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OCTOBER 2024

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How to make renovation projects go smoothly

Homeowners are spending big bucks on home renovations. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, home improvement project spending continues to increase. It's predicted to go from \$472 billion spent in 2022 to \$485 billion in 2024. Those targeting a specific home renovation likely know there is much that goes into the process from start to finish. Patience is a requisite virtue with any remodel, as even a thoroughly conceptualized plan can encounter a few bumps along the way. Although there is no way to completely remove renovation-related obstacles, there are ways to make projects

go more smoothly.

- **Establish a clear plan from the beginning.** Now is not the time to be on the fence about details. A vision for the renovation is essential, and should include details about layout, materials, colors, and design.
- **Manage your expectations.** Again, this speaks to a need for patience with a project but also involves flexibility. Being too rigid when choosing materials can require waiting for back-ordered supplies to come in. Wanting contractors to bend to your schedule can delay the project even further. Creativity and flexibility are key.
- **Establish a budget.** It can be easy to

spend beyond one's means, especially when issues crop up. Black House Real Estate stresses the importance of creating a budget before starting a renovation, which may involve working with a local professional to help. Houzz advises preparing for worst-case scenarios by adding anywhere from 1 percent to 20 percent to the budget. Commit to sticking to the budget no matter what comes down the pike.

- **Assemble a good team.** Thoroughly research all contractors who will be involved with the renovation. These include designers, architects, builders, and more. Be sure they come highly recommended and research online reviews. A good team removes some stress from the project because you'll know the work is in experienced hands.

- **Prepare the space for the remodel.** Any work you can do will help save on labor

costs and make it easier for the team to get started on the project. Clear out clutter and personal items. Ask if it would be helpful for you to handle some demolition, whether that's pulling up old tile, removing drywall or another task.

- **Have an escape hatch at the ready.** Home renovations can cause upheaval to daily life, and that can mean stress on top of already chaotic schedules. If money and situation allow, plan a getaway during a particularly tough stretch of the project so the noise, mess, and disruptions will not induce headaches. Consider spending a few nights at a hotel or a friend or relative's house to escape the constant grind of the project. Home renovation projects add value and functionality to homes. Such undertakings can go more smoothly with some sound planning.





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5 renovations that provide a strong return on investment

Renovations that make homeowners and residents of a home happy are always worth the investment. Though it's certainly true that projects that create more functional, usable space and add comfort and convenience are worth the price, such renovations are even more beneficial if they provide a good return on homeowners' financial investment. Returns are often cashed in when homeowners put their homes up for sale, and each year Remodeling magazine releases its "Cost vs. Value Report," which considers a wealth of data across the United States to determine which renovations return the highest percentage of homeowners' financial investment. According to the "2024 Cost vs. Value Report," the following are five projects that provide a strong return on investment (ROI).

- 1. Garage door replacement:** The average job cost for this project is slightly more than \$4,500 but the project is valued at \$8,751, providing an especially high 194 percent ROI.
- 2. Steel door replacement:** Remodeling magazine notes that a steel entry door replacement is worth double what it was worth in 2023. This project offers a 188 percent ROI on an average investment of \$2,355.
- 3. Manufactured stone veneer:** A manufactured stone veneer is a man-made product that appears as if it's natural stone. Many homeowners prefer manufactured stone veneer to natural stone because of the price, as the former is less expensive and easier to install, which means lower labor costs as well. The comparatively low cost of manufactured stone veneer is perhaps one reason why it averages a roughly 153 percent ROI on an average cost of just more than \$11,000.

