

The Daily Home

HOME & GARDEN

Spring 2024

**Dr. and Mrs.
Harold Settle**
and their 400 roses
Page 2A



Tucker Webb/Consolidated Publishing

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YEAR
of the
cicada**



**REFLECTING
THE SPIRIT
of the Coosa
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**ADVICE FROM
local extension
agents**

A FLORAL PARADISE ON THE SHORES OF LOGAN MARTIN LAKE

Varieties of flora abound in the Settles' lakeside landscaping



Dr. Harold Settle admires some of the 400 roses he cultivates in his Cropwell garden
Photos by Tucker Webb/The Daily Home

Written by **FAITH DORN**
Photographed by **TUCKER WEBB**



For Dr. Harold Settle and his wife Virna, their home on the Logan Martin shoreline in Cropwell is a refuge cloaked in nature. The home is surrounded by an astonishing collection of flora planted by the Settles.

"These banana plants were given to us by the neighbor," the doctor said, pointing out an example. "I was doing stress tests at the office one day, and I looked at a patient's address and recognized our street. I told her that Virna always threatens to come over and take some leaves. The neighbor came over the next year with nine banana roots to plant.

"Virna answered the door, and the neighbor asked her if her mother was home—she thought Virna was my daughter," he added with a laugh.

The Settles have an herb garden just outside their back door featuring thyme, basil, parsley, rosemary and lavender. The front corner of the home has two Savannah Holly trees.

The list of plants on the property is expansive, but there are Japanese maple trees, camellias, Japanese cherry trees, ferns, a Dutch iris, a Meyer lemon tree, peppers, clematis, daffodils, hostas, a plum tree, a live oak similar to the ones on Toomer's Corner in Auburn, a Harry Lauder's walking stick plant, a persimmon tree, blueberries, and what this writer would consider enough roses to enter the parade in Pasadena, California.

"The landscaping never stops," Harold said. "There is always something that needs to be done. I had both hips replaced last year, and it has taken me seven to eight months to recover."

With all the upkeep necessary for the yard, the Settles do not sleep late. "Generally, we do all of our work in the morning, and in the afternoons, we don't work. If it is a hot day, we will get in the swimming pool," he said.

"Virna wanted a swimming pool. I did not. She kept after me and would say, 'I don't want to get in the lake; I can't see the bottom.' Finally, after four years, I looked into it and saw that it could work, so we used Hollywood Pools in Vestavia Hills. I don't know why she didn't talk me into it sooner."

According to the doctor, "to properly tour the yard and see everything, it takes about one hour and two glasses of wine."

The wine cellar in their basement stands at the ready for any lengthy lawn tours or for a casual afternoon at home.

"We have some wine every afternoon to relax. We try to drink decent wines, but we do not drink very expensive wines," said Dr. Settle, who stopped practicing cardiology in December 2017, "but I have started working again doing 20 hours a week for Social Security. I am usually here working in the yard."

The grotto in their backyard was formerly a dog pen.

"The stained glass windows in the grotto are from the Veranda on Highland restaurant in Birmingham. I got them from Southern Architecture in Cullman. They have quotes from Hemingway and Shakespeare," Harold said.

The Settles enjoy opera, and when they attended a performance at the Cincinnati Opera Hall, they saw the square window which now also resides in the grotto. It came from an old house in Hyde Park in Cincinnati, which is the area Dr. Settle lived in while training.

The Settles are not the only ones who enjoy the yard. The wildlife

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The Settles' landscaping includes more than 250 varieties of roses.



also likes visiting the lush property. "I was sitting on the patio, and I was on the phone with my mother in Manila. She said, 'What is that noise?' I listened and said, 'Mom, that sound is the birds!'" said Virna.

Harold built the house 30 years ago with his late wife Jean. "We moved in in June of 1994, and we bought the lot next door in 1999 and started landscaping it. I like to landscape and grow things. It is a passion."

The first time he drove out to the lot, there was just a gravel road. He decided he did not want to be on the main channel because of the traffic.

Having grown up in Virginia and gone to the University of Virginia for medical school, Dr. Settle loves Georgian architecture. The house plan is based on a design from Southern Living.

"This house had been built in Raleigh, North Carolina, and we wanted to go see it, but they told us there was one in Greenville, South Carolina, that was decorated that we should go see," he said. "I made some small changes, but basically, we agreed on the plans."

The home is 3,200 square feet, with four bedrooms and three full bathrooms. The master bathroom has a shower, jacuzzi, and closet. The Settles have redone all of the bathrooms in Italian-style stone.

The first major items Dr. Settle bought for the house were the chandelier and medallion in the formal dining room.

"We love to entertain and have people over," he said. "A few weekends ago, we had the River Oaks Homeowners Association over here. There is nothing like living up here on the lake."

Virna feels the same. "The people are so nice. All of the people are great," she said.

When Virna is not working with her husband on their landscaping, she enjoys cooking, art, tennis, and pickleball. She is a local pickleball champion

and is participating in the state tournament in October.

"I came to the United States in the late 1980s, and I came to Birmingham in 1993. I was in the hotel industry, but I worked in the restaurant business for many years," said Virna. When she married Harold, Virna stopped working outside the home and had time to explore new interests, such as creating art. "I started doing paintings first. Then I started doing pottery."

"She is very talented at pottery," the doctor said. "She makes bowls and spoon rests and has also made chopsticks. She's always looking for new ideas."

Dr. Settle enjoys collecting art, and his collection is spread throughout the house. It includes works by Wayne Spradley, Art Bacon, Carl Salter, and Basil Eads, as well as Remington sculptures and Virna Settle originals.

