

CITYVIEW HOME IMPROVEMENT

GUIDE

SPRING 2023

Learn how area residents have transformed their homes and properties.

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PHOTO BY JACKIE WILSON



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Plan those spring and summer projects now

Most all of us have good intentions of completing home improvement projects during the cold winter months so we can play in the spring and summer. Then, unfortunately, the holidays and other commitments get in the way. I was able to chip away at a few of the big ones on my list, but I still have plenty to do — and the clock is ticking.



Sound familiar? If so, you may need help from some local professionals. And if you do, we are pleased to offer ideas and solutions from businesses and contractors that may push your projects along.

Maybe you are in the planning stage. That's OK, too, as we all have to start somewhere. Sometimes generating the ideas and making the decisions are the most challenging parts of any home improvement project.

Regardless, we are here to help with another edition of our CITYVIEW Home Improvement Guide, packed with examples of what area residents have done to spruce up their properties.

If you are one of the fortunate ones who have your projects completed and would like to be featured in an upcoming issue, please send me a note. We would enjoy sharing your successes, too.

Thanks for reading. ■

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COVER: Stephanie Gates of West Des Moines finally has the bright kitchen she wanted.
Photo by Jackie Wilson

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From brown to bright

Water leak spurs remodel job.



The Gates wanted to remodel their “brown” kitchen and were motivated to do so after a major water leak caused damage. Now they have a bright and modern kitchen. “After” photo by Jackie Wilson. “Before” photos submitted

Stephanie and Zachary Gates moved into their West Des Moines home in 2016. The house included all the amenities, but the home’s interior was “too brown.”

“The house made all of our checklist, but it was all the wrong colors. We wanted to lighten things up and thought we could do it after we bought the house,” Stephanie said.

Several years passed. The home was livable, but a major house catastrophe made their decision move quickly.

The home had a water leak from the top

floor through the wall and floor. At the time, they considered repairing it. Then, they realized it was a perfect time to finally change up the list of things they wanted when they first moved in.

They enlisted help from Red Door Remodeling. Besides the obvious repairs, they wanted several other modifications in the home.

“We felt like the microwave was the focal point and didn’t want that taking over the kitchen when you first walked in.”

The floor and cabinets all blended

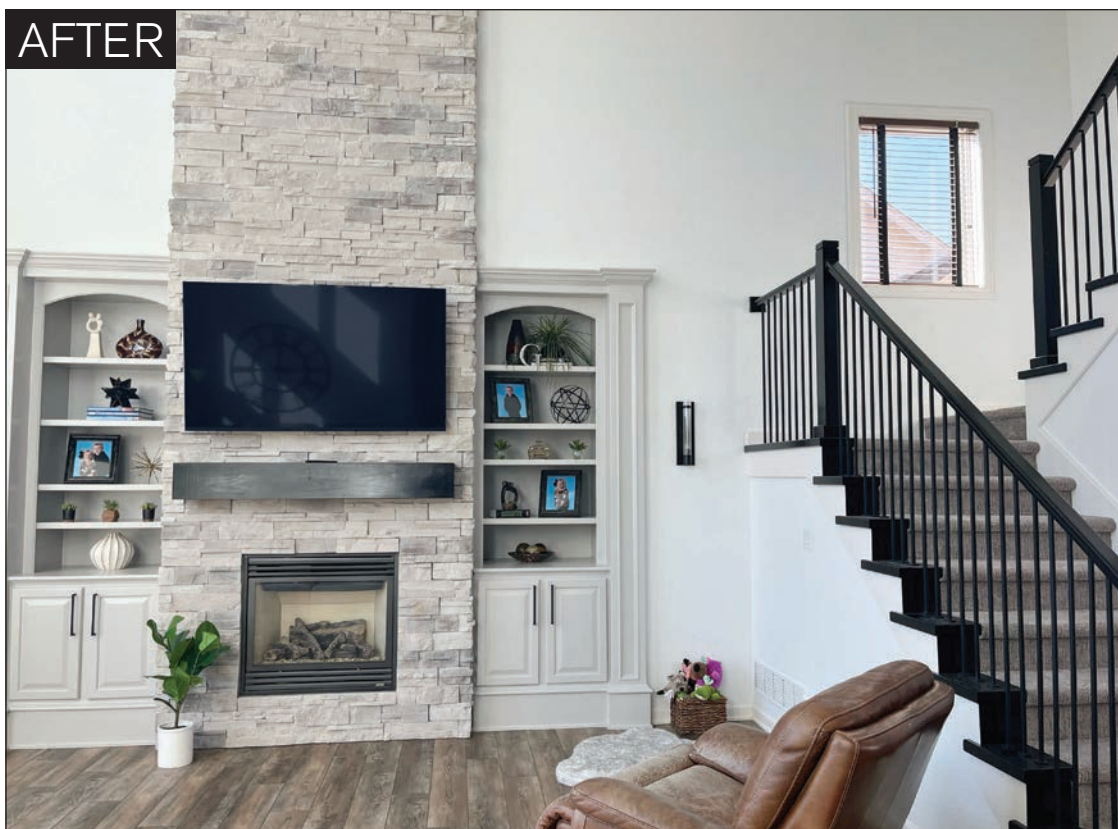
together with dark colors, and the family room looked segregated from the kitchen.