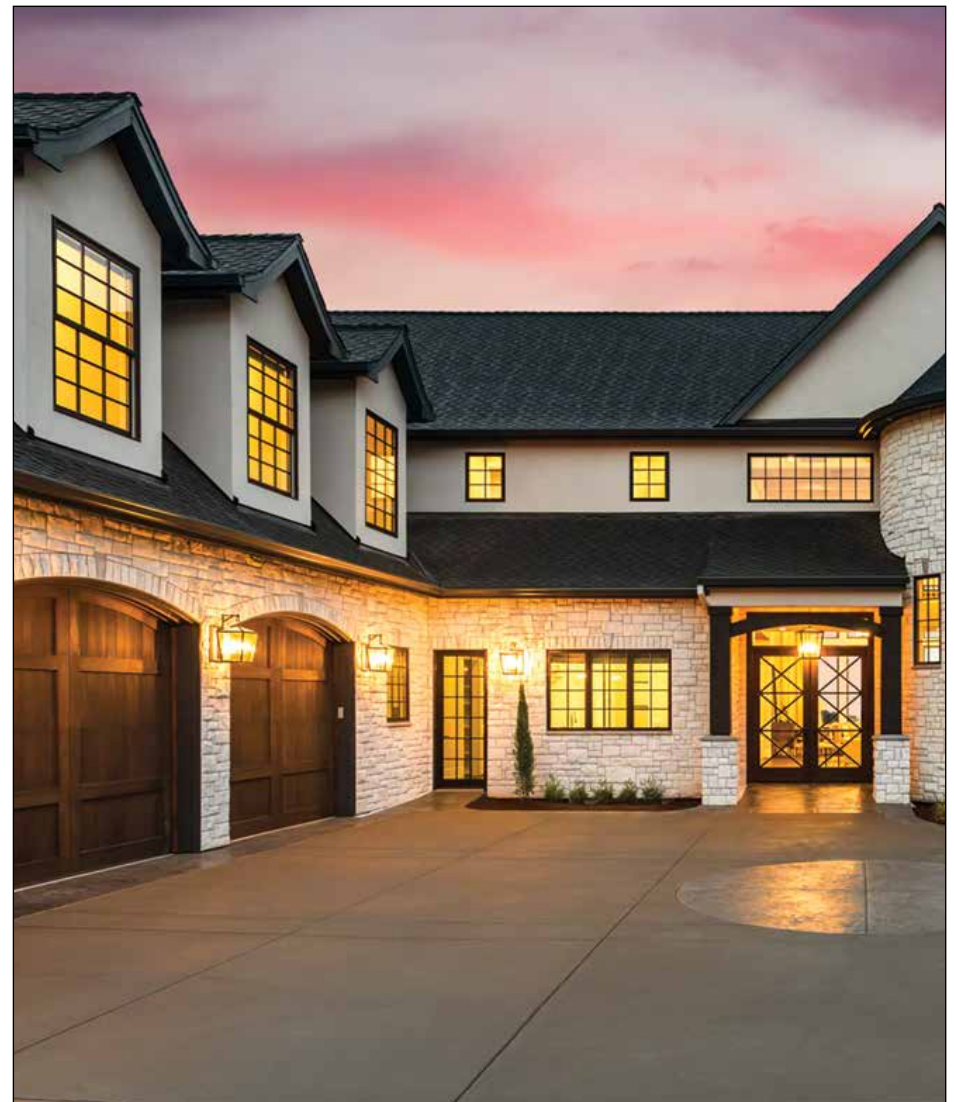
4. Grand entrance upscale (fiberglass): Few things are as awe-inspiring as an impressive entryway, and upgrading to a grand fiberglass entrance door provides a 97 percent ROI. Components of these entryways can vary, but Remodeling magazine notes the project may entail removing an existing entry door and cutting and reframing the opening for a larger with dual sidelights.

5. Minor kitchen remodel: According to the "2024 U.S. Houzz & Home Study" from Houzz Research, kitchens were the most popular rooms to renovate in 2023. There's no denying the appeal of a newly renovated kitchen, and homeowners considering such a project may be happy to learn that a minor kitchen remodel that costs an average of around \$27,000 provides a 96 percent ROI. Bankrate.com notes that minor kitchen remodels typically keep the current kitchen design, size and layout intact, but these projects may involve painting walls, refreshing backsplash, replacing lighting and plumbing fixtures, and changing cabinet hardware and facades.

Home renovations that provide a significant ROI can make homeowners happy once a project is completed and even happier when the day comes to put a home up for sale.