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"We commissioned Richard Tubb from Pepper Place to come in and do a lot of the decoration," he said. "A lot of the furnishings are from his studio. He is responsible for a lot of the interior decorating. You want something that will go with Georgian architecture. We bought the Catholic prayer bench outside Baton Rouge. It is supposed to be from a Spanish church."

Although the Settles feel they have a lakeside paradise, they also enjoy traveling and seeing different cultures. "We have been to France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Jamaica, and throughout the Caribbean," Harold said.

From his perspective, the home has evolved considerably over the last 30 years, including the additions of Virna's grotto and the pizza oven. "But the best addition has been Virna."



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Talladega extension agent shares his knowledge of all things horticultural



Extension agent Chip East with a large blueberry bush / Submitted photo

By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home

Chip East is a regional extension agent who is like a walking encyclopedia when it comes to all things gardening, farming, and horticulture. What started as a hobby has become his vocation, and he uses his knowledge and love for crops to help others.

“I have been gardening for as far back as I can remember,” he said. “As a little boy, picking rocks out the garden around age six or seven I’d say is something I enjoyed, but it was more fun when I got to plant stuff. Then the other fun part is when you get to eat what has grown. So my love for gardening goes way back.”

East worked at a nursery as a teen. As extension agents came in and were so knowledgeable about so much, he found them fascinating and desired to follow in their footsteps to be able to do the same for others. To him, the extension office was like education for adults because the it provides far more information than just about fruits and vegetables. There is information available about food safety, home landscaping, home pests, nutrition, diet, farming, and more.

“The extension office is far from just being one-note when it comes to the information it can help to provide someone,” East says. “I have learned plenty from great extension agents. In fact, I first started going to extension meetings as a kid because I wanted to learn. Then I grew up and now I teach those same meetings that I used to be a part of.”

East’s areas of focus is commercial horticulture. He works with fruit and vegetable farmers, and is an expert on blueberries, grapes, and pecan trees. The counties he covers include Talladega, Calhoun, Chambers, Clay, Cleburne, Lee, Coosa, Macon, Randolph, Russell, and Tallapoosa. For 26 years, he has helped people start farms, answered their gardening or farming questions, given people the encouragement to keep going, and achieved the goal to overall make them more productive.

“I feel like a part of what I do is teach people how to save time, grow more, and be productive. I grow with the farmers and the job at hand is to help them be successful. That may include answering their questions, conducting zoom meetings, phone calls, receiving pictures of bugs or crops, and farm visits. Believe it or not, I answer a ton of questions pertaining to fertilizer. We have a phone app that has plenty of information that is handy as well, but whether from the app or me, the information shared is unbiased research, meaning that this is going to work.”

In an interview with The Daily Home, East had the following to say about fruits, vegetables, the best times to plant, and more.

Q: What fruits are the best to grow in the spring?

East: We can grow a lot, as fruits bloom early. In the spring, I worry about peaches, plums, and blueberries because if it gets cold, they might not bloom again. What blooms now, we are picking. The spring is that time of the year where the possibility of cold weather is definitely a concern, because in the last few years, it has been kind of rough with the cold. I think now we are kind of okay, but we can not say for certain just yet. For strawberries, they will bloom over a long period of time, the heat is what stops their season. One of the good things about most fruits is that we don’t have to replant them each year. For strawberries we do and this is why they are the most expensive crop to plant. When it comes to a peach tree, I will say you can get

about 15 years or so out of a peach tree, but it all just depends. Farming, laboring, and picking the fruit is expensive. This line of work is nothing to be taken lightly because so much goes into it and a lot of times it is done without a lot of help.

Q: What vegetables are the best to grow in the spring?

East: When it comes to vegetables juxtaposed to fruits, we can delay planting vegetables, but we can grow anything it just all depends. Tomatoes get a lot of diseases. Everybody wants to grow them, but they have a lot of diseases or pests. The best outcome of gardening is obtaining that perfect crop. No one wants something that’s rotten or has wormholes. When you go to the grocery store you wouldn’t want a tomato that’s rotten, so the same goes for picking crops and an overall good harvest. But I would say just to list some vegetables, peppers, beans, squash and more. There’s warm and cold vegetables, but spring is the ideal time to plant warm season vegetables. Grow what you like to eat, and always remember that the best thing in a garden is your eyes. Also, I encourage people to try different varieties of vegetables. With different varieties some of them are disease resistant. This could change production and create certain advantages.

Q: What are your thoughts on hybrid fruits?

East: When it comes to hybrid fruits, you first need to understand what a hybrid is. It is a cross of two or more plants, and this is usually done because it was something they didn’t like about that particular fruit. The intent of hybrid fruits is to improve. It may be for better taste and or because it’s more likely to be disease resistant. This can take several years of doing this, trying to get a better quality as far as look or taste. The downside is that sometimes quality can suffer in having a hybrid but this is why it takes time and trial and error. Another downside about hybrids is that you can’t save the seed because it is not a guarantee that it will produce the same thing.

Q: What are the best practices to maintain a pecan tree?

East: Ah, man, I will answer questions about pecan trees all day. I love talking about pecan trees, but the things to keep in mind is to plant more trees and put them further a part. I would recommend 80 ft at minimum, but ideally 100 ft. They are best to be planted in the dormant season. If it is in a pot then any time of the year works, but for bare roots, it is best to plant them in the winter time. They also need weed control, mulch, irrigation, to be kept clean, and rainy years are not good for them as it can encourage diseases.

Q: What is your favorite fruit or vegetable?

East: That’s a tough one, but I would have to go with okra. You just have to pick them every day. As far as a fruit, I would have to go with blueberries. I had a blueberry nursery and can tell you plenty of things about them. In fact, blueberries paid my way through college.