“We wanted it to look like one room instead of separated,” Stephanie said.

The dark brown kitchen cupboards and black crown molding were both painted soft gray. They extended the center island so there was more counter space, along with bar-height seating options. The microwave moved out of sight to an expanded pantry area.

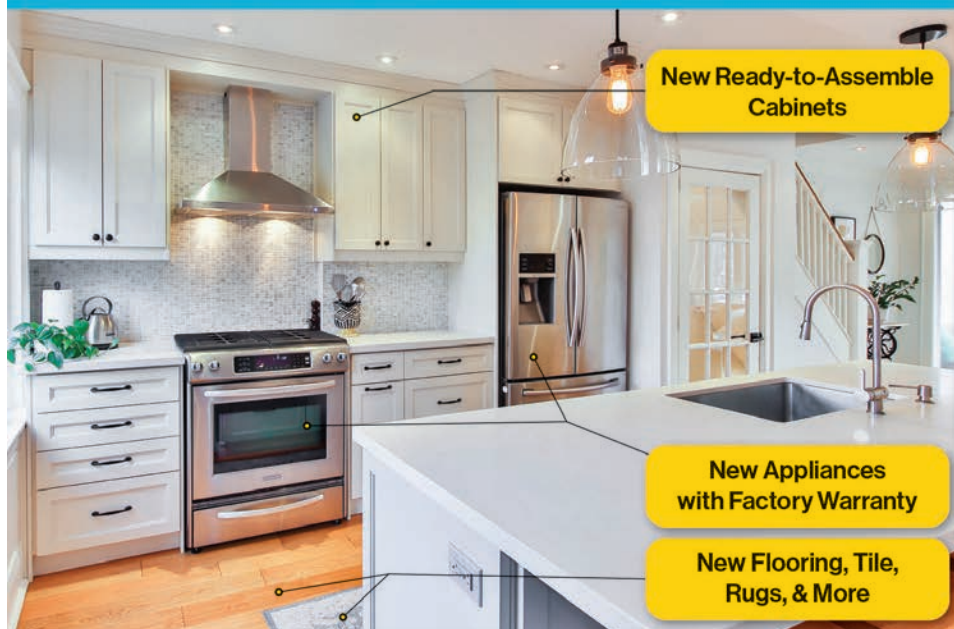
The original wood flooring was in good shape, but with two kids and a dog, they chose to overlay it with a more durable luxury vinyl plank (LVP) flooring.

“We kept the real wood underneath, so if another owner wants, they can revert to that original flooring,” she said.



With new stone from floor to ceiling, the fireplace has become the focal point of the living room. Photo by Jackie Wilson

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Canned lights were replaced with pendant lights. Stephanie was pleased when they finally removed a random kitchen light that was placed awkwardly and uncentered.

The honey oak staircase was accented with a black railing.

“We tried to open it up with color and replaced the railing.”

The process took a while since other homeowners were remodeling homes during the pandemic.

“We had to wait our turn. Red House offered a great plan, and the biggest benefit is that they did everything — they kept it organized with all the contractors coming in.”

Stephanie’s favorite redo is the fireplace, which now serves as a focal point. They kept the fireplace, took out the black tile and installed brick to the ceiling. She likes how bright everything turned out.

“It’s more cohesive. Everything was the same brown.”



