

blueprint

July 2026 | Volume 62 | Issue 7

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BASEMENTS AND BONUS ROOMS

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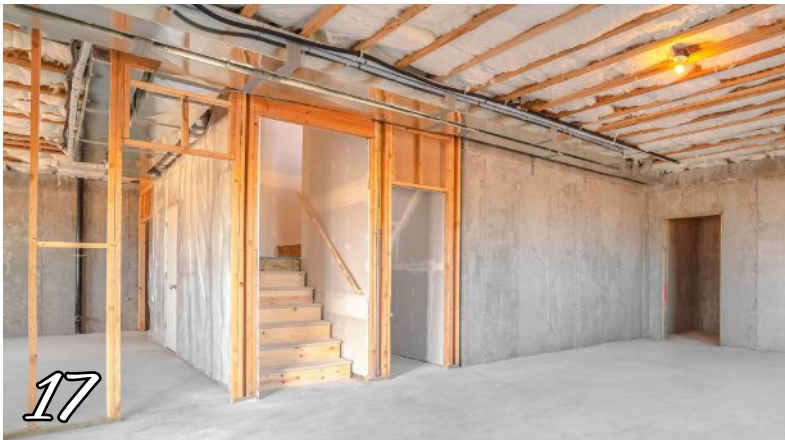
Cover photo provided by Mirza Kudic Photography



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Smart Spaces, Lasting Value: Integrating Technology into Basements and Bonus Rooms

By J² Audio Video & Lighting

When today's homeowners invest in a finished basement, remodeled garage, or dedicated entertainment space, they are creating custom lifestyle environments that reflect how they live, relax, and connect. Whether it's a high-performance home theater, an immersive golf simulator, or a hidden residential speakeasy, these rooms are becoming signature features in mid-to-highend homes across the Midwest.

THE HOME THEATER: MORE THAN JUST A BIG SCREEN

A true home theater isn't just a large TV and a standard soundbar. It's a fully engineered environment where acoustics, lighting, video, and room dynamics work together to create complete immersion. For custom builders, the best results happen when technology is considered early in the architectural process. Simple structural decisions made early can make or break the final experience. Consider:

- **Dedicated power circuits** to eliminate electrical noise and protect sensitive gear.

- **Proper wall construction** — staggered studs, soundproof drywall, or decoupled walls improve audio and prevent sound bleed.
- **Pre-wiring** for in-wall speakers, motorized projection screens, and ambient lighting to future-proof the space.
- **Ventilation and equipment storage** — built-in custom cabinets with active cooling are essential to manage AV gear heat.

When planned from the start, the theater feels seamlessly integrated into the home, no matter the room's location.

GOLF SIMULATORS: FROM HYBRID TO FULLY CUSTOM

Golf simulators are one of our most frequently requested features — especially in Iowa, where winter weather limits outdoor play for nearly half the year. Because they are not one-size-fits-all, options range from simple setups to dedicated custom entertainment spaces.

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Some clients start with a portable hybrid setup: a high-quality turf mat and impact screen for indoor winter use, paired with a portable launch monitor they can carry to the driving range in summer. This offers great flexibility without a permanent build-out.

Others go all-in with dedicated rooms featuring advanced structural reinforcement, theater-level audio, climate control, and online global streaming to compete with golfers around the world. These spaces often double as entertainment zones, complete with wet bars, lounge seating, and nostalgic arcade games.

For those with ample space, pre-engineered golf building kits offer turnkey structures assembled on a backyard slab, fully wired and ready to play. They provide a true retreat without the complexity of a home addition.



Regardless of scale, a professional-grade simulator requires proactive planning:

- **Ceiling clearance** — at least 10 feet of clear height for full swings.
- **Structural reinforcement** — secure mounting for impact screens and safety netting.
- **Lighting control** — automated or dimmable lighting to keep ambient light from washing out projector images.
- **Flooring and acoustics** — rubberized flooring to protect the structure and reduce noise.

THE RISE OF THE RESIDENTIAL SPEAKEASY

Another growing trend is the residential speakeasy — a hidden, mood-driven lounge blending classic craftsmanship with modern tech. These rooms rely entirely on atmosphere: dimmable lighting, rich textures, concealed entryways, and hidden audio.