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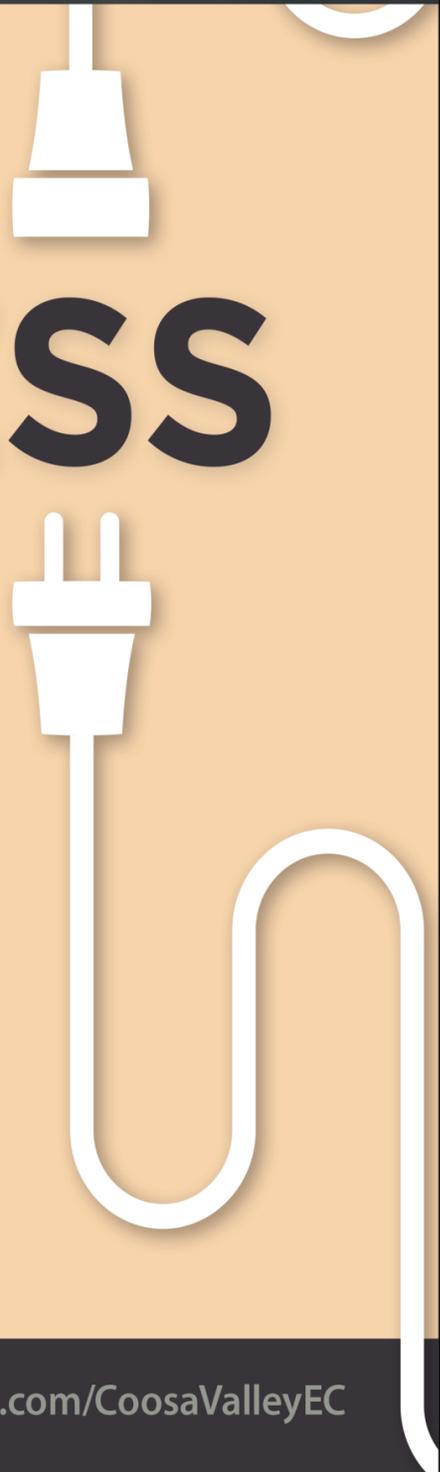
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Furnishing your home Room By Room



The Room By Room staff includes, from left, Greg and Lynn Winningham, Alex Lloyd, Jeff Dobbins and Janet Edwards. / Submitted photo

By **VALLEAN JACKSON**
Special to *The Daily Home*

Furniture is what helps a home feel like home, and there's no better feeling than being able to shop for it locally.

Room By Room in Pell City is a locally owned family business that carries an array of pieces from living room furniture to wall art. It offers a variety of combinations and styles that can be used to furnish a home or business. It has been located in Pell City since 2009, but the owner Greg Winningham has been in the furniture business since he was 16.

"I started this business to meet the growing housing market in the area," he said. "We wanted to offer the great people of Pell City and surrounding areas a place they could furnish their home without having to travel to Birmingham."

Winningham said that as a family owned business, Room By Room strives to treat its customers and employees like extended family. What makes the business unique is that it provides customers a way to fully decorate their home. A customer can walk into the store and see living rooms, dining rooms, and bedrooms completely decorated with everything: sofas, recliners, beds, mattresses, tables, occasional tables, lamps accessories, wall art, rugs, and even greenery.

"We want customers to be able to physically see the vision of what it could look like in their home."

According to Winningham, the knowledgeable sales staff is always willing to offer decorating advice and information to help customers purchase the best fit for their home. Delivery service is always an option or customers are more than welcome to pick up at their own convenience. They offer 12 month interest

free financing with approved credit or they have the option of no credit check available. If a customer is not interested in financing, they can take advantage of their 90 day layaway plan.

"This line of work has allowed me to get to know the people in my community and I have been able to make lifelong friends in the process. I am now selling furniture to the grandchildren of some of my most loyal customers and hopefully along the way I have been able to make a difference in their lives as well as the community. I look forward to serving Pell City, Anniston and the surrounding areas for many years to come and hopefully our family will be able to sell to the grandchildren of the grandchildren that I am working with now."

In an interview with the Daily Home, Winningham had the following to say.

Q: What style of furniture is currently trending?

Winningham: 2024 trends will include darker woods, earth tones, textured fabrics, curved silhouettes and arches making a comeback. We try to stay on top of the trends and show them on our sales floor but most importantly we want to remind customers that if they love a certain piece and it speaks to them then that is what they should purchase no matter what is trending at the time. We believe that homes should be more of a reflection of individuality and personality than just a showroom showcasing the latest trends.

Q: How do you choose what pieces to have in your store?

Winningham: We choose the pieces for our store based on customer feedback and always trying to provide the best value for our customer. With 28 years of buying experience for multiple locations we have developed strong relationships with several reputable companies that allow us to offer our customers good quality products at a great price.

Q: What type of material would you recommend when it comes to furniture purchases?

Winningham: Leather is timeless but new fabric technology has been able to produce performance fabrics that can actually be cleaned with bleach. This provides a way for families to have the soft, light colors that decorators desire with the durability that homeowners can live with. Various textures and polyester fabrics are also a good choice for families with children and pets.

Q: How often do you switch out pieces?

Winningham: Our sales floor is constantly changing because we give customers the option of taking pieces off of the sales floor if they don't have time to wait for us to order them. We do have a few of our top sellers that we will not sell off of the floor but on those pieces we make it a priority to try to always have those items in stock in our on site warehouse.