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333 S. West Ave. \$122,000
This charming older home is a find...with 1,156 sq. ft., 2 bedrooms and 1½ baths. It has a range and refrigerator and a washer and dryer....gas water heater and furnace. The rooms are all very ample for comfort. The lot reaches to the ally and has a storage shed to compliment the single carport. A good solid home! Asking \$122,000



3155 W. Millcreek Rd. \$574,900
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Tips to transform a living room into a go-to viewing space

Watch parties are wildly popular. Whether it's a gathering for the big game or a group of friends anxious to see the latest episode of a favorite television show, watch parties have become a fun way to enjoy special events with family and friends. Many bars and restaurants have recognized the popularity of watch parties and looked to capitalize on the trend, particularly for sporting events. Watch parties can make for a fun night out, but homeowners can do much to make their own living room a go-to spot for the next big game or series finale.

- **Expand seating space, if necessary.** Of course, guests for the big game or movie night will need a place to sit. Homeowners who love to host can determine their ideal gathering size and then work to ensure their entertaining space has enough seats to accommodate everyone. Multifunctional furniture can help if space is limited. For example, some stools that are typically used as footrests can be repurposed as seats when guests arrive and an upholstered coffee table can provide an additional space for guests to sit. Another option is to work with a contractor to add a built-in window seat or bench beneath a picture window.

- **Convert an existing space into an open floor plan.** A 2023 survey from Rocket HomesSM found that more than half of individuals surveyed preferred open layouts to traditional layouts. Open layouts can make living spaces feel more airy and less claustrophobic, and such designs also make it easy to accommodate more guests. Homeowners can speak with a local contractor to determine ways to convert living spaces into open floor plans.

- **Invest in your internet.** Whereas cable television used to be the go-to option when watching sports, movies and television at home, streaming platforms have now taken over, as many, including Peacock, Amazon Prime and Netflix, are now even broadcasting National Football League games. Homeowners who want to host watch parties must invest in high-speed internet and perhaps even a new router to ensure games and shows are not interrupted by the dreaded spinning wheel or issues that can arise if internet speeds are slow. If necessary, relocate the router to the



living room to reduce the risk of streaming interruptions.

- **Reconsider your lighting scheme.** If movie nights or television shows dominate your watch party schedule, some recessed lighting in the living room can reduce glare and reflections on the screen once a movie or show begins. Recessed lighting above a mounted television can illuminate the screen so every-

one can see it but won't appear in the screen and adversely affect what viewers can see.

- **Consider upgrading your television and sound.** It goes without saying that a television is wildly important when hosting a watch party. The experts at Best Buy note that 8K resolution is the highest resolution available in the television market. Such devices provide an extraordinary viewing experience, but they also can stretch

homeowners' budgets. A 4K television won't cost nearly as much, and these devices also provide superior image quality. When a new television is paired with a premium soundbar, viewers can settle in for a memorable game day or movie night experience. Homeowners can embrace various strategies to make watch parties an extraordinary experience for themselves and their guests.

Maximize outdoor spaces this **holiday season**

The holiday season comes at a time when the weather can be anywhere from cool to frigid. But even if the weather outside is somewhat frightful, holiday entertaining in outdoor spaces can still be delightful. Making the most of outdoor spaces during the holidays and the rest of the winter can enable guests to spread out, which should make things more comfortable for them. With that goal in mind, the following are some tips for putting outdoor areas to good use when hosting loved ones this holiday season.

- Decorate first. An easy way to make outdoor entertaining spaces more welcoming is to coordinate the decor with the interior of the home. Greenery wrapped with lights around railings and fencing can create the perfect ambiance. Candles, wreaths and small, decorated Christmas trees can finish the effect.

- Consider a fire or heating element. Unless you live in a temperate climate,

you'll need some way to keep guests warm. Center the outdoor entertaining space around a fire pit, outdoor fireplace or an outdoor heater. Make sure to illuminate the outdoor area so that guests can find their way around with ease.

- Host an early gathering. The sun sets early in fall and winter, so it may not only get colder, but also darker at a time when guests typically arrive. Think about moving up the start time of your holiday event if you'll be having an outdoor area, so guests can see one another and stay a little warmer.

- Use the grill. Keep foods warm by using the grill or an outdoor griddle; otherwise, set up the food buffet-style inside so guests can make their plates and gravitate where they feel comfortable.

- Provide blankets or fleeces. In addition to warming elements around your entertaining space, stock a large basket

with cozy throws, blankets or fleece jackets that guests can use to warm up. Hats and scarves also may be appreciated.