Pendant lights, a revamped fireplace and a black stair railing provide a modern touch. Photo by Jackie Wilson

The Gates still have more remodeling in the works. They want to redo a dining room and other small projects in the house.

“It’s never-ending,” Stephanie says. “But we have a good start.” ■

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Beachy bathroom

Light, bright and airy



Polly Loneman envisioned a coastal design for her house. The last room to be transformed was the bathroom, which is now brighter and more functional with more lighting, a waterproof vinyl floor and gold accents.

When Polly Loneman and her husband, Jeff, set out to introduce style to their builder-grade home on the southwest side of Altoona, they had their family's needs and a coastal design at the forefront.

Polly's wish list was long but had one goal: light, bright and airy.

One of the final projects was the bathroom. The vision was for the feel to be beachy but coastal casual — functional enough for their 6-year-old, yet still appealing and welcoming to guests.

Polly worked with Lowe's in Altoona based on

their vision for a coastal-styled home. As she perused the aisles lined with different products, she had in mind functionality to ensure the products chosen would meet her family's needs.

Updates included a taller vanity, additional lighting sources, and waterproof vinyl flooring. The latter two were the most considerable improvements, in Polly's opinion.

"These updates make the home feel much lighter, brighter and bigger. In addition, the white and gold accents add a modern yet beachy feeling."

There were hiccups in the renovation,

especially with the flooring. Still, with some research, they took their time to lay out, cut and install it. Unfortunately, they also discovered their bathroom wasn't entirely square, adding additional challenges.

Polly found inspiration for the coastal design from the actual beach — her second home, as her family vacations are spent on the gulf side of Florida. Next, she looked to Pinterest for further inspiration.

Polly said she welcomed her home becoming an oasis.

"When we purchased our home in 2014, it

was a true builder grade: tan paint, dark countertops and cherry cabinets. This bathroom was the last of the home to be updated into our coastal theme, as the entire house — both indoor and out — already are. We boast a flamingo-colored front door.”

Polly had been following the trend of gold accents for a while, so she knew she wanted to go that direction.

“I love how the gold just pops and pulls the brightness out, even within the small space,” she said.

Polly’s dad, Nathan Soukup, is a retired carpenter, so a few phone calls helped her assemble a team to help renovate their home. The Lowe’s team was another integral part of the project’s completion.

“The Altoona Lowe’s team was a tremendous help and super knowledgeable. They set us up for success.”

To other homeowners wanting to achieve similar results, Polly advises,



Jeff and Polly Loneman have updated their home, one project at a time.

BEFORE



The Lonemans finished their home overhaul with a new bathroom, which was indistinct and dark.

“Do your homework.”

Of course, it helped that Polly had her husband and father on her side.

“I’m so thankful for a husband who gets behind my vision and is willing to help. He’s a great problem solver and always up for a challenge,” said Polly, whose father instilled in her patience to achieve perfection. “My dad has been an amazing teacher of his trade, becoming a voice of reason and accountability, always reminding us to measure twice and cut once.” ■

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Love where you live

Lampmans make renovations to fit their family.

Indianola Realtor Emily Keller-Lampman is in the business of helping clients find their dream homes. She knows there are many things that factor into this very important decision — perhaps it's family traditions or a particular time in life. But mostly, she knows people select a home for the experiences and happiness it can offer their lives.

For the Lampmans, it was no different when they got the itch to move.

"I've seen/toured many beautiful houses over the years, but it never really prompted me to want to make a change," Emily explained. "We were in our previous home for over 10 years. We loved that house and the neighborhood, so for us, we had to find something really special if we were going to move."

In early 2021, Emily was preparing to list a home on Buxton Street. She had driven the tree-lined route every day on her way to work for nearly 11 years. It didn't occur to her that this home might be the "one" for their family.

When she told her husband, Seth, about the listing, he immediately said, "Let's buy it!" After thinking about it, they realized the home was in a well-established neighborhood, and it provided the bedroom space they needed.

"It didn't take long for Seth to convince me," Emily said, smiling. "The vision for how we could make it our own quickly fell into place."

Emily knew she wanted a more open living space and a white kitchen. They removed a couple of walls, completely updated the kitchen, added new flooring, woodwork and doors, and also new lighting. The family loves the new, bright kitchen and that the main level is now a wide-open space where they can host many people — with everyone together.



One of the most noticeable changes the Lampmans made was painting the brown exterior white with black trim, giving the home a modern, yet classic, farmhouse look they love.