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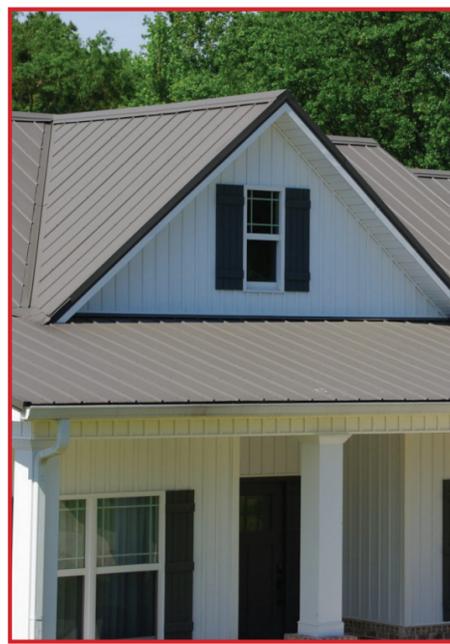
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HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PLANTS FROM PESTS THIS SPRING

Local extension agent offers suggestions for successful home horticulture



By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home

“When it comes to how long I have been gardening...if I had to put a time frame on it, I would have to say my whole life, to be honest. I have kind of always played in the dirt. So what I am doing now is nothing new. It just comes with a lot more questions and the chance to help more people.”

Talladega’s newest Regional Extension Agent Jacob Turner says that while he’s still learning his role, his knowledge of home grounds, gardening, and home pests is plentiful. He believes that his honesty and will to help, makes him a great fit for the position.

Turner shared a short story about a time he was called out to check on an oak tree that was built around this man’s house. Upon looking at the tree, he discovered it was dying. The man turned to Turner and asked, “How much longer does the tree have?” Turner said, “I’m not sure sir, I’m not a doctor.”

He believes honesty is important. “I don’t want to give people false hope, so I have to be straightforward with them, even if they may not always like my honesty. Just like the man with the oak tree, he was disappointed that the tree was dying, but there wasn’t much I could do. To even provide him a window of the life it had left was unrealistic. The same goes for plants. If it’s a dead plant I can’t save it, but I will help give information and possible steps on how to have success the next go-round.”

For six months, Turner has been an agent and can’t determine how the position has changed his life just yet, but he’s finding enjoyment in the chance to learn from others. He said that it is exciting to know that there are ways to go by the book, but a person does not have to just go by the book, and there are other ways to do it than just one way.

When it comes to gardening, Turner’s go-to is vegetables. He likes to grow his own vegetables because it is fun to watch things grow, he loves to see things grow from a seed, and he enjoys knowing where his vegetables are coming from.

“The first plant I ever grew was a tomato. I think I was about three years old when I grew my first one. I have been growing them for a while now on and off, and I decided to grow them because everybody in the South loves them. In fact, do not even like tomatoes. Maybe within certain things or in different forms, but let’s just say you would not ever catch me eating a BLT.”

In an interview with The Daily Home, Turner had the following to say about his focus areas and what to expect this spring when it comes to a certain pest.

Q: What is your definition of home grounds?

Turner: Home horticulture which is related to growing anything at home. This gives me the opportunity to reach everybody in the state almost because somebody is going to grow something. Whether it is their lawn, gardens no matter if in a container or in the ground. Therefore, everyone is a possible client.

Q: What would you say is the key to gardening?

Turner: Starting with a good soil is the key. That is where the magic happens! In order to determine the status of the soil, I would recommend getting a soil test done that is offered through any county’s extension office for \$10. The results can be emailed within three to four days, and paper results take about a week.

Q: Would you say transferring plants to pots is gardening or is there a difference?

Turner: It’s a part of gardening and necessary to growing a good plant or it could lead to root bound. Root bound is when the roots become tangled because they have little or not enough space to grow any further. The plant needs as much room to grow as possible.

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Starting with good soil is the key," extension agent Jacob Turner says of spring planting / Photos by Tucker Webb/The Daily Home

Q: What home pests are there to be expected this spring?

Turner: This is the year of the cicada. It is the first time we have had a double emerge in 221 years. The last time this took place was back in 1803. We will have two separate broods of cicadas. One after 13 years emerged and one after 17 years emerged and they both so happen to fully emerge at the same time this year. I feel that they will be the test for this year. They are set to last from about May to June and I can honestly admit that I am not looking forward to them. They are not small creatures and can be

sometimes annoying. They tend to make a lot of racket in the trees almost like crickets. They are attracted to porch lights and are kind of big. They tend to suck the juices from plant roots, and once they emerge they suck juices from trees and shrubs. There is honestly no type of prevention for them, as it is one of those things that unfortunately just has to run its course.

Q: What would you say is the best way to protect gardens from home pests?

Turner: The use of IPM which stands for inte-

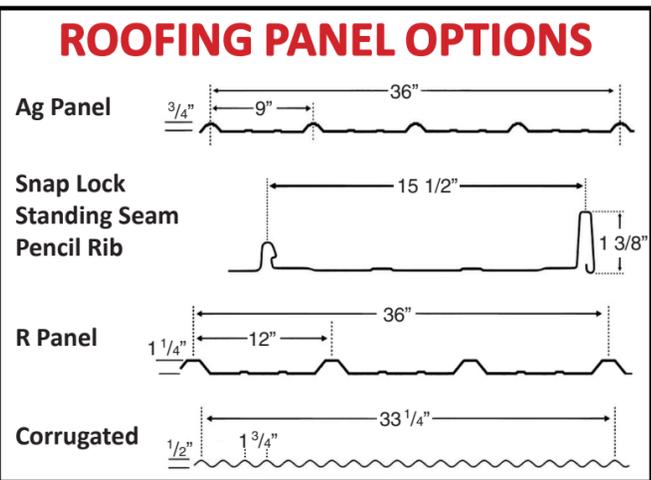
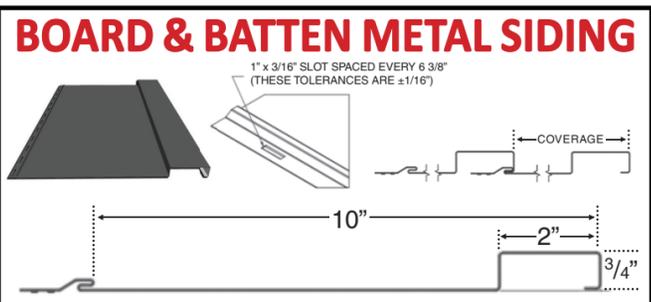
grated pest management or the use of trap crops like marigolds or any other possible trap crop that can be of use. The intent of trap crops is to allow the pests to hopefully only eat on those and hopefully not your plants.

