

Space Savers

Cabinet line provides unique storage solution

Regardless of how big the home, there's never enough storage space. So reasoned veteran general contractor Rodney Merrell, who has launched a product line of in-ceiling remote-controlled cabinets to take advantage of unused ceiling space. Suitable for an entertainment center, bedroom closet, secure gun storage, or hideaway kitchen pantry (shown), these overhead cabinets are designed to fit into a recessed receiving box or bulkhead built from 3/4-inch plywood. The box is framed into the ceiling and insulated, then each unit is fastened with heavy-duty piano hinges. Each overhead cabinet is lifted and lowered on vinyl-coated cables and aircraft-grade aluminum pulleys powered by a 3/4-hp motor. The units are typically operated with a handheld or wall-mounted remote



UP AND AWAY STORAGE SYSTEMS

controller, but a braking system that locks the units in place and a manual override are provided in case of power failure. Units may also be secured with a four-digit keypad. **Up and Away Storage**

Cabinets come in an assortment of fine wood finishes to match almost any decor. For more information, contact Up and Away Storage Systems, 877-884-8877; www.upandawaystorage.com.

Top-of-the-Class Shingles

Durable polymer roofing meets fire- and weather-resistance standards



LAMARITE SHAKE COMPOSITE SHINGLES

While cedar shake has long been chosen for its ability to withstand coastal sun and rain, it won't easily meet fire- and hail-resistance specifications. **Lamarite Shake Composite Shingles** provide a convincing alternative that is hard to distinguish from traditional cedar while providing a Class A fire rating when installed over a fiberglass-reinforced underlayment.

Made with a mineral-filled polymer, Lamarite Shake Composite Shingles offer the authentic grain pattern

and natural tones of wood in both a Cedar and Weathered Wood option, and are available in 5-, 7-, and 12-inch widths to emulate the natural beauty and look of real wood. The shingles are listed for UL Class A fire resistance, UL Standard 2218, and Class 4 impact resistance (for hail), and are offered with a 50-year limited warranty. Lamarite Slate Composite Shingles made of the same material and offering the same advantages are also available. For more information, contact Tamko Roofing Products, 800-641-4691; www.tamko.com.

Engineered Opening

Narrower shear wall for garage-door moment frames

Garage-door spans prove to be one of the most difficult openings to reinforce for high winds. Unless the return walls on either side are extra-wide or a custom steel moment frame is used, there is usually not enough wall area to provide adequate racking resistance to meet high-wind requirements. Simpson Strong-Tie has introduced a new all-steel shear-wall panel that allows for a much narrower wall return at the sides of a garage-door opening than its other Strong-Wall panels. The new **Steel**

Strong-Wall panel is available as narrow as 12 inches, comes with preattached studs and header or top plates, and is predrilled to allow wiring to pass through it and for attaching blocking or nailers. Steel Strong-Wall panels fit garage-door rough openings from 7'-1 1/2" to 8'-3 1/4" and are available in a variety of widths for other easy-to-install shear walls. For more information, contact Simpson Strong-Tie, 800-999-5099; www.strongtie.com/products/steel-strongwall/steel.html.



STEEL STRONG-WALL

Forget Chalk Lines

Premarked panels speed installation and inspection of roof sheathing

Martco, a leading supplier of plywood and OSB, has introduced **The Grid Panel System**: pre-measured and preprinted roof sheathing panels designed to speed cutting and nailing. The preprinted lines appear directly on OSB and plywood panels, eliminating

the need to snap chalk lines when cutting sheets and making it easier to hit the truss chords or rafters when nailing off panels. According to the manufacturer, The Grid Panel System also simplifies the inspection process, providing a quick check to gain piece of mind that the sheathing is properly attached and won't blow off in the next gale-force strength test.

The sheathing itself comes in standard thicknesses and can be ordered with Eclipse Radiant Barrier, which can reduce solar heat gain and keep interior temperatures and cooling costs down. Eclipse panels include a perforated foil material adhered to 7/16-, 15/32-, and 19/32-inch OSB panels, and to 15/32-, 19/32-, and 23/32-inch rated sheathing plywood.

All Martco panels are accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council as meeting criteria for sustainably harvested forest products. For more information, contact the Roy O. Martin Lumber Management Co., the parent company of Martco Limited Partnership, 800-299-5174; www.martco.com.



THE GRID PANEL SYSTEM

Bug-Free Living

Retractable screens provide unobstructed view

Without good screening, outdoor living on most coasts would be unbearable.

Fiberglass screens can help, but they often obscure the view — a primary purpose of window walls and sliding doors. **Phantom Screens** offers the “Murphy bed” for doors and windows: The company’s selection of retractable screens can slide out of the way — completely out of view — into a low-profile housing that blends into the door or window frame. The screen housing and track systems are made from extruded aluminum with an

enamel finish that resists fading and chipping. According to the manufacturer, the ultra-sheer fiberglass mesh coated with PVC and the sturdy UV-resistant nylon fittings are durable enough to withstand the intense sun, moisture, and salt air of coastal environments. For more information, contact Phantom Screens, 604-855-3654; www.phantomscreens.com.