Execution requires precise planning. Hidden doors need structural support and swing clearance. Lighting must be layered — ambient, accent, and task — and fully automated. When builders collaborate with integrators early, they can design spaces where technology enhances the experience without sacrificing aesthetics.

For these intimate spaces, Sonance invisible speakers are a perfect selection. They align with the manufacturer’s philosophy, “What do you want your sound to look like?” They deliver rich, immersive audio throughout the lounge without altering architectural details.

WHY EARLY COLLABORATION MATTERS

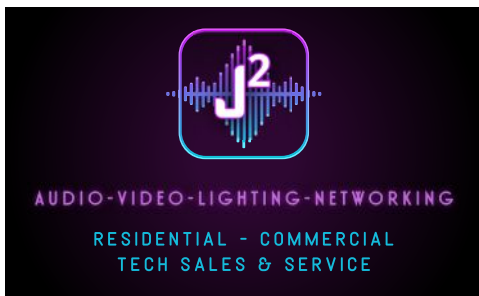
What happens behind the walls matters just as much as what is in front of them. I recently worked with a custom home client whose builder did not involve a technology integrator. When the client called me to design a golf simulator, we hit a hard limit: the ceiling was 18 inches too short.

The only solution was tearing out the concrete floor, lowering the basement by three feet, repouring the slab, and rebuilding the room. The cost was just under \$80,000, alongside months of delay and major disruption. A five-minute conversation during design would have prevented this nightmare.

I encourage builders and designers to bring in a technology partner early. A quick consultation identifies critical clearances and infrastructure needs before construction begins. It is not about selling gear; it is about preventing costly overruns. Simple steps like installing low-voltage conduits, reserving equipment

rack space, and planning network infrastructure go a long way. Early collaboration positions you as a thoughtful, fullservice partner who anticipates problems before they happen, building lasting client trust.

At J2 Audio Video & Lighting, we don't just install gear; we engineer environments. The "why" behind these spaces comes down to helping families and friends spend meaningful time together. Movies, indoor golf, and quiet lounges keep loved ones close. As a prominent industry CEO noted, "We aren't selling lighting — we are building environments that have a WHY." That is the real return on investment. If you are an Iowa builder or designer looking to deliver smarter, future-ready homes, let's build spaces that truly live well.



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CORE VALUE SPOTLIGHT

Keith Butz

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DEDICATED

For more than a decade, Keith Butz has demonstrated what dedication truly looks like through his leadership of the DSM HBA Golf League. From organizing weekly pairings to managing communications with participants, Keith consistently goes above and beyond to ensure the league runs smoothly and provides a great experience for everyone involved.

Thank you, Keith, for your unwavering dedication to the DSM HBA and for all you do to support our members!

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MESSAGE FROM MITCH JOHNSON

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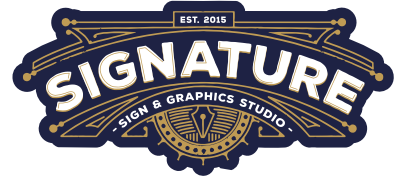
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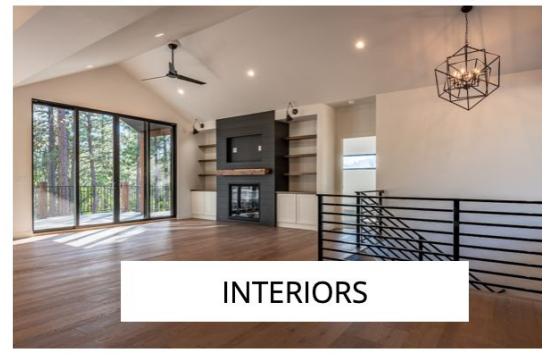