Q: What is your favorite fruit or vegetable?

Turner: Okra, but fried only as that is the best way to eat it, and my favorite fruit would have to be oranges.



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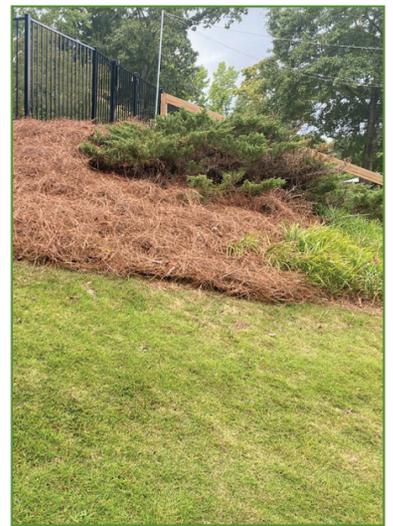
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LANDSCAPING AND HARDSCAPING ARE THE NELSON TEAM'S SPECIALITIES

Leeds-based business reflects the local spirit of the Coosa River



Submitted photos

By MICHELLE LOVE
Special to The Daily Home

Bill Nelson has been the owner and operator of The Nelson Team, a landscaping and hardscaping company based in Leeds, since 1989. In the course of his 35-year run, Nelson has never grown tired of the landscaping life. Instead, he chooses to relish in all aspects of both his work life and his home life, both of which nourish his spirit.

His career in landscaping began after spending several years selling heavy equipment such as bulldozers and cranes in the construction industry. The company he was working for was bought out, and Nelson didn't agree with the new owners' philosophies on business. He was about to take a job in Atlanta when a new opportunity arose.

"A young man asked me about watching his crews in Birmingham," he said. "They did landscape maintenance, and I fell in love with it. I've never looked back."

With his new love of landscaping pulsing through him, Nelson started his own landscape maintenance business - the birth of The Nelson Team. It incorporated in 1991, and the rest has been history. Over the years, the business has evolved from strictly landscaping maintenance, irrigation services, hardscaping, and softscaping.

Hardscaping, which deals with building outdoor structures like patios, fireplaces, and fire pits, is the majority of The Nelson Team's work nowadays. Nelson said ever since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, people want to be outside more, and that leads to more masonry work for his contractors.

Nelson and his team meet with the property owners to find out what they want their property to look like, and Nelson said he will then direct them in the right direction of what is aesthetically pleasing and also useful. He also emphasized they are more than

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Owner Bill Nelson

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"You can go online and get a landscape architect, and they're going to come and listen to you and do what you want but they're going to charge you \$400,000 on like an outdoor kitchen or something like that. With us designing, we get a number from people and we design based on their budget."

Nelson said one of the key differences in his team and other landscaping businesses is that his team does the designing and the physical labor. He added all members of his team take immense pride in the work they do.

"Our guys have been here for years and years," he said. "I worry about their families and kids. I pay them really well because they're so career minded. When they're out there building, it's not just a job to them. Their name is going on this, and if it's masonry their name is going to be on it a lot longer than they'll be around. They take a certain amount of pride in the detail of building."

Nelson said he doesn't see his clients as dollar signs. He doesn't ask for deposits or money upfront, instead opting to collect payment once work has been done. He strives to provide every client with exactly what they want without breaking the bank, and he said he is always a man of his word.

"Another thing that people tell us about our company is they say, 'You did everything you said you were going to do.' Not everyone does that, and that's our simple motto: just do what you say you're going to do," Nelson said. "We call them 'clients' not customers because we do a huge amount of repeat business and referrals. We appreciate people telling other people that we did exactly what we said we were going to do and kept the job neat and clean. That's what we take pride in."

Nelson said he made the decision in the beginning to keep the business small so consistency in quality and in his team remained the same over the years.

