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THE WELCOME MAT

More and more Americans are becoming direct-it-yourselfers... that's "DIY" for a new millennium. If they're not actually doing the work on home improvements and renovations themselves, they are doing the research, planning and hiring. But before you take anything on, make sure you are armed with the right info. What you don't know can cost you. For example, did you know that a subcontractor on your project could put a lien against your home if the main contractor does not pay him for work done, even if YOU have paid that main contractor in full for completing the project? It's true, but also easily avoidable. Listen to our nationally syndicated radio show for more and read on...

SHORT CUTS

Power Snow Removal

The power and convenience of a snow thrower can turn a winter shoveling chore into a quick and easy job. There are several sizes on the market today, and whether you have a small walkway or a 100-yard driveway, there's a machine to meet your specific snow removal needs.

Most small, lightweight snow throwers (3HP) are electric and ideal for short sidewalks, steps and decks or patios. Most medium models (5HP to 8HP) are single stage units and typically handle up to 12 inches of snow. Most of the larger snow throwers (8HP to 12Hp and above) are dual stage machines and typically handle heavy-duty snowfall and larger clearing areas. Most snow throwers weigh somewhere between 38 to 275 pounds, and have either gas or electric powered engines. Many models are propelled, to make operation easier for the user.

Snow throwers vary a great deal in price. The amount you spend depends on the type of machine and the specific features it offers. In general, most small, single stage snow throwers run about \$300 to \$500. Dual stage snow throwers can cost anywhere \$600 to more than \$1,500. To help make your choice easier, decide who will be operating it, how large of an area needs to be cleared and whether or not you have room to store it. That should get you on your way to finding a model and size that works for you.