

Buyer Beware! This Could Be Expensive

(March 20, 2006) -- Rather than being enamored with the fashionable décor, smart home buyers should pay attention to aspects of a home that really count in the long run, says Greg Haskett, vice president of HomeTeam Inspection Service Inc., an Ohio-based national franchiser. Here are Haskett's chief buyer beware's:

- Driveways, walkways, or low spots that pitch toward the home. Water should be directed away from the foundation, not toward it. The cost to regrade or repair: \$1,000 to \$10,000.
- Wall cracks in the basement or interior rooms. As a foundation shifts, floors and walls can move with it. It could be a sign of age, sagging or bowed basement walls, or other factors. Cost to repair the foundation: \$10,000 to \$30,000.
- Buckled or wavy roofing. Caused by aging shingles, heat trapped in an unventilated attic or ice dams. Cost to repair or replace faulty roofing: \$2,500 to \$20,000.
- High utility bills. If the heating or cooling bills are whoppers, the insulation and drafty windows could be upgraded or replaced. Cost for new windows: \$2,000 to \$15,000 installed. Insulation costs: \$750 for the attic.
- Aging infrastructure. The furnace may be a relic and air conditioners may be aging or inadequate. Inefficient HVAC systems will probably need a total makeover. Cost to repair and replace major components: \$5,000 and up.
- Sagging or cracked floors or ceilings. May be evidence of past water damage or damaged support beams. Cost to replace: \$1,500 to \$7,500.

Source:

- The Washington Post, David Bradley (03/18/06)