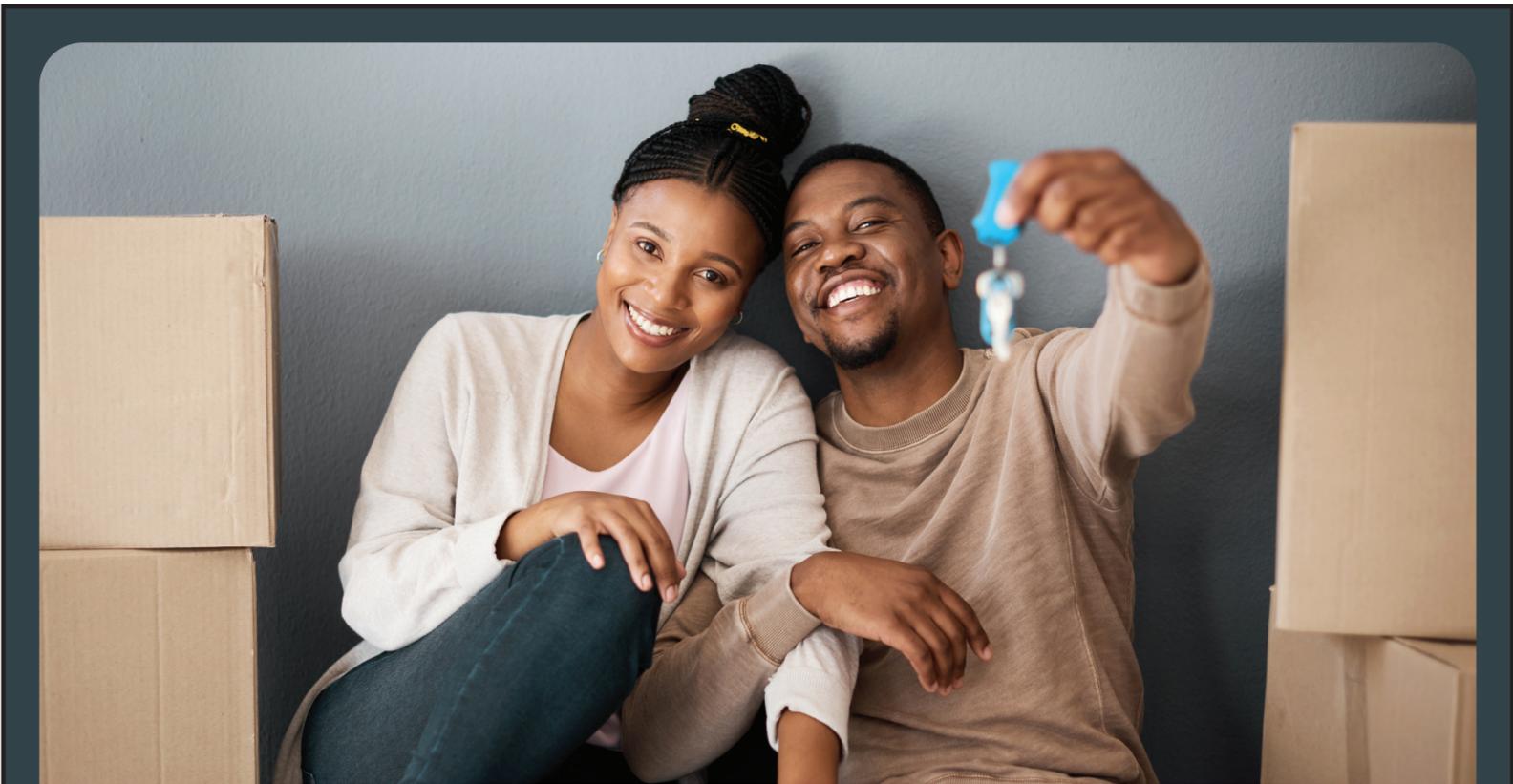
"We will never grow into one of those big companies that has a high turnover rate," he said. "We don't have a turnover rate. We use some subcontractors, but we handle everything and oversee everything."

Nelson said he is working on phasing himself into retirement, though he still shows up to work every morning ready to take on the day's tasks. He moved out to the Logan Martin area about 10 years ago and fell in love with the lake.

"I tell people that I wish I'd done it 20 years earlier," he said, laughing. "My wife and I, all our kids are grown and have their own kids, and we live in a cabin on the lake. We've got a true cedar cabin on the river, and we love it."

Nelson said there's a feeling of peacefulness that comes from the water that he can't describe. Whether he's working on the lake or enjoying the view from his back porch, he relishes the feeling of tranquility that comes from that environment.

"The lake is, when I get off work I go out on my back porch and it's so peaceful," he said. "Even working out there, it just seems so peaceful. I think that's just being around water in general. We love doing jobs out there because it's right on the water. It's the spirit of the river."



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SYLACAUGA BROKER OFFERS ADVICE FOR THOSE PLANNING TO BUY OR SELL A HOME

By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home

Bill Pharr is the broker and owner of AREA Real Estate in Sylacauga. Since 2007, his family owned business has offered the community and surrounding areas a variety of services from residential properties, commercial properties, industrial, land, appraisals, and property management. In 2023, he opened a land division called AREA Land and Timber that focuses on land sales, management, and timber management, headed by his son Blake.

Pharr has more than 30 years of experience in real estate and chose to start his own business as a way to add his own personal touch to real estate.

“Before starting my business, I was already a real estate agent with another company, but I decided to step out on my own,” he said. “I wanted to do things differently, improve on customer service and the way buyers and sellers are treated. And I knew that would be best done with starting my own business.”

One of the things Pharr prides himself on is doing “a ton of community service” and finding ways to give back.

“One of the ways I give back is by supporting the local animal shelters. We’re constantly doing donations, and we’ve hosted blood drives. Then in our giving back we also include our buyers and sellers. For every closing, we donate \$100 to a local charity of the buyer’s or seller’s choice in their name. I am a strong believer that the community you live in supports you, so it’s important to give back and see it continue to grow and thrive.”

During an interview with The Daily Home, Pharr shared the following real estate advice.

Q: What is there to know when it comes to buying land?

Pharr: Look into your zoning to know what can be built in the area you are interested to build in. Also be aware of knowing what type of house can and can’t be built in that area as well. Then see what utilities are available because not having utilities in an area could be something else to factor into your decision to build. Because then that expense would have to be considered. Then be sure to have legal access via easement or public road.

Q: When should someone get an appraisal done?

Pharr: If you’re in the market to sell, I highly recommend getting an appraisal done to determine its market value instead of listing it alone. If listed on your own, there is a strong chance that you can leave money on the table or even under its value. With getting an appraisal, we can do a brokers market analysis which will give a range of value that the home should be listed for. When selling a home, you want to sell for as much as you can, and with an appraisal we can help with that. I also strongly recommend getting help instead of doing it alone because we do not have any emotional attachment to the home. For us it is strictly about getting you the best offer and not focusing on the memories you had in the house or a bias of what a seller might feel their home is worth.