PHANTOM SCREENS

Composite Porch Planks

Durable T&G flooring offers traditional grace

Composite decking is valued for its ability to hold up to the rigors of coastal sun and rain, but most plastic decking must be installed with gaps between boards, creating a look that would destroy the classic lines of a traditional covered porch. **TenduraPlank** offers the first authentic tongue-and-groove composite porch plank that is specifically designed for covered porch applications. Made of a combination of plastic and waste-wood flour, TenduraPlank is fungus and termite resistant and will not splinter, check, crack, or cup, according to the manufacturer. These composite planks have a slightly textured wood-grain surface, will not rot or deteriorate, and are dimensionally consistent.

Like traditional wood porch flooring, TenduraPlank Classic is factory-primed and is ready for painting with latex or oil-based porch paint. Planks are available in a 7/8-inch thickness and either 3 1/8-inch or 5 1/4-inch widths in 8-, 10-, 12-, 14- or 16-foot lengths. Tendura offers two nosing piece designs to finish off the edge of the porch: a one-inch half-round and a 7/8-inch x 1 7/8-inch ogee, both available in 10-foot lengths. Tendura also offers a 1/2-inch quarter-round molding to trim out against the house or under the floor overhang. For more information, contact Tendura, 800-836-3872; www.tendura.com.



TENDURAPLANK

Let There Be Light ... and Air

Operable acrylic block windows

In dense developments, privacy between homes can be hard to establish. Though glass block is a good option, it doesn't allow for fresh air and it keeps occupants removed from the outdoor view, both of which are strong pulls in any coastal environment. Now the best of all worlds — light, air, and privacy — is possible using Hy-Lite Products' operable acrylic block windows. Available in casement, awning, and basement hopper windows, these block windows are built with durable vinyl frames in white, tan, or driftwood tones, and install much like conventional flanged windows. Hy-Lite windows are available with 6- or 8-inch acrylic blocks in a variety of patterns and colors. For more information, contact Hy-Lite Products, 800-827-4920; www.hy-lite.com.



HY-LITE ACRYLIC BLOCK WINDOWS

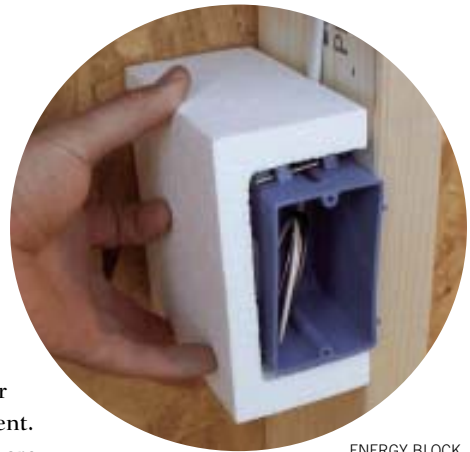
Energy Block

Outlet box sealing device stops air cold

Leaks around electrical devices are one of the prime culprits of air infiltration, which carries away conditioned air and transports moisture vapor into wall cavities. The **Energy Block** — a simple, inexpensive foam block designed to fit around outlets, switch boxes, and ceiling light boxes — essentially eliminates air infiltration in both directions, says its inventor, North Dakota general contractor Joel Anderson. The installed cost (estimated at between \$200 and \$400 per house) is minimal, he notes. The Energy Blocks themselves sell for about \$87 for 49 pieces, which

Anderson says will typically seal the electrical devices in a modest-size home. He claims that electricians can finish the installation in less than two minutes per box. The product easily meets the International Building Code for flame spread and smoke development.

The wires leading to the device are sealed to the Energy Block after rough wiring is complete, so there is no chance of breaking the seal, and the product reportedly provides a solid R-10 insulation behind the device — an area often hard to insulate well — further reducing



ENERGY BLOCK

the chance of mold forming due to moist inside air escaping and condensing on an exterior wall. For more information, contact Pine Ridge Builders, 701-320-1111; www.energyblock.com.

Best Practice for Brick

Polyester insert prevents mortar from clogging weep holes

Brick, a relatively porous cladding, must have an air space behind it and weep holes at the base. This air space provides a capillary break to prevent moisture from driving through the wall, instead allowing the moisture to drain down and out the weep holes. Of course, this assumes that the weep holes don't get plugged and excess mortar doesn't short-circuit the air space.

HouseNet provides a two-level surface that suspends mortar droppings at different levels behind brick veneer, rather than letting them fall to the very bottom of the wall cavity where they

may block the weep holes. The dove-tail-shaped 90% open-mesh material is made of recycled polyester or high-density polyethylene that will not oxidize, rot, or promote fungal growth. In addition, the manufacturer offers Mortar Net Weep Vents: mesh inserts made of a similar material in colors to match a variety of brick. These inserts provide insect screening for open head joints used as weep

holes. For more information, contact Mortar Net USA, 800-664-6638; www.mortarnet.com.



HOUSENET