To maintain some of the character and charm, a coat of paint easily updated the brick fireplace, surrounding shelves, bathroom vanities and wet bar cabinets.

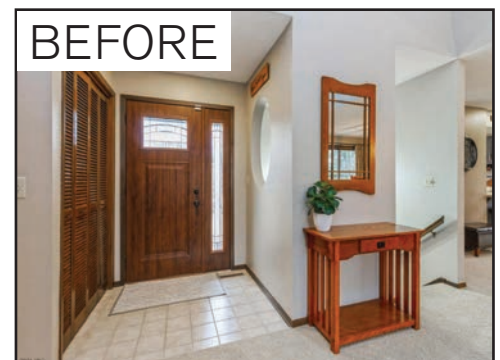
The fourth bedroom in the basement even got a makeover, transforming into a playroom/movie room. Daughters Elliot and Livvy keep all their Legos, video games and toys in that space, spending hours there with friends.

During the renovations, the family of four camped out — literally — in the driveway for about a week and then lived in the basement for a few weeks until the main level was complete. In addition to contractors in and out, Seth spent many late nights doing much of the work himself.

The Lampmans decided to open their home for Indianola's 2022 Holiday Tour of Homes.



The entryway to the home was opened up with the removal of walls around the staircase to add depth of space.



BEFORE



By removing a couple of walls, the Lampmans now have a bright, functional kitchen and a wide-open space offering a seamless flow of interaction and activity between family and guests.

“We had people asking all the time about the work we’ve done,” Emily said. “They can see we painted the exterior but are curious about the inside projects. We thought the home tour would be a great way to welcome others in to see the changes.”

Tourgoers experienced classic Christmas with lots of black, white and red décor in the main living area, and the girls got to pick themes for their rooms that fit their personalities — boho chic and “Star Wars.” The lower level showcased the Hawkeyes and the North Pole.

AFTER



After nearly 18 months of home projects, the Lampmans are happy to settle in and enjoy their new space. They will eventually replace windows, but for now, they say it’s nice not to be discussing their to-do list every night at dinner. ■

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Revealing a historic stone home

Years of overgrowth removed from 160-year-old structure.

AFTER



After removing a tremendous amount of overgrowth on their property, the Cooks were finally able to see the beautiful, historic stone home they owned. People in Winterset took notice, too, and thanked the couple for allowing the home to be seen again.

Before Anna and Jamie Cook moved into their home in 2017, you could drive by it and not even know it was there — thanks to a jungle of brush and trees that had overtaken the lot. The home had been vacant for more than a year, and the plant life had completely taken it over. That didn't scare the couple away, though; they could see through it all to the historic stone home that was hiding behind it.

BEFORE



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“Living in a stone home was intriguing, and it had so much potential,” Anna said. “We wanted a home we could fix up, but we had to be able to live in it while we did; this allowed us to do that.”

The first step in realizing this home’s potential was cutting down more than 20 trees, removing 40 tree stumps and bushes, and picking up countless rocks that were oddly placed throughout the yard. This work helped not only curb appeal but made a good impression with the neighbors.

“We had people walk by all the time during and after we removed the bulk of the vegetation, always thrilled that we were cleaning it up,” Anna said. “One guy actually said, ‘I didn’t even realize there was a house there!’ ”

Updating the inside started with removing multiple layers of wallpaper and painting that old smell out of the home. Next was removing carpet throughout the home to uncover original wood floors that only needed to be scrubbed to look beautiful — an impressive revelation, given the home was built between 1856 and 1860.

Their home also boasts inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, as the Miller R. Tidrick House. This registry requires significant background information to be gathered on the home to qualify, which means the Cooks have a unique glimpse into the life of their 160-year-old home.

The registry documents that the home is made of locally quarried limestone and represents a “moderately expensive residence” found during the Madison County settlement era. Miller R. Tidrick, the first homeowner, was a prominent man and successful entrepreneur in Winterset, which likely made him able to afford to build in stone. Historical data also shows that the home was updated with plumbing and electrical after World War II.

Given its historical background, the Cooks have worked to maintain the integrity of the home by keeping the original six-paned doors and woodwork throughout the home intact.

“All the original lath and plaster is still going strong,” Anna said. “The kitchen still has some 33-inch-tall counters (today’s standard is 36 inches) and old cabinets that work for us because we are short people.”