Q: What advice do you have for buyers?

Pharr: Before even looking at homes, to pre-qualify is the first thing. See where you stand and what you qualify for, this will allow you to see houses in your price range. Opposed to seeing a home that is more than you can afford. Also keep a watch on your credit and pay your bills on time. This helps to lead to a better score and higher chances to be approved.

Q: What advice do you want to share with readers when it comes to buying property or land?

Pharr: It may sound repetitive, but I don’t think people realize how important credit is and how much it can affect you. Without an approving credit score, it can prevent buyers from buying land or a home. So I strongly suggest keeping your credit clean and your score high because it matters!



AREA Real Estate broker Bill Pharr / Submitted photo

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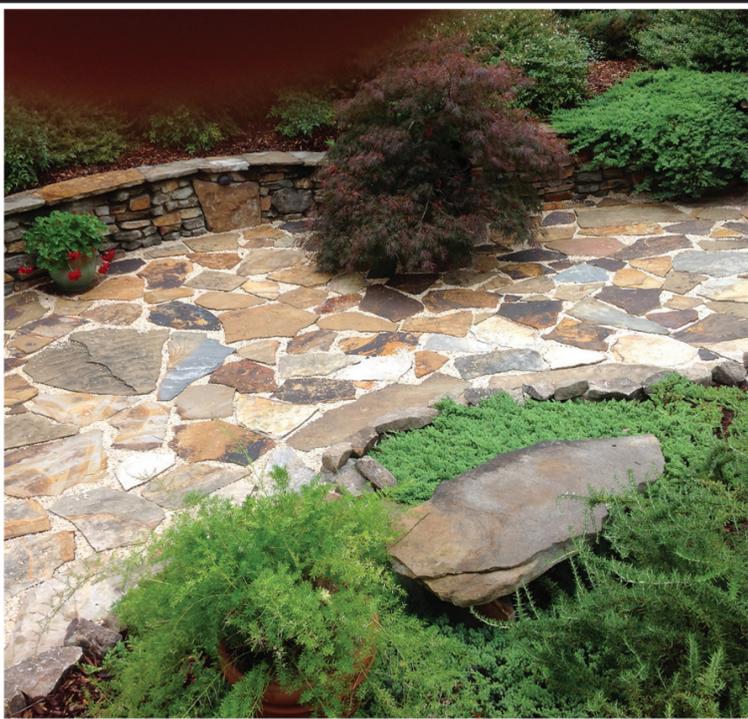
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Change the oil in small engines once a year, St. Clair County mower dealer advises



Submitted photo

By **VALLEAN JACKSON**
Special to *The Daily Home*

Spring is the season of pollen, flowers blooming, bees, weeds, and the sound of lawn mowers being pulled out the shed.

Springville Small Engine is here to help make sure homeowners are prepared to take on the season's yardwork. The local business services and repairs lawnmowers, blowers, chainsaws, weed eaters, and other small engines. It is a licensed Dixie Chopper Zero Turn mowers dealer and sells trimmers, blowers, and push mowers.

"I've been in business since about 2017, and I got into this because I learned the trade, I wanted to start my own business, I love working with my hands, and I saw a need for this type of business in the community. There's not a lot of people around here that offer all of what I do," said owner Stacy Shoop.

As a native of Springville, he felt it is only right to name his business after his hometown and the place he desires to make a difference. Aside from doing what he loves daily, he finds it rewarding to have the chance to meet customers and build relationships with those within his community.

In an interview with *The Daily Home*, Shoop had the following to say about his business and equipment maintenance.

Q: What products do you recommend?

Shoop: Personally, I don't have a favorite product

in my shop. I enjoy the chance to work with my hands daily, and I can work on practically anything that has a small engine. If it has a problem, I can fix the issue.

Q: How do you feel your business makes a difference in the community?

Shoop: I feel like I am helping the community by providing them a service and products that are handled and serviced locally. Without having to venture out to another city or town, it makes it convenient for the residents here. Also, it draws some people here, which helps Springville as a whole.

Q: How does the spring season affect your business?

Shoop: I can't say for sure, but I know it's been busy. Definitely an influx of customers coming in needing a lot of service work done. One of the things I have done a lot of is oil changes on mowers and blowers.

Q: What advice do you have for readers?

Shoop: One of the problems I see often is nobody is changing their oil, and that causes a problem with the piece of equipment functioning properly or possibly overall just giving out. Not changing the oil

affects the life of the equipment. For the best results and continued use, I strongly suggest getting the oil changed at least once a year.