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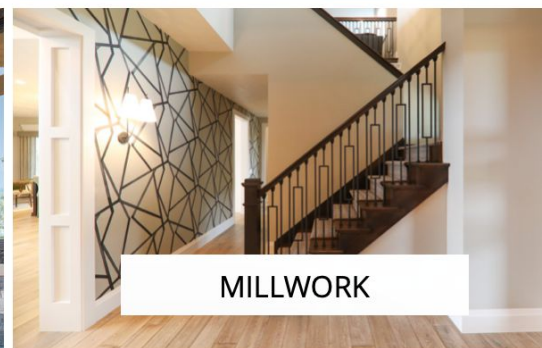
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Caring for Your Home From the Ground Up: What Every Homeowner Should Know About Basements and Bonus Rooms

By BAM! Basements and Masons

When homeowners think about maintaining their homes, they often focus on visible areas such as the roof, siding, landscaping, or kitchen upgrades. However, two of the most valuable spaces in a home, the basement and bonus rooms, are often overlooked until problems happen in those spaces. Whether they are used for storage, entertainment, additional living space, or a home office, these areas require regular attention and maintenance to protect both your investment and your family's comfort.

Understanding how to care for these spaces can help prevent costly repairs, improve indoor air quality, and extend the life of your home.

WHY BASEMENTS DESERVE SPECIAL ATTENTION AND CARE

Your basement serves as the foundation to your home, both literally and structurally. Because it is below ground level, it is constantly exposed to moisture from the surrounding soil. Even homes that appear dry can develop issues over time if small warning signs are ignored.

One of the most common concerns homeowners face is moisture intrusion. Water can enter through foundation cracks, window wells, floor joints, or areas where the soil around the home does not drain properly. While a small damp spot may seem insignificant, persistent moisture can create conditions that encourage mold growth, wood rot, and structural deterioration.

Homeowners should periodically inspect their basement for:

- Musty odors
- Water stains on walls or floors
- Efflorescence (a white, chalky substance on concrete surfaces)
- Cracks in foundation walls
- Warped flooring or trim
- Excess humidity or condensation

Maintaining gutters and downspouts is one of the easiest ways to reduce basement water issues. Downspouts should direct water several feet away

from the home's foundation, and the surrounding landscaping should slope away from the structure to encourage proper drainage.

THE HIDDEN IMPACT OF HUMIDITY ON YOUR BASEMENTS

Even in a basement that never experiences flooding, humidity can create problems. High moisture levels can damage stored belongings, encourage mold growth, and negatively impact indoor air quality throughout the home.

Experts generally recommend keeping basement humidity levels between 30 and 50 percent. A simple hygrometer can help homeowners monitor humidity levels, while a dehumidifier may be beneficial during humid months.

Proper ventilation is equally important. Ensuring air circulates throughout the basement can reduce stagnant conditions that allow moisture to accumulate.

FOUNDATION HEALTH MATTERS

Your foundation works around the clock to support the entire structure above it. Over time, soil movement, seasonal temperature changes, and water pressure can place stress on foundation walls.



While small hairline cracks are common, homeowners should monitor any changes in size, width, or direction. Signs that may indicate a more significant structural concern include:

- Horizontal cracks in foundation walls
- Bowing or leaning walls
- Doors and windows sticking unexpectedly.
- Uneven floors
- Visible separation between walls and ceilings

Regular inspections can help identify concerns early before they become more extensive and expensive to address.

MAKING THE MOST OF BONUS ROOMS

Bonus rooms have become increasingly popular as homeowners seek flexible living spaces. Whether located above a garage, in a finished attic, or as an addition to the home, these rooms often serve multiple purposes over their lifetime. Because bonus rooms are sometimes converted from areas not originally designed as living space, they can present unique maintenance challenges. Temperature control is one of the most common concerns. Homeowners frequently notice that bonus rooms become hotter in the summer and colder in the winter than the rest of the house. This often results from insufficient insulation, inadequate airflow, or HVAC systems that were not originally designed to accommodate the additional square footage.

To improve comfort and efficiency:

- Check insulation levels in walls and ceilings.
- Ensure vents are open and unobstructed.
- Seal gaps around windows and doors.
- Consider ceiling fans to improve air circulation.

Proper insulation not only improves comfort but can also reduce energy costs throughout the year.