They do have future plans for the home, though, including taking foam ceiling tile out of the living and dining room because it doesn’t fit with the time period of the home. They also hope to add a second bathroom.

“It’s an old house that will never not have a project going or needing to be done,” Anna said. ■

BEFORE



AFTER



The kitchen update included a new window and an antique double drainboard cast iron sink that fit perfectly below it. The change added 4 feet of much-needed counter space.

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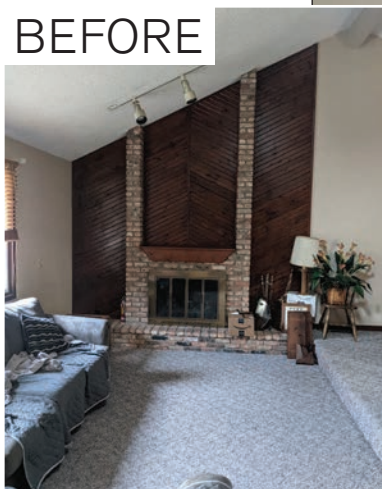
Much-needed updates included built-in planter.

Irene and Oscar Meyer's house was "straight out of the '70s" and in dire need of renovation.

"It needed to be updated, mostly for style, but also the functionality," Irene said. "We simply wanted our home updated into the 21st century. So we ended up with a home that looks like it belongs in a magazine!"

Nate Lorey of Lorey Construction helped them to update their home, which had carpet and appliances more than 25 years old.

BEFORE



AFTER



Stepping into the Meyers' home was like a trip back in time to the 1970s. After being renovated, the home was more modern and functional.

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A bland and neglected built-in planter was turned into a show piece with a little work.

“Our wish list included replacing the flooring and appliances, redoing the fireplace wall, and removing both the pillars of brick and painting the brick around the fireplace.”

Nate helped Irene and Oscar choose the color palette that best suited their home and products that best fit their lifestyle.

“He had lots of ideas that really helped us,” Irene said. “He understood our goals and was instrumental in making them happen. We gave him free rein, and it was fabulous.”

Nate paid a lot of attention to detail and craftsmanship. He brought Irene and Oscar several floor options and helped them choose the right one. He built the guard between the dining room and basement steps, the fireplace mantel, and the kitchen island for Irene as a gift from her family.

When the brick pillars of the fireplace were removed, they discovered the anchors holding the brick façade were rusted and “completely gone.” Hence, Irene selected brick from Lowe’s — during the pandemic when supply was low. Still, she is confident now that it “turned out to be perfect and exactly what I wanted.”

True to the initial 1970s vibe, the home’s interior featured a built-in planter that was rotted below the plants. It was cleaned out and completely redone during the renovation and is now stunning.

Irene said she is happy with the improvements.

“The whole house seems larger. The new flooring is beautiful. The fireplace is probably my favorite, but I hated the old one so much.”

Irene’s advice to other homeowners is to pick a trusted contractor.

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“Be specific about what you want, and listen to their ideas.”

And when it came to ideas, Irene said Nate had the best.

“Even though, at the time, I thought he was crazy about some of it,” she said. “For example, he suggested completely redoing the fireplace. Now I know I should have listened to him first.”

The couple quickly learned that an open attitude is imperative when it comes to renovations.

“Be prepared for the unknown and expect the unexpected,” Irene said. “We knew some of the bricks were disintegrating, but none of us could have predicted the whole thing was rotten. It added to our budget but was worth every penny.”

Looking back now, Irene admits she had to be “somewhat flexible” with their budget. However, she is still in awe of the “remarkable results.”

“If you want it done right, you must pay for it. Or don’t expect the fabulous results we did.” ■



Irene and Oscar Meyer had a lot of work to do to update their 1970s home.



New flooring and an island modernized the kitchen.

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Additions provide much-needed space

Family of eight finds it easier to gather.

Katie and Garry Lenhart recently completed their first phase of renovations of the primary level of their home in Bondurant. A family room addition and kitchen remodel have had a dramatic impact inside, and a new deck added gathering space outside.

But, for now, the new addition boasts a gathering space allowing their family of eight to spend time together, inside or outside.

As Katie and Garry grew their family and home, functionality and design were on their minds. They knew they needed to increase the size of their space, first and foremost. Then they wanted to infuse some of their “own style and personality” into their home, said Katie.

