

Products | Electrical | by Patrick McCombe

Easy Does It. Installing a heavy light fixture or fan from a suspended ceiling can be easy or hard, depending on how you do it. The hard way is to install blocking in a dark, dusty, cluttered ceiling plenum while unsecured communication cables snag your hammering arm with every swing. The easy way is to use a *FBRS420SC Fan/Fixture Box* from Arlington Industries. Rated for 70 pounds, it comes fully assembled and includes a 20-cubic-inch octagonal workbox. It costs about \$25.

Arlington Industries, 800/233-4717, www.aifittings.com.



Let There Be Light. Who wouldn't want to turn on their porch and house lights from inside the car? With an *AuroRa* wireless lighting control system, homeowners can do just that, plus other convenient time-saving tricks. Unlike many home-automation packages, this one promises to be easy to install and operate. For about \$600 you get a starter kit containing five high-tech dimmers, a central antenna, a tabletop master controller, and a visor-mounted remote control with a 100-foot range.

Lutron, 888/588-7661, www.lutron.com/aurora.

Aluminum Ally. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, "Homes wired with aluminum wire manufactured before 1972 are 55 times more likely to have one or more connections reach 'fire-hazard condition' than homes wired with copper." But short of a complete rewire, what can you do? One solution is to use an *AlumiConn*. This little terminal block prevents the oxidation and loosening that can lead to overheating at connections. It has UL approval and — unlike other methods — doesn't require any special tools. A 25-count bag sells for \$74 on the Web.

Al-Cop, 877/614-7185, www.al-copstore.com.



Products | Fasteners

Inside Job. It's always a challenge to install new-construction windows from the inside of a building. Hammering while leaning out the opening is both awkward and dangerous — and then you have to remove or open the sash. That process can distort the frame, leaving the window tough to operate and the weather stripping less effective. *T-S Window Clips* make the job easier and safer — and frame distortion less likely. They cost 50 cents apiece.

T-Street Fasteners, 877/800-2547, www.windowclip.com.



The Big Guns. If you've never tried a self-drilling structural screw like the *Star Drive Lag Screws* from Screw Products, you really should. Available in lengths from 2½ to 12 inches, these multipurpose screws have super-sharp points and star-drive heads that resist stripping and cam-out. Six-inch and shorter lengths are 5/16 inch in diameter and are protected with a bronze ceramic coating. Longer lengths are 3/8 inch and are protected with yellow zinc. Some sizes also come in stainless steel. A 100-count pack of 2½-inch screws sells for around \$30; a 100-count pack of 7-inch screws costs \$97.

Screw Products, 877/844-8880, www.screw-products.com.



Color-Coordinated. Stainless steel screws are great for many tasks, but their shiny heads can really detract from a finished project. No contractor I know has time to touch up hundreds of screw heads. That's why *Painted Head Stainless Screws* from Universal Poly Products are such a great idea. The #8 screws are 2¼ inches long and come in five colors to coordinate with popular shades of composite decking. They sell for about \$8 per 100; discounts apply to larger quantities.

Universal Poly Products, 800/633-7093.