- Invest in waterproof furniture. Upgrade your exterior seating with plush outdoor couches and lounges that are decked out in weather-resistant fabrics. Make them more comfortable with throw pillows that coordinate with a holiday entertaining theme.

- Set up two drink stations. Set up beverages both inside and outside the home so guests can easily refill their drinks wherever they are relaxing. Think about having some warm drinks outside, such as mulled cider or hot chocolate, so guests can be warmed from the inside as well.

- Use a wireless speaker. A Bluetooth-enabled wireless speaker placed outside allows guests to listen to holiday tunes while they are enjoying themselves.

Using well-equipped outdoor areas for entertaining can expand the possibilities and guest list for holiday gatherings.



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Trends That Predict the Home of Tomorrow

The home of tomorrow isn't about Jetson-esque wonders and smartphone apps. It's about home value, natural resources and our lifestyles.

To predict what home features will be most valued in 25 years, let's focus on four rising trends:

#1 Extreme Energy Efficiency

Utility bills are expected to skyrocket over the next couple of decades. This will result in sustainable updates that push the green needle of household standards.

Energy dashboards: You know how cars share the miles per gallon we're getting? An energy dashboard will do the same for our homes. It's all about the emerging technologies that will surround the future modernization of the electric grid. Called the Smart Grid, it will allow a two-way dialogue between homeowners and their utility companies so we can understand our energy use and its costs in real time.

Waterless toilets: Nope, we aren't talking

about porta potties, but clean and sanitary indoor thrones that will one-up low flush loos. It makes sense since residential water rates are rising in the U.S., and toilets are responsible for nearly 27% of our total water use. Plus, Dow Chemical says waterless toilets will become a household standard.

Grey water systems: According to Energy.gov, systems like these currently reuse up to 60% of your household water for watering the lawn and flushing toilets. The best of tomorrow trends will be high-tech purification systems that return wastewater to drinking-quality level. A good example is the orbital shower. This concept saves 90% of the water and 80% of the energy used, trimming as much as \$1,000 off yearly energy bills.

Garages wired for the electric vehicle revolution: Energy.gov predicts we will be charging our vehicles at home, and filling up at the gas stations less. This is based on the growing number of electric vehicle sales across the U.S. One city has already embraced this idea. In Palo Alto, Calif., building code requires

new homes to come pre-wired for electric car chargers.

#2 The Rise of Super Storms

Since super storms are becoming the norm, homeowners can be left without electricity for weeks, even months--as they were after Hurricane Ian. Look what happened recently on the west coast.

Whole house generator: This will allow people to live comfortably until their power is restored. FYI, homeowners can currently recoup 52% of the cost of a midrange electrical backup system. Thanks to extreme weather and our aging power grid, blackouts are becoming more common. The Department of Energy says thunderstorms, hurricanes, and blizzards account for 58% of outages in the U.S. since 2002.

Tip: Futurists predict that USB ports will become the power outlets of the not so distant future. Luckily, quick charge ports are available now.

#3 The Locally-Grown Movement

The desire to eat healthier, better-tasting foods continues to increase. This will make indoor gardens common among our home of tomorrow trends. Edible indoor kitchen gardens are hydroponic systems that add to home enjoyment by allowing people to create the farm-to-table experience in their own kitchens. Also, urban farming is on the rise. It combats rising food prices and reduces the energy consumption of transporting food.

#4 Smart Home Stuff

Kitchen sinks: They will do double duty as dishwashers. The in-sink dishwasher will wash small loads in just a couple of minutes. Faucets won't be just for water. They will also dispense ice, various beverages, and vitamins.

Laundry machines will clean and fold clothing into compact pellets. This will be a big space saver and allow consumers to carry an entire outfit in a small gym bag or purse.

Smartphones have replaced the need for other items like alarm clocks and cameras. With that idea in mind, it makes sense that countertop appliances will become replaced by multi-purpose "uber appliances" that make our lives a little bit easier.

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Dining room conversion ideas

Many homeowners can undoubtedly take a stroll through their homes and find at least one space that could be repurposed to provide more functionality. Real estate professionals know that such sentiments are not uncommon, and many point to formal dining rooms as spaces that have fallen out of favor in recent years.

