

# Spring Home IMPROVEMENT

## Tips on interviewing, hiring a contractor

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When it comes to finding a potential contractor, homeowners should do more than just pick a name out of the phone book.

Zach Koenig, owner of Koenig Homebuilders, said the questions you ask of a company should help influence a final decision.

He recommends asking the following seven questions when interview-

ing a contractor to remodel or build a home:

- Do you have general liability and workman's compensation insurance?
- Are you licensed for the work you are proposing to do (and will you be obtaining a building permit)?
- Do you have experience doing the type of work you are proposing to do, and can you show examples or provide references?
- Will you provide a written lien

waiver at the end of the project?

- What is your warranty and how will warranty claims be handled?
- How will you protect my home while the work is being done?
- How is clean-up handled?

Additionally, other experts recommend that homeowners have a good idea of the work they want completed before hiring a contractor. Planning a project before hiring a contractor keeps a homeowner on track, and decreases the likelihood of misunder-

standings with the contractor, which can also save money. They also recommend getting a written contract specifying work to be completed, costs involved and deadlines.

Koenig said that currently the most popular projects in the Highlands and Franklin areas are outdoor living spaces, such as decks, larger porches, fireplaces and outdoor kitchens.

He also said that homeowners are choosing more low-maintenance building materials. He said exteri-

ors have included lots of stone, better paints and wood siding, though homeowners here have typically shied away from manmade materials, such as vinyl siding.

Koenig also said that residents in the area seem to be slower than others in catching on to environmentally-friendly building techniques for their homes.

"I'm actually surprised there isn't more of a call for it," he said. "We try to encourage it whenever we can."