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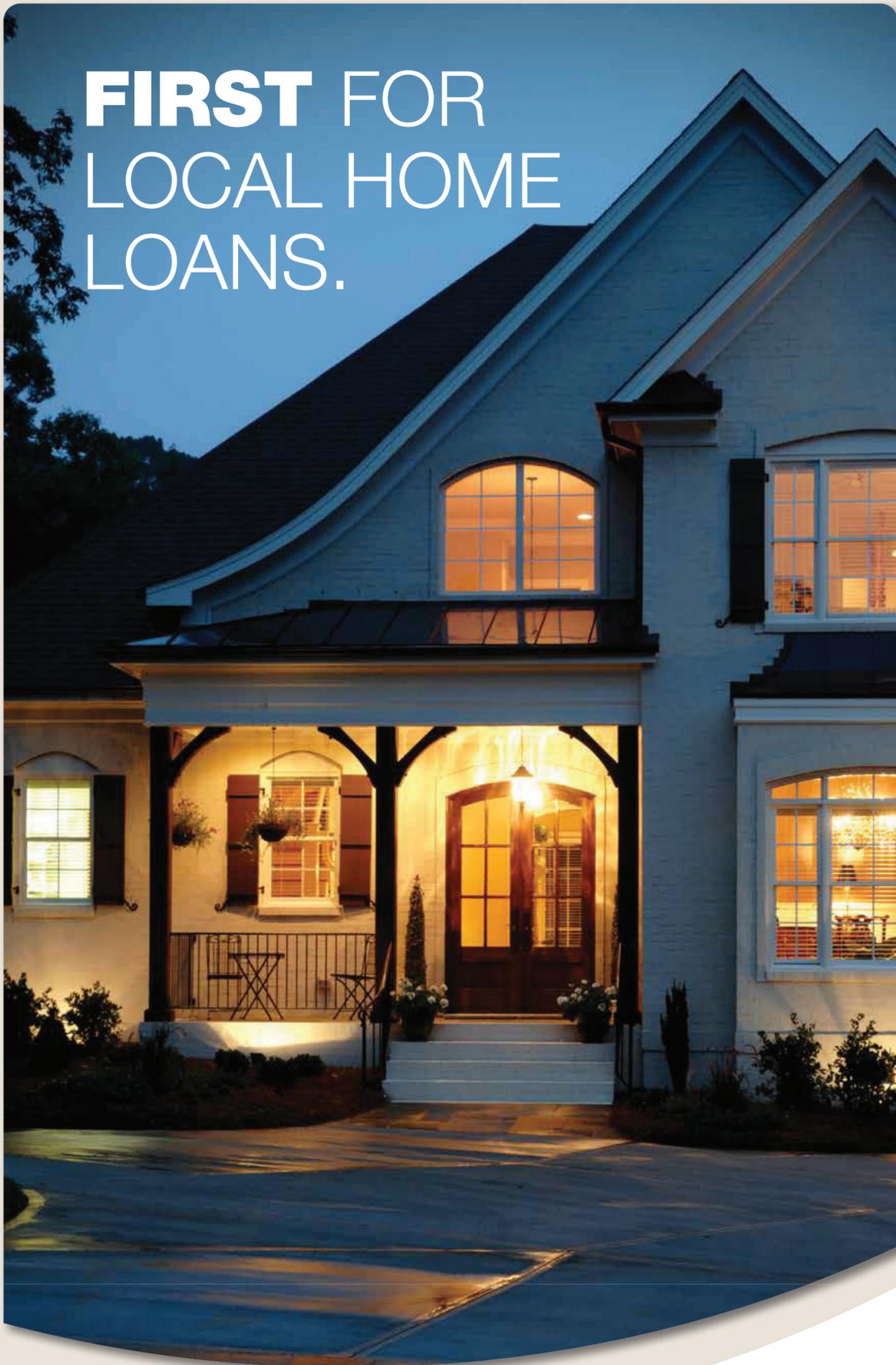
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PELL CITY HEATING & COOLING KEEPS YOU COMFORTABLE AND HAPPY IN YOUR HOME



Pell City Heating & Cooling is a family-owned business, says Susan Deese, shown with her granddaughter Rhyleigh Boiling.

By VALLEAN JACKSON
Special to The Daily Home

Pell City Heating & Cooling is a locally owned business that has been serving the city and St. Clair County for more than 60 years, making sure customers have year round heat and cool air.

Owner Jason Fendley is the fourth owner of the company and he continues a tradition of customer satisfaction and quality services. Fendley worked in the business since he was about 17 under the original owner. According to Fendley's older sister Susan Deese, who is the bookkeeper for the business, her little brother has his heart in every job and has a heart for the community.

"I have been working here for about 10 years now and I can say that here it is not just about customers, but how we can make a difference within the community," she said. "Aside from the children we sponsor within various sports and activities, we also partner with Air Engineers and Trane to help people with their units. If we see a need and we are able to help, we do, because we understand that not everyone is doing well and we step in and try to take care of those customers like they were family."

Deese believes what makes the business unique is that people trust the Trane brand and trust them because they have been in the area for so long. It is as though their name speaks for itself, and they believe in working hard to deliver what customers expect from them. She added that their care for customers and treating them right is also what makes their business stand out.

"One of the most rewarding things for me is talking to people, getting to know new people, and helping them when in need. It brings me great joy to turn things around for a customer and or a customer and their family. To be comfortable in your home is important and that is what we strive to offer. Year round comfort," said Deese.

In an interview with The Daily Home, Deese had

the following to say about heating and cooling.

Q: What is your take on switching the heating and cooling unit between heat and cool to combat the mixed weather in Alabama?

Deese: The system is going to do what you ask it to do. If it's 72 degrees then that is how it should feel, as long as the circulation is good, but every home is different. Nevertheless, every unit should get checked twice a year because you have to remember that for many, this unit is being used year round. So having the unit checked to make sure it's in good condition is almost the same thing as getting an oil change for your vehicle. You would never just drive your vehicle and never change the oil. If so, then a problem is likely to arise with your car. The same goes for a unit. The unit won't last if you don't change the filter. The filter is the life of the system.

Q: How often should the heating and cooling filter be checked?

Deese: I would say that it should be checked at least every three months, but if you have dogs or a lot of dust, once a month. It also just depends, but I definitely recommend checking on it and making sure it's clean or doesn't need to be replaced.

Q: What are signs that a unit needs to be replaced?

Deese: Signs that show it might be time for another unit or something is wrong is that it is not keeping the temperature. For instance, in the summertime you have it set to be cold, but it won't feel like that temperature and vice versa. So it could mean that it's time to replace the unit or it could simply just be low on freon.

Q: Any tips for energy bill savings?

Deese: There are so many energy efficient systems nowadays juxtaposed to the old models. Some of the later model units have per-set settings that can be used or wifi control. If the unit is older, I would definitely consider replacing it, as it could also help to be sufficient on energy bills.

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