STORAGE AND ORGANIZATION BEST PRACTICES

Both basements and bonus rooms often become catch-all storage areas. While these spaces provide valuable storage capacity, poor organization can create safety hazards and increase the risk of damage. Homeowners should avoid storing items directly on basement floors where moisture exposure is possible. Instead, use shelving or storage containers to keep belongings elevated.

Important documents, family photographs, and electronics should be stored in climate-controlled environments whenever possible. Labeling storage bins and conducting seasonal cleanouts can also help maximize usable space and prevent clutter from accumulating.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR FINISHED SPACES

As more homeowners convert basements and bonus rooms into living areas, safety becomes increasingly important. Finished basements should include properly functioning smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. Homeowners should also ensure emergency exits always remain accessible. In many areas, finished basement bedrooms require egress windows that allow occupants to exit safely during an emergency. For bonus rooms located above garages, proper fire separation and ventilation should be maintained according to local building codes. Regularly testing smoke detectors, replacing batteries, and reviewing emergency escape plans can provide valuable peace of mind.

PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT YEAR-ROUND

A well-maintained basement and bonus room can significantly increase the functionality, comfort, and value of a home. By addressing moisture concerns, monitoring foundation health, maintaining proper ventilation, and staying proactive with inspections, homeowners can prevent many common issues before they become major repairs. Like many aspects of homeownership, routine maintenance is often the key to long-term success. Spending a little time each season evaluating these spaces can help ensure they remain safe, comfortable, and enjoyable for years to come. Your basement may be out of sight, and your bonus room may not get daily attention, but both play a significant role in the overall health of your home. Caring for these areas today can help protect one of your most valuable investments tomorrow.



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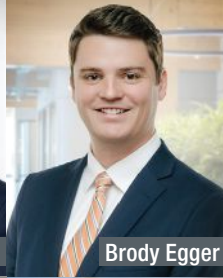
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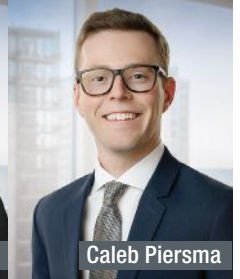
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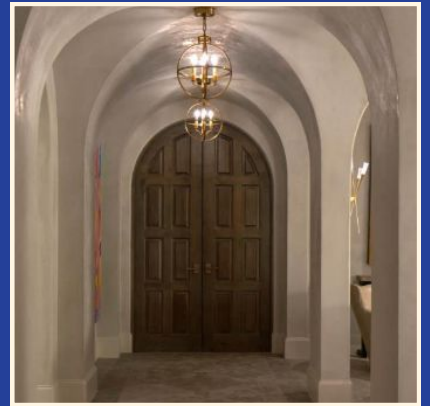
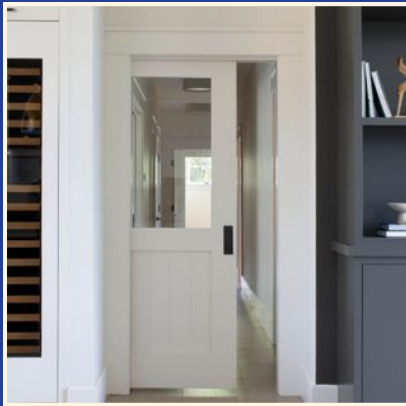
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Local Leaders Join National Housing Conversation

During a visit to a Habitat for Humanity development in Waukee, HUD Secretary Scott Turner and Congressman Zach Nunn convened a roundtable with local housing leaders—including members of the home building industry—to discuss the future of affordable housing in Iowa.

Conversation centered on practical challenges facing builders and developers, from regulatory hurdles to construction costs, as well as opportunities to expand housing supply through partnerships and policy reform.





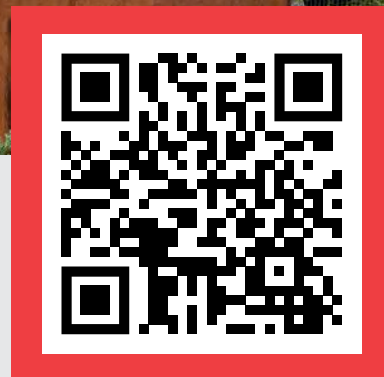
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MEMBER NEWS



CONGRATULATIONS TO ETHAN STAHL

Congratulations to Ethan Stahl with Beisser Lumber Company for being selected to the LBM Journal 40 Under 40 Class of 2026!