Formal dining rooms were once common in newly built homes, but the pivot toward open concept floor plans left it up to homeowners to decide if such spaces were for them. In a 2017 book published by the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, authors used cameras to monitor life in many people's homes, including how they used each room. The authors concluded that formal dining rooms were rarely used for eating. If that sounds a lot like home to many current homeowners, then it might be time to consider some ideas to convert formal dining rooms to make these spaces more functional.

• **Home office:** Though the percentage of professionals working remotely has dipped considerably since the end of the pandemic, hybrid working is perhaps among the more lasting work-related byproducts of COVID-19. In its Global State of Remote and Hybrid

study published in early 2024, the career networking resource LinkedIn noted that 13 percent of jobs posted to the platform were for hybrid positions. That means millions of workers can still utilize an accommodating home office space. A formal dining room can be converted to provide such a space, and the good news is that such a conversion need not require extensive renovations. A fresh coat of paint, an additional outlet or two and perhaps a new overhead lighting fixture can instantly transform the space at minimal cost.

• **Reading room/library:** Homeowners who dream of having a designated space for quiet reading can convert a little-used formal dining room into a space to curl up with a good book. Some comfortable armchairs, built-in bookshelves and perhaps an expanded floor-to-ceiling window overlooking a side or backyard can help homeowners create a home library that will be the envy of any avid reader.

• **Studio space:** If there's a resident yogi and/or artist living under the roof, then converting a dining room into a yoga or art studio, or perhaps even a hybrid space for those who enjoy both activities, is a no-brainer. A yoga studio conversion may not require as much in-

vestment as a kitchen overhaul or bathroom renovation, but an ideal home yoga space requires more than a mat and room to stretch.

The Yogapreneur Collective notes that flooring in a yoga studio should be non-slip, easily cleaned, durable, sound-absorbing, and low maintenance. The Yogapreneur Collective asserts that different flooring materials may be ideal for certain types of yoga, noting that cork flooring is a go-to choice for professional studios that offer hot yoga. Similarly, the right flooring for an art studio may depend on the artist's preferred medium, whether it's oil painting, arts and crafts or another artistic pursuit. But any artist knows that a floor that's easy to clean is perhaps best for a home art studio.

• **Additional ideas:** Some additional ways to repurpose a dining room include a gaming room for avid gamers, a memorabilia showcase for collectors or a pantry for foodies who love to cook but need some extra space to store ingredients and tools of the trade. If a formal dining room is only utilized on occasion, homeowners may want to consider the many ways to convert such spaces into areas that are more usable every day.

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10879 ARCHER ST. /ROSEWOOD
 New Price- \$115,000. Seller is proceeding with renovation. Electric wiring and plumbing lines have been run furnace and ductwork has been installed, drywall being hung, septic system is being updated and as seller continues, price will be adjusted accordingly. Kitchen cabinets and countertops are ordered. Vinyl plank flooring, stainless steel appliances, bath fixtures, doors and all remaining buildings materials will stay if sold prior to completion. If you have seen it in the past, call Pattie Armstrong at 937-489-1861 to schedule another showing to see how the renovation has progressed.



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 Spectacular 3 bedroom/2 bath remodeled ranch in the Hub of Scenic Indian Lake. Whether you want year round Lake 'Livin' or a fabulous vacation home, this spacious 1568SF home will delight you. Massive gas fireplace, cathedral ceilings, vinyl plank flooring, 16x14 deck for relaxing, metal roof and 2 car garage. Previously used as an AirBnB, it is totally and tastefully furnished and could be sold as a turnkey package. Contact Pattie Armstrong at 937-489-1861 to get on the list to tour when it hits the market.



1911 RIVERSIDE
 If you want the wonderful feel of country but the convenience of city water and sewer, then this home is just for you! Three bedrooms, one and a half bathrooms, beautiful open concept living/dining room/kitchen, separate rec room off the garage, and a partial basement ready to be used for many different purposes!! It has been totally and tastefully repainted, very nice, new carpet in the upstairs, and new garage door openers. The outside is a nature lovers paradise! The feel of privacy could be all yours! \$245,000 Contact Rita Thurman 937-726-6173.



