

### 3 Hot Home Improvement Trends

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From small, do-it-yourself projects to dramatic large-scale procedures that require a contractor, there are several home improvement jobs that are currently all the rage. The News-Press caught up with Kevin Krom of Ardent Home Services in Sterling and John Taylor of Brown's Hardware in Falls Church to find out the latest fads in remodeling and home improvement. From stone patios to sealing off windows, here are the three biggest trends in home improvement.

1) Outdoor Living Spaces: According to Kevin Krom, one of the owners of Ardent Home Services ([www.ardenthomes.com](http://www.ardenthomes.com)) based in Sterling, Va., homeowners interested in remodeling are getting outdoors by adding on screened-in porches, patios and other outdoor living spaces. John Taylor, manager of Brown's Hardware in Falls Church, added that many residents are creating stone-landscaped patios and straying from wood. "People want to be down on the ground instead of up in the air," he said. The stone, according to Taylor, is more durable and does not require the staining and refinishing that wood does every few years.

2) Going Green: Becoming energy efficient is such a large business that Krom started Ardently Green ([www.ardentlygreen.com](http://www.ardentlygreen.com)), a separate company within Ardent Home Services to work on those projects, including air sealing, structured insulated panels, heating and ventilation. Other ways to go green are with solar hot water systems or Energy Star appliances. Krom explained that energy efficient work is on a smaller scale than other remodeling projects and they range from \$3,000-10,000. The economic benefits on energy efficient houses are twofold: saving on monthly electricity bills while increasing the long-term value of a home. Further, home remodeling guru Bob Vila names living green as one of the top eight Big Home Improvement Trends in 2008.

3) Garage Additions: To keep from having to scrape ice off windshields, many home-owners are opting to build garage additions to their homes. Garages are also being remodeled to serve as offices, workshops or as extra living space. If your home already has a garage, cleaning it out is the first step to its new function, so install some shelves and get organized! Garages are sometimes referred to as "drive-in closets," so maximize your storage space. Home remodeling blogs are naming garage makeovers as the hot trend of the decade, and refurbished garages include stain-resistant floor coatings, stainless-steel work tops and custom cabinets.