“When we initially started planning the addition, we had just adopted our sixth daughter, and we desperately needed more space.”

Katie and Garry liked their location, and with the current high home prices, an addition was the best choice for their family.



A spacious new family room allows the Lenhart family of eight to comfortably enjoy time to gather and entertain friends.

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Katie and Garry Lenhart and their six daughters needed more living space in their home.



A new family room addition provided more living space indoors, and a deck addition provides outdoor gathering space.

They planned to turn their original living area into a dining room and add a new ample gathering space that aided them in caring for their growing family.

“We also needed to add a bedroom for our newest addition as well as expand our laundry room and upstairs storage,” Katie said.

The family began the renovation journey with a basic vision. Katie said she looked to Pinterest and other online sites to gather more ideas.

Products for the renovation were chosen with the help of their renovation professionals: TJ Werner from Authentic Construction in Bondurant and Stacie Hamilton at Urban Flooring in Grimes.

“TJ has been great at helping us envision what things would look like and brainstorm why certain things would or wouldn’t work,” Katie said. And of Stacie: “She was fabulous at helping me find the flooring

that fit our lifestyle and budget.”

“The family room and deck are our favorite spots,” Katie said. “Both spaces have enough room for us and guests to hang out together and not be cramped in a small space anymore.”

And for homeowners wanting to achieve similar results, Katie advised: “Be prepared for unexpected time delays and extra costs. As we have changed things in different areas of the house, it has inspired me to want to make more changes. If only I had an unlimited budget.”

For now, Katie and Garry are settling into their new favorite spots for the spring and summer. They plan to complete phase two, including their kitchen, when their three eldest daughters, who are triplets, go to college in the fall. Then they will have more flexibility with their space to relocate furniture during renovations. ■

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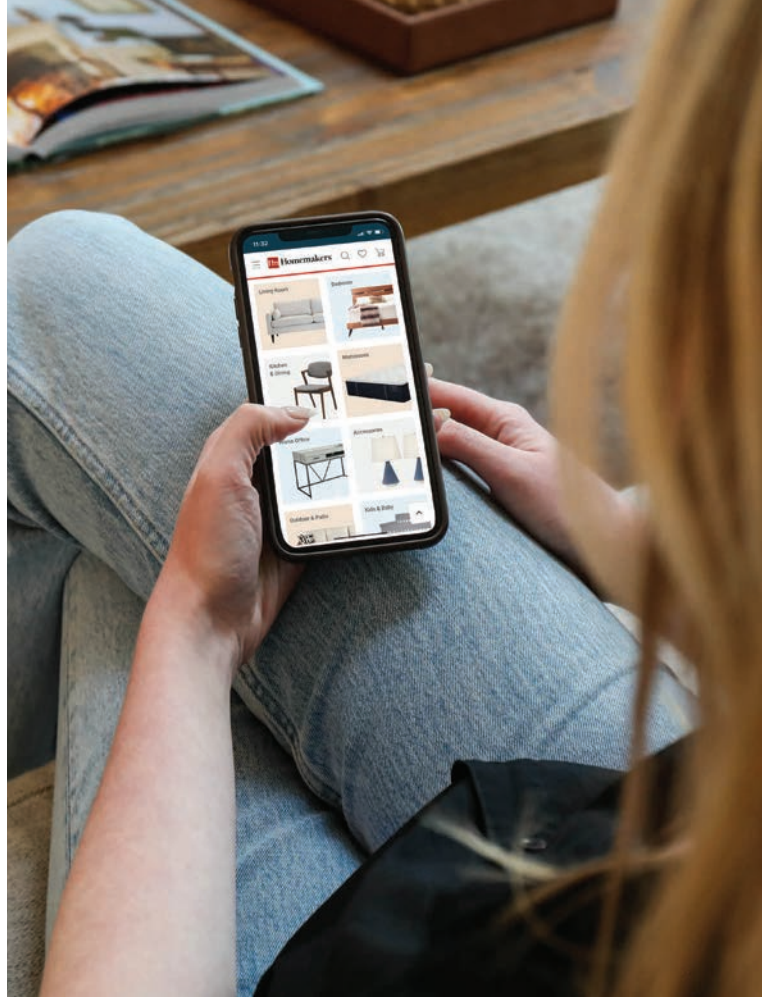
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