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### Home Maintenance Projects To Help Increase Your Home's Value

*"Mr. Fix-It" Lou Manfredini Offers Homeowners Tips That Save Time and Money*

ST. PAUL, Minn. – September 16, 2009 – When it comes to home improvement, there are certain tasks that may help you get the most return on your investment by saving you money in the long run or adding value to your home. Before starting any home improvement project, homeowners should carefully consider their goals and be aware of the home maintenance projects that will help them get the most bang for their buck.

"Too often, homeowners become over-ambitious and imagine costly additions or gut renovations, instead of concentrating on the smaller projects that will really add value to their home," said Lou Manfredini, host of *HouseSmarts* TV and home improvement contributor on NBC's *The Today Show*. "With any home improvement task, it's always important to think like a seller – whether you'll be holding onto your house for a year, five years or 10 years. This is the only way to guarantee that the money you put into your home now will add potential value when it comes time to sell."

Follow these home improvement tips from Lou Manfredini to help add value to your home:

1. **Service your mechanical equipment**—Like your car, your furnace, boiler and central air conditioner are machines that should have annual servicing by a professional. If you have a water heater, it should be drained to remove corrosive sediments, and its burner should be cleaned. For about \$100 a year, you can greatly extend the life of your equipment.
2. **Install new windows**— If you've suffered through yet another winter of drafty windows, and are tired of propping them open in warmer weather, it is time to consider replacing them. While this ranks as an expensive proposition, it will help lower heating and cooling bills and add significant value to your home. In many cases, professionals can change every window in your home in just a couple of days and will leave both the interior and exterior trim in tact.
3. **Add insulation to your attic**— Just like we wear hats in cooler weather to keep body heat from escaping out the tops of our heads, the attic needs insulation to prevent the heat from escaping out of the home. You can reduce your home's heating and cooling costs by as much as 30 percent through proper insulation attic and the rest of the home<sup>1</sup>.
4. **Upgrade and change the air filter**— Whenever you seal up your home, whether to keep the cool air in during summer months or out during the winter months, allergens such as pollen, pet dander and mold spores can become trapped without proper ventilation. Upgrade your home's air filter to a high-performance filter, such as the Filtrete Advanced Allergen Reduction filter from 3M, and be sure to change the filter every three months. In addition to improving your home's indoor air quality, regularly changing your filter helps your furnace or air conditioning system save energy.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Energy: <http://www.energy.gov/insulationairsealing.htm>

5. **Install and reverse ceiling fans**— Ceiling fans can help reduce energy costs in the summer by supplementing the air conditioning. During the warmer months, the blades of the fan should turn counter-clockwise to push the cooler air down into your living space. In the cooler months, be sure that the blades of the fan turn clockwise by flipping the switch, usually located on the middle section of the ceiling fan just below the blades and above the lighting. This will displace the warm air that rises naturally, forcing it down into your living space.
6. **Install a programmable thermostat**— During the night or when you're not at home, there's no reason to keep your home fired up to 70 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter, or kept to a cool 72 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer. Programmable thermostats can be set to automatically raise and lower your home's temperature, based on your own schedule.
7. **Clean and stain your deck**— Some homeowners hear the words "pressure-treated wood" and assume that their decks are resistant to damage and do not need any maintenance; however, decks can become discolored and unappealing in less than a year. To remedy this, clean the deck with a power washer, sand it carefully with a palm sander and then apply a deck preservative that contains linseed oil. If you repeat this process every few years, you'll end up with a deck that looks great and lasts for decades.

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### **About Lou Manfredini**

Lou Manfredini has been a professional homebuilder and remodeler for over 25 years. His knowledge of homes, inside and out, lets him take the intimidation out of any project. Since 1995, homeowners have been calling in to Lou's three-hour *Mr. Fix-It* program on WGN radio in Chicago. He is a regular contributor to NBC's *Today Show*, as well as a home improvement editor for *USA Weekend Magazine*. He is also one of the executive producers and host of the nationally syndicated news magazine TV show *House Smarts*, and *The House Smarts Radio Show*.

### **About 3M**

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