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**Jill C. Kline & Brenda K. Odenbaugh**

Owners  
Jill: 970-388-2926  
[jill@kandorealty.com](mailto:jill@kandorealty.com)  
Brenda: 970-381-1169  
[brenda@kandorealty.com](mailto:brenda@kandorealty.com)  
[www.kandorealty.com](http://www.kandorealty.com)



**K & O**  
**REALTY, LLC**

K & O REALTY, LLC  
P.O. Box 1103  
607 Main St  
Platteville, CO 80651

## HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

### Rest easy with these 5 bedroom design tips

Although guests may not frequently view the owner's bedroom, it's worth investing a little time and money into creating a place for you to relax. Here are some suggestions to think about when designing your bedroom oasis:

- **A proportionate bed:** While a king-size or four-poster bed may sound tempting, if your square footage is tight, an oversize bed will make your room feel cramped. Make sure there is enough space on both sides of the bed to walk comfortably.
- **Adequate storage:** A room that is lacking in functional storage space will quickly fill up with clutter. Try a bed frame with built-in drawers if there's no room for an extra dresser or chest.
- **Soothing wall colors:** Save bold paint colors for high-energy rooms like the kitchen or dining room. Go with soft blues, grays or neutrals to maintain a calm atmosphere in the bedroom.
- **Ample natural light:** Avoid placing furniture in front of windows, or compensate with other light sources such as floor lamps and track lighting.
- **Mixed and matched furniture:** Rather than buying a complete bedroom set, add personality to your room by using different furniture pieces that complement one another. Use varying shapes and finishes to keep the design interesting.

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### Prepare your home for the holidays

As the holiday season approaches, you may be planning several gatherings for family and friends. Clean and organize your home ahead of time so you can focus on your guests when they arrive.

**Clean kitchen appliances.** The microwave is about to earn its keep, so give it a thorough cleaning before the festivities begin. Remove the rotating plate to wash by hand or in the dishwasher, and wipe down the inside walls and door. Purge your refrigerator of unwanted leftovers and expired food, and reorganize whatever is left to free up space for casseroles and food trays. Ensure that nothing is blocking the cold air vents in the refrigerator or freezer.

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**Don't clean the oven.** The self-clean cycle is hard on ovens and often leaves behind an unpleasant aroma. Unless your oven is overly dirty, save the deep clean for after the holidays.

**Purify your coffee maker.** If you have a group of coffee-drinkers heading to town, give your coffee maker a good cleansing so it's ready to brew multiple pots a day. Run a cycle of vinegar and water, followed by two cycles of plain water. Thoroughly scrub the basket and pot.

**Be prepared.** Place a nonslip rug by the doors to wipe wet shoes. Be sure to have a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen, and test smoke alarms throughout the house. Buy a first-aid kit and basic over-the-counter medications to have on hand.

**Stock bathrooms.** Give bathrooms a deep clean and stock with extra hand towels, toilet paper and facial tissues in easy-to-find places. Consider placing a scented candle in each bathroom as well.

**Childproof your home.** If you don't have young children but will be hosting families with babies and toddlers, childproof your home by moving breakable decor out of reach, covering all outlets and safely blocking off your staircases.

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## How to choose the right LED lighting

*Houzz.com* offers these four tips for finding the perfect LED bulb.

- **Brightness:** First, check the package label for the equivalent incandescent bulb wattage (such as 60, 75 or 100 watts) to determine how much brightness your space needs.
- **Costs:** A 60-watt-equivalent basic LED bulb costs about \$1.50. Keep in mind that prices tend to increase significantly for longer-life and specialty bulbs.
- **Color appearance:** Consider a room's decor and the time of day it's used most when choosing a color appearance (or "temperature"). Warm light complements natural-looking furnishings and is best for evenings, while cool-colored bulbs provide sharp lighting for a kitchen or home office during the day.
- **CRI:** The color rendering index (CRI) measures how realistic colors will appear when lit by a bulb. A CRI of 90 or above is recommended.

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## Mistakes that make your house look cluttered

Keeping your house organized can be challenging when household items constantly pile up. To cut back on clutter, avoid these common habits.

**A non-functioning entryway:** If you don't have a mudroom, your entryway is likely to appear cluttered with shoes, jackets, umbrellas, and bags. Create designated spaces for these items by adding attractive baskets for shoes and accessories and by placing a coat rack just inside the door.

**Organizing papers in piles:** Even if loose papers are neatly organized in stacks, they still make a room look messy. Throw unnecessary paperwork away immediately, and create a simple filing system for important papers so you can prevent piles from accumulating on tables and kitchen counters.

**Excessive toys:** Sort and give away all but the favorite toys your kids play with most often, and do your best to keep toys contained in only one or two rooms in the house. Moving forward, request gift cards for experiences (like movie tickets or zoo passes) rather than new toys for your kids.

**Hanging reminders on the refrigerator:** Displaying lots of invitations and to-do lists on your fridge is distracting. Instead, hang a bulletin board or chalkboard to keep important information visible but organized.

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## Maple-Glazed Sweet Potatoes

**Ingredients**

8 medium sweet potatoes  
8 Tbsp. butter  
1 cup brown sugar  
6 Tbsp. maple syrup  
½ tsp. ground nutmeg

**Directions**

Preheat oven to 375° F. Lightly coat a 9 x 13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Peel potatoes and cut into 1-inch cubes. Spread potatoes in baking dish.

Melt butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add sugar and stir until dissolved. Mix in syrup and nutmeg. Pour glaze over potatoes, and stir to coat.

Cover with foil. Bake for 45-60 minutes, stirring once halfway through. Potatoes are done when they are tender but still hold their shape.

Serves 8



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The Personal Marketing Company  
11511 W. 83rd Terrace  
Lenexa, KS 66214