



November 5, 2009

Sioux Falls sets remodeling record

Kelly Thurman

kthurman@argusleader.com

Remodeling continues to be a bright spot for the construction industry even as building permit values in Sioux Falls dwindle.

Through October, \$31.2 million in residential remodels and additions were permitted in Sioux Falls, the highest amount on record for that period. The previous high was in 2006 with \$30.7 million through October, according to Jeff Schmidt, assistant director of planning and building services.

"They may not be building new homes, but they're putting money into their homes," Schmidt said.

So far this year, 5,579 building permits have been issued, a slight increase from the previous year when 5,490 were issued. But building permit values continue to be down, as is single-family home construction.

Through October, 418 building permits for single-family homes were issued, compared to 484 in 2008 and 827 in 2007.

Doris Krekelberg and her husband, Jim, recently remodeled their kitchen. She said reasonable interest rates made this year the right time to do it.

"I think for us it was we've been in our home since 1983. We enjoy the neighborhood, and for us it was just we weren't interested in moving, but we just needed to ... modernize our kitchen," she said.

They took out walls, added new cabinetry and flooring and redid the ceilings. Now, Krekelberg said the home will take them into retirement.

Paul Rowenhorst, owner of Handyman Matters, said business has been steady the past year. He attributes it to people making their homes an oasis away from the nation's economic problems.

"They're staying home, and they're wanting to update their space so they can enjoy their home environment a little more," Rowenhorst said.

Rowenhorst won't be breaking any records with business this year, but said he's doing everything from small jobs to full-house remodels.

There's also the fact that many remodeling jobs can only be put off for so long, said Terry Konechne of Konechne Building. As time goes on, homes need shingles or new siding and kitchens become out-of-date, he said.

"The phone is ringing," he said. "There are things out there that need to be done, and people are calling and they are asking."

Reach Kelly Thurman at 331-2322.

Additional Facts

By the numbers

\$31.2 million: Value of residential remodeling and additions in Sioux Falls through October.

\$30.7 million: The previous high in the same period.

418: Building permits for single-family homes this year.