2026 GENYP OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Kris Klabunde on being named the Urbandale Chamber's 2026 YP of the Year!

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PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN BUILDING

MESSAGE FROM JAMIE ELROD



Upcoming Events

JULY 21
11:30 – 1:00 PM
PWB EXEC

HIDALGO
2675 100TH ST
URBANDALE

JULY 28
9:45 – 11:00 AM
COFFEE CLUB

ST. KILDA COLLECTIVE
333 5TH ST
WEST DES MOINES
SPEED NETWORKING

JULY 31
10:00 – 3:00 PM
GOLF GET-TOGETHER

WILLOW CREEK
140 SE WILLOW CREEK DR
WEST DES MOINES
RSVP HERE BY JULY 10

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JULY EVENTS

ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD AT THE HBA OFFICE UNLESS NOTED

2 Thursday

**HBA OFFICE CLOSING
AT 12:00 PM**

3 Friday

HBA OFFICE CLOSED

6 Monday

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
8:00-9:30 AM**

HBA GOLF LEAGUE

4:30 PM
LEGACY GOLF CLUB
400 LEGACY PKWY, NORWALK

7 Tuesday

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

11:00-1:00 PM
IOWA STATE CAPITOL
1007 E GRAND AVE, DES MOINES

TOUR OF THE IOWA STATE CAPITOL

1:00 PM
IOWA STATE CAPITOL
1007 E GRAND AVE, DES MOINES

8 Wednesday

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

2:00-3:00 PM

9 Thursday

NETWORKING AFTER HOURS

4:30-6:30 PM
CKF
11271 MEREDITH DR, URBANDALE

13 Monday

HBA GOLF LEAGUE

4:30 PM
LEGACY GOLF CLUB
400 LEGACY PKWY, NORWALK

16 Thursday

DEVELOPERS COUNCIL

10:00-11:00 AM

20 Monday

LUNCH BUNCH

11:30-1:00 PM
HBA PARKING LOT

HBA GOLF LEAGUE

4:30 PM
LEGACY GOLF CLUB
400 LEGACY PKWY, NORWALK

21 Tuesday

HOMESHOWEXPO COMMITTEE MEETING

9:00-10:00 AM

PWB EXEC

11:30-1:00 PM
HIDALGO
2675 100TH ST, URBANDALE

22 Wednesday

DALE CARNEGIE EDUCATIONAL BREAKFAST

8:30-10:00 AM

AMBASSADOR COMMITTEE

11:30-12:30 PM

27 Monday

HBA GOLF LEAGUE

4:30 PM
LEGACY GOLF CLUB
400 LEGACY PKWY, NORWALK

28 Tuesday

PWB COFFEE CLUB

9:45-11:00 AM
ST. KILDA COLLECTIVE
333 5TH ST, WEST DES MOINES

31 Friday

PWB GOLF GET-TOGETHER

10:00-3:00 PM
WILLOW CREEK
140 SE WILLOW CREEK DR,
WEST DES MOINES

BEGINNING OF AUGUST

3 Monday

HBA GOLF LEAGUE

4:30 PM
LEGACY GOLF CLUB
400 LEGACY PKWY, NORWALK

5 Wednesday

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

2:00-3:00 PM

6 Thursday

NETWORKING AFTER HOURS

4:30-6:30 PM
PELLA WINDOWS & DOORS OF
CENTRAL IOWA
4740 121ST ST, URBANDALE

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PERMIT TOTALS

2025			
CITY	SF	TH	MF
Adel	5	0	0
Altoona	12	0	0
Ames	5	0	0
Ankeny	20	46	0
Bondurant	5	0	0
Carlisle	0	0	0
Clive	5	0	0
Cumming	0	0	0
Dallas County	0	0	0
Des Moines	21	0	125
Grimes	6	0	0
Huxley	0	0	0
Indianola	6	0	0
Johnston	4	0	0
Newton	0	0	0
Norwalk	0	0	0
Pella	0	0	0
Pleasant Hill	5	0	0
Polk City	2	0	0
Polk County	12	0	0
Urbandale	28	8	0
Waukee	33	0	0
West Des Moines	18	0	16
TOTAL	187	54	141
382			

