



GROUP ESTES *realty*

Save money every month with these simple home improvements!

Dear Client Advocates,

March 2016

Hi Everyone! Big news at Group Estes this month. Many of you long part of the community we are so grateful to serve have seen Bob take on a larger and larger role over the years. You likely may also know that I wouldn't have created Group Estes Realty as its own firm without having Bob assisting me. As we have been realizing how much fun we are having, and how many opportunities we can create together with your support, it has created a huge amount of freedom. With that freedom comes our ongoing commitment to you to continually increase and enhance our skill set and our expertise within the real estate profession. And so! Drum roll please!!! Please join me in congratulating Bob on receiving his Managing Brokers license. Lots of class hours and yet another state exam. And it's DONE ☺

And now on to our regular program... If you are like many of us, you are always looking for ways to save money on your monthly home-related bills. You turn off the lights when you leave the room, keep the heat lower when you're not home, turn off the faucet while you brush your teeth and only wash full loads in the dishwasher. What else can you do?

The information in the flyer this month outlines six simple home improvements you can make to help you save on utility bills. From upgrading your fixtures to applying weather stripping to drafty windows, these simple suggestions will save resources and money.

And while you're thinking about improvements, perhaps you are also wondering which options that you might be considering would also improve the value of your home... Page Two outlines three projects that will help you boost your home's value and give you more enjoyment while you're at it! Ok, maybe some energy-efficient upgrades (like a high-efficiency furnace) aren't as much fun as new kitchen appliances might be, but those new kitchen appliances are going to be more energy efficient than the older ones! Fun *can* be practical.

Which does lead me to add more insight to the comment about a high-efficiency furnace... Even though it's not necessarily 'fun' or even visible, last time we checked, a high-efficiency furnace will pay for the cost delta in just about three years. And should last for far longer than that, with the advantage of the now lower heating costs. Energy cost comparisons can be fascinating and really helpful as you make your choices and choose your priorities.

Chatting with you about options you are thinking about, perhaps making a visit to your home to discuss resale pros and cons (in terms of where to spend your updating dollars) if you are

Founder Christine Estes 206-910-7926
Co-Founder Bob Ferguson 206-799-0997
Chris@GroupEstes.com
Bob@GroupEstes.com
www.GroupEstes.com

Group Estes Realty
15600 Redmond Way
Suite 200
Redmond, WA 98052

considering that down the road – these are all part of what you can always expect from us. And it's also just great to see you and to have the opportunity to be of service.

As you know, we also maintain a database of trusted service providers that we can refer to you whenever you need a resource and don't necessarily know who to call. That's also something you can always count on from us. And you will see this month's five highlighted vendors later in this letter.

First, though, is a look at the local market. And the year is off to a remarkable start. Throughout the Puget Sound Area, we are seeing lower inventory than this time last year, faster time to contract, and higher average sale prices. Gratefully, Pending (under contract but not closed yet) sales are up throughout the region as compared to this time last year. So even though it is still clearly a Sellers' Market in our area, there are also more buyers getting properties under contract. There are skills in navigating any kind of a real estate market. And we are honored to exercise our expertise on our clients' behalf.

This month's highlighted vendors are (and don't hesitate to write or call if you need a resource that we haven't posted in a letter recently – we love to hear from you!):

Spotlight Vendors for March

Sandra Jones - Coaching Adventures - Sandra@YourSoulSatisfaction.com - 425-646-8170
Coach - Life

Kerry Burk - Abundant Heating & Air Conditioning - aheating4@comcast.net - 206-244-3393
Air Conditioning, HVAC, Oil Burner Furnace Service & Replacement

Mark Bullis - Mark Bullis Construction - msbullis@gmail.com - 206-556-1436
Contractor, Handyman

Ken Steiner - Homestreet Bank - ken.steiner@homestreet.com - 206-389-4405
Lender

Marty Ferguson - Around the Sound Masonry - 425-742-8559
Chimney Repair, Masonry/Stone Contractor

We appreciate your advocacy and the opportunity to be of continued service to you and anyone you know who may also appreciate what we offer.

Sincerely,



Always looking for more ways to be of service ... if you know of someone who would appreciate the consistent level of service we provide, please introduce us via email, or call / text us with their name and contact information, and we'll be happy to follow up and take great care of them.



