

HOME & GARDEN

MONEY:

continued from page 7

departments often take care of the worst offenders such as iron-manganese-hydrogen sulfide. Even if you get municipal water you likely still have calcium and other hard water deposits and can

benefit from a water softener. Systems for well water will cost a little more but it is well worth it."

The only way to truly remove the calcium and magnesium from household water systems is with a salt-based water softener. These remove the scaling in the pipes entirely by

running the incoming hard water through a resin filter that traps the calcium and magnesium in the water — as well as any iron, manganese or radium ions. It then replaces them with sodium ions.

A salt-based water softener is one home improvement that will not

only pay for itself but add value to a home. A properly sized quality water softener appliance can save a homeowner thousands of dollars over its life in reduced soap and detergent costs, electricity, efficiency and extended life for expensive appliances.

VALUE:

continued from page 8

beautiful curb appeal."

Budgeting for success

Once you've decided which replacement and remodeling projects will offer the best ROI, develop a schedule and a budget to ensure the home makeover remains financially sound. The budget defines the project's scope, estimates

overall costs, and helps to establish priorities. Generally, renovation costs should not exceed 30 percent of your home's value and should be consistent with housing trends in your neighborhood.

What should the budget include? Websites like www.plygem.com offer comprehensive advice for creating a renovation budget and sticking to it. To start, consider these likely-to-occur expenses:

- Contractor costs. These include labor and may incor-

porate employee benefits, professional fees, permit and inspection charges and, of course, profit. Get at least three contractor estimates to ensure your contractor is cost-effective and reputable.

- DIY costs. Should you forgo a contractor? Keep in mind you will need to rent or buy power tools and equipment and potentially learn new skills.

- Hidden costs. For example, bringing outdated electrical or plumbing installations to code, or removing lead paint.

- Site preparation costs. For exterior renovations, this may include tree trimming, clearing land, and renting a haul-away container.

- Interim housing costs. If you plan to relocate, you will need living expenses for the project's duration.

- Material cost. These include large expenses and small ones (ex. nails, trim) and could account for as much as half to 75 percent of the total cost. Factor in an extra 6-to-10 percent for waste for materials that are cut and fitted.

CPTED:

continued from page 3

erty they don't want people to be, she said.

She said holly and rose bushes are both attractive examples of things people can plant to make a residence both visually appealing and deter criminals.

"There's a bunch of different spiny things that you can use that are still really pretty," Sandoval said. "Of course, there's an advantage to alarms and security services, but if that's not what the homeowners' leaning towards, these are still going to beautify your property and reinforce it, too."

MAINTENANCE

A big part of CPTED, Sandoval said, is making sure properties are maintained — shrubs and foliage are trimmed and neat

and not blocking windows, lawns are mowed and porches and lawns cleared of debris or clutter.

If a property is well maintained, she said, people understand that somebody owns that property and cares for it.

Well-maintained properties also encourage neighbors to spruce up their residences and keep them maintained, Sandoval said, adding to the security.

CPTED, Sandoval said, is not a new concept, but it's something that is not widely known, and she is trying to change that. Sandoval can perform CPTED assessments at homes and businesses and make recommendations on what things property owners can do to improve safety and security.

Contact Sandoval at 541-667-5112 for information about a property assessment.

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