

Boomers get charge out of electric fixes

Courtesy of Home Improvement News and Information Center

Baby Boomers upgrading their longtime homes can benefit from the electrical contractors who know the established neighborhoods.

"Since Boomers typically live in homes that are 30-40 years old, the electrical contractors who initially wired the homes have extensive experience — they know where everything is, and offer unique expertise," said John Maisel, publisher, *Electrical Contractor* magazine, published by the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), Bethesda, Md.

From home automation to security systems to lighting upgrades, increasingly reported projects include:

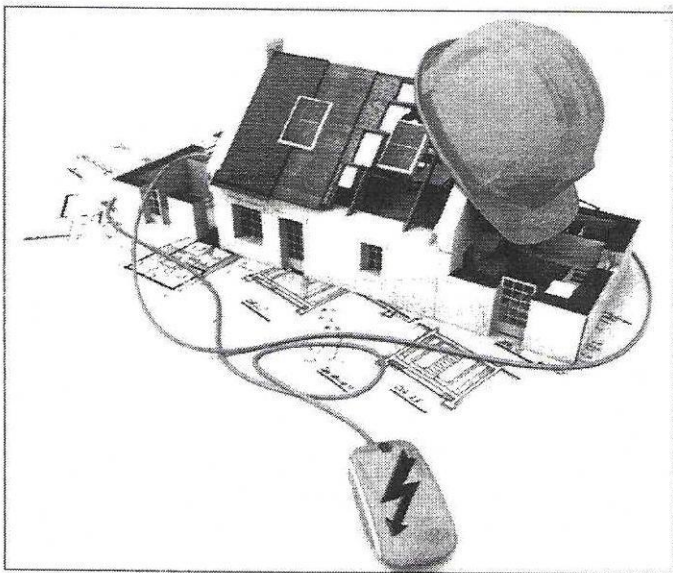
- An electrical heating grid under sidewalks and driveways: especially in colder climates, to save on snow shoveling

- Heated bathroom floors
- Undercounter lighting in kitchens, and skylights in unused attic space

- Remodeling garages into state-of-the-art man caves: including additional electrical outlets; pulling wire for cable TV, telephone and Wi-Fi connections

- Electronic shading: including wireless electronic shading for automated lighting and shade control

- Lighting controls: universal dimmers that control a variety of lighting hardware; photosensor controls that turn off when daylight is sufficient; motion sensors that fit into standard wall boxes and switch off the lights when nobody is around; help



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MANY BABY BOOMERS are upgrading their homes with electrical improvements.

with compact fluorescent (CFL) and light-emitting diodes (LEDs) during the incandescent phase-out

- Energy management control systems to govern the overall heating, cooling and lighting systems

- Increasing the amperage in the kitchen to allow simultaneous use of multiple appliances

- Adding outdoor outlets for holiday lighting

- Wireless technology: lead by Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, including computer networking, gaming and movies, home office, appliance and energy management, smartphones, home security, power strips, thermostats, energy controllers, smart meters and other devices

- Home automation: New apps on tablets and smartphones can manage homes

remotely; since many homeowners install an entertainment system in one room with plans to integrate lighting controls or thermostats in the future, electrical contractors can put an automation backbone in place ahead of a completely integrated system

- Solar and wind power products: recommending and installing off-the-shelf wind generators and solar energy products on rooftops and in backyards that may also qualify for state and federal rebates

Combining similar projects with neighbors — such as installing outdoor spot-lighting on plantings — can also help save on home upgrades.

For more information, go to *Electrical Contractor* magazine at www.ecmag.com and click onto the Residential tab.