2026			
CITY	SF	TH	MF
Adel	1	0	0
Altoona	17	0	0
Ames	12	0	0
Ankeny	28	4	0
Bondurant	9	0	0
Carlisle	0	0	0
Clive	6	0	0
Cumming	0	0	0
Dallas County	0	0	0
Des Moines	13	0	0
Grimes	17	0	80
Huxley	4	0	0
Indianola	3	0	0
Johnston	12	0	0
Newton	0	0	0
Norwalk	20	0	0
Pella	5	0	0
Pleasant Hill	6	8	0
Polk City	6	0	0
Polk County	10	0	0
Urbandale	17	0	0
Waukee	17	0	0
West Des Moines	14	6	0
TOTAL	217	18	80
315			

CLICK BELOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE MONTHLY DETAILED BUILDING PERMIT REPORT:



BUILDER INFORMATION | SITE ADDRESSES | RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

YEAR TO DATE

PERMIT TOTALS

2025				2026			
CITY	SF	TH	MF	CITY	SF	TH	MF
Adel	30	0	0	Adel	34	0	0
Altoona	53	0	0	Altoona	67	0	0
Ames	39	0	0	Ames	31	41	0
Ankeny	133	229	462	Ankeny	158	44	0
Bondurant	19	0	0	Bondurant	44	0	0
Carlisle	10	0	0	Carlisle	0	0	0
Clive	22	0	0	Clive	14	0	0
Cumming	0	0	0	Cumming	0	0	0
Dallas County	0	0	0	Dallas County	6	0	0
Des Moines	84	49	650	Des Moines	62	0	70
Grimes	26	48	0	Grimes	49	0	160
Huxley	0	0	0	Huxley	8	1	0
Indianola	36	0	0	Indianola	17	0	0
Johnston	35	12	0	Johnston	43	36	0
Newton	0	0	0	Newton	0	0	0
Norwalk	14	0	0	Norwalk	78	0	0
Pella	0	0	0	Pella	28	0	0
Pleasant Hill	19	0	0	Pleasant Hill	28	18	0
Polk City	30	0	0	Polk City	36	0	0
Polk County	35	0	0	Polk County	31	0	0
Urbandale	138	30	0	Urbandale	124	40	0
Waukee	162	0	50	Waukee	116	36	91
West Des Moines	82	20	16	West Des Moines	56	24	0
TOTAL	967	388	1178	TOTAL	1030	240	321
2533				1591			

NEED TO FIND SOMEONE FOR A PROJECT?

WE HAVE A MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY! FIND OUR MEMBERS BY CATEGORY IN THE BUYER'S GUIDE FOR EXPERTISE.

**MEMBERSHIP
DIRECTORY**





Beyond the Main Floor: How Basements and Bonus Rooms Add Value to Your Home

By Clarity Homes

When designing a new home, most homeowners focus on the kitchen, great room, and primary suite. While these spaces are essential, some of the most valuable square footage in a home can be found beyond the main floor.

Basements and bonus rooms provide flexibility, functionality, and room to grow—allowing homeowners to create spaces that fit their lifestyle today while adapting to future needs. When you're building a custom, these additional living areas can dramatically enhance the way you live, entertain, and enjoy your home.

