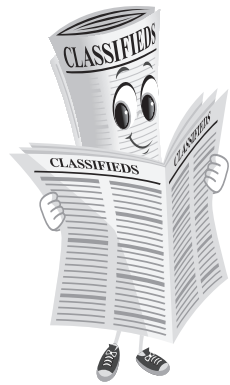


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How to make your home feel warm, bright, and welcoming this North Dakota winter

By: Nicole White

During the winter months, homeowners often look for small, manageable projects that improve comfort and functionality without requiring major renovations. Patrice Gerber, CEO of KOUBOO Artisan Decor & Furniture, shares quick and budget-friendly home improvement ideas that can be tackled in just a few hours or a weekend. These updates focus on how homes are actually lived in, not

just how they look in photos, while also supporting long-term value.

Gerber explains that lighting is one of the fastest ways to change how a home feels, especially during the winter months. Many rooms rely heavily on overhead lighting, which can create a flat effect. Adding table lamps, floor lamps, or accent lighting introduces a warmer tone and creates a more welcoming atmosphere. Soft bulbs and gentle lighting

levels help the home feel balanced throughout the day and evening. When daylight is limited, layering light sources can dramatically change how a space looks and how people feel in it.

Entry points are a natural place to focus next since they immediately set the tone and style of a space. A freshly painted front door, a welcoming doormat, or a simple console table can instantly signal care and style. Even small upgrades like a catchall tray, wall hooks, or a bench can improve flow and make daily routines feel more organized. Adding a runner in the hall or a clean statement mirror continues this feeling throughout the entrance.

Adding smart small appliances is a budget-friendly way to make a home feel up-to-date. Simple upgrades like a programmable thermostat, motion-sensor lighting, or energy-efficient faucets show that the home is well cared for.

A fresh coat of paint is an easy way to boost a home's appeal. A fresh coat of paint brightens walls, hides imperfections, and gives older rooms a cleaner and more contemporary atmosphere. Even painting trim or interior doors can provide a renewed sense of polish with surprisingly little effort.

Mixing materials such as wood, ceramic, woven elements, and soft upholstery adds warmth and depth, even in neutral spaces. Swapping flat throw pillows for textured fabrics or subtle patterns is one of the fastest ways to make a room feel finished.

Minor kitchen and bathroom updates can also make a noticeable difference. Replacing an outdated faucet, choosing a simple modern sink, or swapping in a new showerhead creates a feeling of care and attention. These small improvements help the most frequently used rooms feel more current without requiring

a large investment in remodeling.

Hardware changes such as new cabinet pulls, drawer handles, or door-knobs can reshape the look of a room. When finishes match throughout a space, the entire room appears more cohesive and thoughtfully designed. Replacing mismatched switch plates, upgrading outlet covers, or aligning metal finishes within a room are inexpensive changes that elevate a space.

Upgrading floors does not always require installing new materials. Budget-friendly options such as self-adhesive tiles, refinishing existing hardwood, or placing a large area rug can transform the look of a room without a full replacement. A large area rug is also one of the simplest ways to add warmth and softness during colder months, especially in rooms with hard flooring.

A curated approach to belongings also adds value. Removing clutter is not about stripping the existing personality of your home. When surfaces are organized and useful items are stored in a clean way, rooms appear larger, calmer, and easier to enjoy. A simple approach of one functional item, one organic element, and one decorative object keeps coffee tables,

consoles, and nightstands looking styled but livable.

Window treatments are another often overlooked upgrade that makes a room feel complete. Hanging curtains higher and wider than the window frame visually raises ceilings and allows more natural light to enter when opened. Even affordable curtain panels can feel custom when properly sized and paired with a simple rod.

Improving a home does not always mean buying new furniture. Re-evaluating layout by pulling furniture away from walls, creating clear walkways, and anchoring seating around a focal point can make rooms feel larger.

Artwork placement also plays a major role in how polished a space feels. Hanging art at eye level rather than too high creates better visual balance, while grouping smaller pieces together often has more impact than a single undersized frame.

Across all these ideas, the central goal is thoughtful but achievable improvement. Small upgrades can refresh a home and increase functionality. These changes generate a sense of comfort and care that can significantly enhance a home's value.

LEGALS

NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Barnes County Planning and Zoning Board will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 6:00 p.m., in the Commissioners Room of the Barnes County Courthouse, 230 4th Street NW, Valley City, North Dakota, to consider a request from Barnes County to update the Floodplain Ordinance per SB2027.

The public may comment by attending the meeting or in writing to the Barnes County Planning & Zoning Board, 230 4th St NW Rm. 202, Valley City, ND 58072

(December 31, 2025 & January 9, 2026)

BARNES COUNTY PLANNING & ZONING

January 13, 2026 - 6:00PM

Barnes County Courthouse

2nd Floor Commission Chambers

AGENDA

6:00 PM CALL TO ORDER

MINUTES

HEARING - Duane Burchill Jr - Structure Setback Variance of 90' from center of Barnes County 6, NW1/4, 01-142-57, Grand Prairie Twp

HEARING - Barnes County - Update of Floodplain Ordinance per SB2027

BUILDING PERMIT REVIEW

Pembina Cochin LLC - Elec Equip Building -- 10 acres in SE1/4 SW1/4, 22-142-60, Edna Twp; Kyle Olstad - Grain Bin - 10 acres of SW1/4, 25-142-56, Minnie Lake Twp; Mark Luessen - Garage - Aud Lot 1 of NE1/4, 07-139-59, Green Twp; John Stevens - 2 Grain Bins - Aud Lt 1, 10-138-58, Nelson Twp

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LEGALS

(January 9, 2026)

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