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Remodeling to Save Money?

You If you have been postponing home improvement projects during the economic downturn, here is some welcome good news! You may already know that the incorporation of sustainable building products into your remodeling project can significantly lower utility costs now, as well as make your house more desirable in the future should it go on the market. What you may not know is that there is money available to help you finance these improvements. Check with your accountant to see if the Federal energy tax credit program (which provides homeowners with up to a \$1500 credit for energy conservation upgrades that are purchased and installed in the owner's primary residence) is still in effect when you do your remodel. The installation of triple-paned windows and some window coverings, gas fireplaces, upgraded insulation, and concrete roofing tiles are included in this program. Utility companies are offering rebates on high efficiency toilets (three per household) and Energy Star appliances. Even the conversion to solar power is becoming more affordable. One local solar power company leases their system to remove the barriers to investment. Another company will install the solar system for \$1000; and then sells the homeowner power from the solar panels at a rate below that of PGE. Since 2010 the cost of solar panels has fallen by about a third. The cost of wireless home automation systems has also dropped in cost 30-50% during the past 5-7 years as technology progressed and competition increased between manufacturers. Competition between contractors has also lowered the cost of building, but be sure to select a contractor team based on their referrals, experience in similar projects and their ability to provide proof of insurance and licensing credentials rather than by the price of their bid. There is no greater value than a job done correctly the first time.

**To view other green building options
call Jean Cary at: 650-593-9622 or
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