Basic Home Improvements

that Save Money

In many areas of the country, energy and water costs are on the rise, taking a bigger chunk out of our wallets every month. But, there's hope. With a few home improvements, you may be able to save money on your utility bills.

Water

Whether you live in an area that's facing another year of drought, or you just want to save money on your water bill, these tips can help you be efficient with your water.

Go low flow.

Showerheads and faucets account for more than **32%** of household water use combined.¹ Low flow faucets and showerheads can reduce your water consumption in these areas by as much as **50%** and may save up to **\$145/year** on your bill.²

Fix leaks.

Leaks comprise **13.7%** of household water use.¹ Leaky faucets and pipes increase your water bill and may require expensive repairs if they're ignored. Every six months, inspect your faucets and pipes for wear and tear. If you notice a leak, fix it right away.

Go tankless.

If it's time to upgrade your water heater, consider going tankless. A tankless water heater may help you save up to **20%** on your water bill.² An added bonus: You'll never run out of hot water again!

Energy

Heating and cooling comprises more than half of the energy used in the average home.³ Regulate your home's temperature to save energy, improve comfort and reduce your heating and cooling costs.

Rethink your insulation.

Good insulation not only helps regulate the temperature of your home, it can also reduce your heating and cooling costs by as much as **20%**.³

Manage the temperature automatically.

Wouldn't you love to come home to the perfect temperature? A programmable thermostat not only improves your comfort from the second you step foot in your home, it also helps you save energy and money—up to **\$150 a year**.³

Seal up drafts.

Have you ever wondered why your home won't stay warm in the winter or cool in the summer? Check your windows—drafty windows cause **30-40%** of heating and cooling losses. Apply weather stripping to your windows to patch up leaks and save more money.³

Sources: 1. Environmental Protection Agency, Water Sense, Water Use Today
2. US News, 8 Energy-Efficient Home Improvements that Save Money, May 31, 2013
3. U.S. Department of Energy, Energy.gov
4. Houzz, Houzz & Home, June 2015

Home Improvements

that Boost the Value of Your Home



Homeowners remodel their homes for a number of reasons, but one of the most common is to increase resale value. Renovations will improve the style and function of your home and may make it more appealing to potential buyers.

Upgrade Your Kitchen

The kitchen is the heart of the home. A kitchen remodel will not only improve your home's functionality, it may also become a key selling point if you decide to sell. The average major kitchen remodel costs between **\$29,400** and **\$42,400**, while the minor kitchen remodels average between **\$11,700** and **\$17,800**.⁴ However, if you're thinking of listing your home soon and your kitchen is in good shape, you may want to rethink a full remodel. A minor upgrade and a coat of paint may be all you need to freshen up the space.



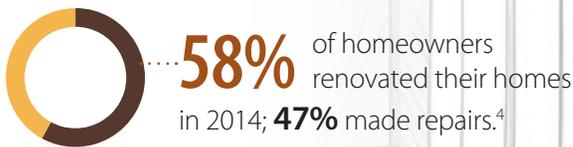
Upgrade Your Bathroom

The bathroom is the place where you get ready to take on the world every day. Show it some love with a makeover. Upgrade your fixtures to reflect your style, or create the spa-like getaway of your dreams. The average major master bathroom remodel costs between **\$10,500** and **\$18,800**, while the average minor master bathroom remodel costs between **\$4,800** and **\$8,300**.⁴ Are you thinking of renovating a guest bathroom? Expect to spend somewhere of between **\$7,200** and **\$9,500** for a major overhaul, or between **\$3,200** and **\$4,400** for a minor remodel.⁴

Improve Energy Efficiency

Is it time to upgrade your appliances, windows and other energy-impacting parts of your house? Upgrading your home with energy-efficient features will not only save you money each month on your utility bill, it may also make the home more attractive to younger or more energy-conscious buyers.

Renovation Facts & Figures



Top 5 Interior Renovations⁴

1. Kitchen
2. Guest/other bathroom
3. Living/family room
4. Master bathroom
5. Guest/other bedroom

Top 3 Reasons for Renovating⁴

1. Improve the design/look and feel
2. Improve functionality
3. Increase resale value