THE ULTIMATE SPACE FOR ENTERTAINING

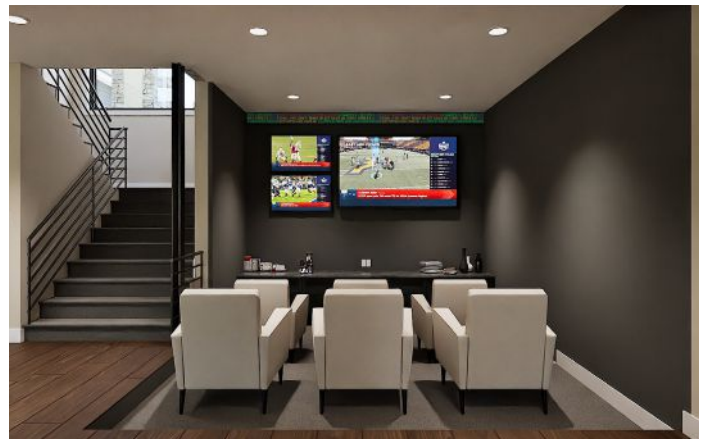
For many homeowners, a finished basement becomes the go-to destination for gathering family and friends. With additional living space separate from the main floor, homeowners can create game rooms, home theaters, sports lounges, wet bars, or recreation areas that make hosting effortless.

As entertaining trends continue to evolve, homeowners are wanting spaces that allow them to host comfortably while maintaining the functionality of their everyday living areas.

ROOM FOR HOBBIES AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

One of the greatest advantages of bonus rooms and basements is the ability to personalize them. Every homeowner has unique interests, and these flexible spaces can be tailored to support them. Think, home fitness rooms, craft and hobby studios, music rooms, home offices, golf simulators, and whatever else you can dream up.

Unlike traditional living spaces that serve a specific purpose, bonus rooms offer the freedom to evolve alongside your lifestyle.



A SMART INVESTMENT IN YOUR HOME

Beyond the immediate lifestyle benefits, additional finished space can also increase the long-term value and appeal of a home.

Buyers consistently appreciate homes that offer versatility and extra living space. A thoughtfully designed basement or bonus room provides opportunities for future homeowners to envision how the space could fit their own needs, making the home attractive to a wider range of buyers.

A finished basement is one of the most impactful ways to add functional living space to a home. Industry studies show homeowners can often recoup 70–75% of their investment in added home value.

Zillow, “Does a Finished Basement Add Value?” (2025), reporting an average return on investment of approximately 70% for finished basement projects.

THE ADVANTAGE OF BUILDING CUSTOM

One of the greatest benefits of building a custom home is the ability to plan these spaces from the beginning. Rather than treating a basement or bonus room as an afterthought, homeowners can intentionally design areas that align with their lifestyle, hobbies, and future goals.

At Clarity Homes, we work closely with homeowners to understand how they live and what matters most to them. Whether it’s creating the ultimate entertainment space, designing a private retreat, we help ensure every square foot serves a purpose.



Our mission is to Build Better Living. Because the best homes aren’t just built for today—they’re thoughtfully designed for the way you’ll live, gather, and grow for years to come.

CLARITY HOMES

BY CLARITY CONSTRUCTION

Clarity Homes

www.clarityconstruction.com

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RETENTION

BY THE NUMBERS

85%

RETENTION GOAL

87%

YEAR TO DATE

84%

MONTHLY

RECRUITING

TOP MONTHLY RECRUITERS

1

Marc Lee
NEW IOWA LISTINGS
RE/MAX PRECISION

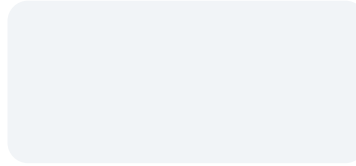
2

Derek Temple
TEMPLE REAL ESTATE SERVICES

3

Justin Bauer
CLARITY CONSTRUCTION
EPCON COMMUNITIES

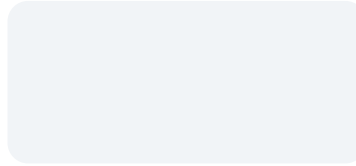
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FIRST INTERSTATE BANK
CLIVE
DAN FITZGERALD



STRAIGHT UP FRAMING
AMES
MATTHEW MONTANGE



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SASSMAN GLASS & MIRROR
DOUG SASSMAN

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STAFF

DSM HBA



DAN KNOUP

Executive Officer
dank@dsmhba.com



JESSICA VERWERS

Director of Membership
jessicav@dsmhba.com



BRANDON PATTERSON

Workforce Development
brandon@dsmhba.com



KATIE NEIBAUER

Director of Events
& Partnerships
katie@dsmhba.com



MOLLY NIEBERGALL

Graphic Designer
& Brand Manager
molly@dsmhba.com

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