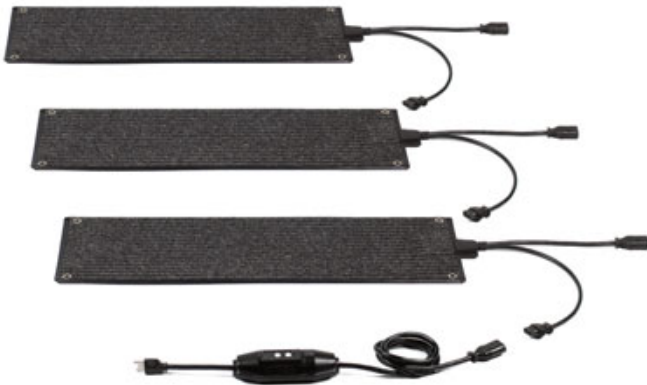


# Products

**Snow Melters.** HeatTrak says its stair mats will prevent snow and ice buildup during a 2-inch-per-hour snowfall. Up to 10 mats can be connected to one another (in a parallel circuit) and plugged into a standard 120-volt outlet. More mats require a second power cord. Control options include a plug-in temperature sensor, a hard-wired snow sensor, and an outlet switch inside the entry door. The company also makes walkway mats. Stair mats cost \$50 each.

**HeatTrak**, 866/766-9628, [heattrak.com](http://heattrak.com).



## Efficient Hot Water.

The *HP-50* heat-pump water heater's 2.0 energy factor means it should use half the power of a standard electric tank. Its top-mounted heat pump requires 1,000 cubic feet of surrounding air space (a 10-by-12-foot room with an 8-foot ceiling easily qualifies). It works in temperatures down to 40°F; at lower temperatures, an electric resistance backup kicks in. In summer it provides some dehumidification. Prices range from \$1,700 to \$2,200.

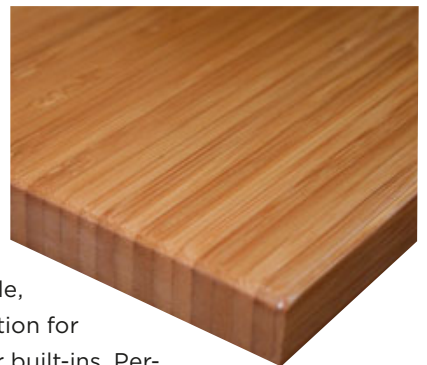
**Rheem**, 800/621-5622, [rheem.com](http://rheem.com).



**Modulating Fireplace.** In most gas fireplaces the flame is either on or off, but the *864 TRV Green-Smart* unit adjusts its flame height based on the temperature setting. It can be run in standing-pilot mode — in which the pilot stays on to maintain draft — or electronic-ignition mode, in which the pilot turns off when the fireplace does, saving fuel and money. The price ranges from \$2,100 to \$4,500, depending on such accessories as facings, firebacks, and remotes.

**Travis Industries**, 800/654-1177, [fireplacex.com](http://fireplacex.com).

**No-Ply Plywood.** Vertical-grain *BamPLY* isn't plywood in the usual sense. It has no core veneer; instead, it's assembled like bamboo flooring, with long strips of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-wide bamboo face-glued together into a 4x8 sheet. The maker says it has 30 percent more strength than oak and 17 percent more than maple, making it a good option for high-end cabinets or built-ins. Per-sheet costs range from \$90 for  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick to \$185 for  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick.



**Pacific Western Wood Products**, 323/266-6200, [pacificwesternwoodproducts.com](http://pacificwesternwoodproducts.com).

# Products



## Quick Deck Post.

The *Secure Mount Post* was designed for cases where a deck rail needs to be added directly to a concrete or wood deck and there's no existing structural post. It consists of a steel post and base plate that are bolted directly to the deck, plus two polypropylene blocks that fit over the post. The top block can be set for a 36- or 42-inch railing height. A 4x4 TimberTech sleeve slips over the blocks and is fastened with standard fasteners. According to the maker, the post is tested for a 500-pound design load and has an anticorrosion coating that outperforms standard galvanizing. It costs \$50 to \$60.

**TimberTech**, 800/307-7780, [timbertech.com](http://timbertech.com).



## Disappearing Vent.

If you have to put a ceiling grille in a room with a ceiling fan, *Invisivent* is worth a look. It consists of a round hvac grille with a built-in duct boot and electric box. The assembly is held in place behind the drywall by steel support rods that offer enough load-bearing capacity to support the fan. The installation is unobtrusive, says the maker, and the fan helps distribute air from the grille around the room. The list price is \$68.

**N2vent**, 352/875-4747, [invisivent.com](http://invisivent.com).

## Filtering Blocks.

The *Aquaflow* permeable pavement system lets water seep into the ground in a controlled manner. The pavers are installed over a sub-base that includes a geotextile fabric that filters out pollutants before releasing the water. According to the maker, the system prevents dirty runoff and reduces a community's need for storm-water ponds, infiltration trenches, and drains.

**Hanson Hardscapes**,  
800/273-7084, [hansonhardscapes.com](http://hansonhardscapes.com).



## Better Sump Pump.

The most likely point of failure in a basement sump pump is the switch, which is typically a floating device that turns on the pump when lifted by water to a certain level. Like all mechanical devices, these switches wear out over time. The switch on the *Blue Angel* 1/2-hp sump pump (model SSBSC50) works a different way: Rather than relying on a float, it senses the presence of positive ions as the water rises. The switch and its microprocessor are encased in epoxy to protect them from corrosion. The manufacturer claims the switch will last for more than a million cycles, or five times as long a mechanical version. The pump costs \$260.

**Wayne Water Systems**, 800/237-0987, [waynewatersystems.com](http://waynewatersystems.com).