608 W. HIGH ST./ PIQUA
 A "Missed Opportunity" could pass you by if you don't check out this property. This almost 6000 SF Commercial building offers an abundance of office space, retail sales area or feasible multiple unit apartment conversion possibilities. The former Noah's House Christian Daycare Center is conveniently located on the west end of downtown Piqua. 23x36 detached garage and oversized 3 car attached garage. Huge rooms, kitchen areas, baths, basement and entire west side paved with convenient rear alley access. Possession at closing. Call Pattie Armstrong at 937-489-1861 to schedule your private tour.



10 UNITS -S. SPRINGFIELD ST. / ST. PARIS
 Fantastic Deal for any investor looking to hugely expand their rental property portfolio. 7 apartments / 3 storefronts. Some with updated hot water heaters, furnaces, central air conditioning, roof, brick tuckpointing and plumbing, 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom units. One with huge garage and potential of adding addition apartment above. One with a one car or storage unit. Unlimited possibilities. Tenants pay for their gas and electric. Seller currently pays water. Could possibly be purchased separately. (119, 119 1/2, 121, 121 1/2, 137, 137 1/2, 201, 203, 203 1/2, 203 Rear). Contact Pattie Armstrong at 937-489-1861 for details, rents and pricing.



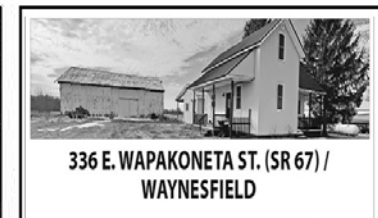
1301 E. Ash St./Piqua
 1500 square feet of professional office space located directly across from Wal-Mart in Piqua. Easy access from I-75 on State Route 36. Shared entry, private waiting room, and break room. Five office/exam rooms, two shared restrooms, and large storage room. Immediate occupancy call Caven Risk 937-489-7200.



380 S. MAIN / DEGRAFF
 This property offers a very unique business and residential opportunity situated on 2.3 acres. The historic Degraff Lumber Company building has been transformed into a breathtaking rustic chalet inspired 3 bedroom, 2 bath 2772SF 1st floor Abode with an additional 2772SF 2nd floor just waiting to be finished. The residence's rear 1812 SF attached "Man Cave" garage is absolutely amazing. The 5000+ commercial building with 16 ft. ceilings, is presently the Keystone of a national recognized auto fabrication and transmission shop. Reception, showroom, restroom, office area, parts department and numerous work stations with multiple overhead doors (9-9.5, 10 & 12 ft.) and heated floors, easily accessed from any direction. Call Pattie Armstrong at 937-489-1861 for more information.



406 RISHA ST. / ANNA
 Wonderful updated brick faced 3 bedroom ranch nestled on a spacious 1/3+acre lot in the Village on Anna is "Move In Ready". Huge renovated eat in farmhouse inspired kitchen with new white shaker cabinetry accented with black hardware, complimenting countertops, ceiling fixtures and new vinyl plank coordinating flooring. New concrete driveway and front sidewalk. Massive rear yard is completely bordered by a privacy fence. This home would be a great opportunity for first time homebuyers or those looking to downsize. Easy to see so call Pattie Armstrong at 937-489-1861 to schedule your private tour.



336 E. WAPAKONETA ST. (SR 67) / WAYNESFIELD
 MOTIVATED SELLERS RELOCATING...BRING YOUR OFFERS!! Looking to escape to a bit of Country Paradise nestled on 1.65 acres that gives you the opportunity to transform your personal ideas, touches, needs and desires into a reality? Here it is! The majority of the inside is like a blank canvas waiting for the painter to give it life. Totally rebuilt exterior 2016-2023. New siding, windows, roof, windows, electrical, plumbing, furnace, insulation, areas of new floor joists, new kitchen with Kitchen Maid cabinets and spacious 20x22 great room constructed in 2021, with breathtaking Cabin Appeal. The 40x50 Century old barn, with updated 300 amp electric, 220, concrete and turme that could stay. Asking \$220,000 but bring your offer. This home is calling you, so call Patie Armstrong at 937-489-1861 to make it your own.