover the burn(s) with cool, sterile, moist bandages, towels or cloth.

CHOKING

Most people clutch at their throats when choking, an obvious symbol for help. However, if a person isn't giving that signal, be alert for these indications. Inability to talk, difficulty breathing or noisy breathing, inability to cough forcefully, skin/lips/nails turning blue, loss of consciousness.

The Red Cross recommends a "five-and-five" method for first aid: First give five blows between the person's shoulders with the heel of your hand. Second, perform the Heimlich maneuver (abdominal thrusts) five times. Alternate between five back blows and five abdominal thrusts until the blockage is dislodged.



IN AN EMERGENCY, DIAL 911

Build • Plant • Live • Grow



LOCALLY

**...and support
the community
you live in!**

*you live in!
the community
you live in!*