

## Entrepreneur forges new remodeling company

by Andy Phelan  
Staff Writer

Home Forge founder **Bruce Meller** deals in miraculous transformations.

But he doesn't sell salvation as the spiritual leader of a megachurch or reveal the secrets of a butterfly's meta-

completed and all the major elements needed for the project are on site and ready to go before they start a job.

"From the day we cut off your refrigerator to begin work to the day you fry eggs on your new stovetop, it's just three and half weeks," Meller said.

"And this is high quality custom work, not prefab cookie cutter stuff."

**John and Frances Guess** can testify to that.

Standing in his new kitchen while master carpenter and Home Forge team leader **Roy Rymer** put the finishing touches on the room's ceramic backsplash, a smile flashed across Guess' face.

"This was a tired old kitchen, it was just beat," said Guess, who lives off Clairmont Road near Emory University. "We spend 90 percent of our time in here and the den, and it's

just going to be so much more refreshing in here now." Antique beige cabinets blend with toast-colored backsplash tiles and are framed by yellow-gold hues of the remodeled floor. The new granite countertops are still covered with paper to protect from being scratched and an island stands in the center not far from where a countertop used to cut the room in half.

Rymer, along with carpenter **John Conwell** and painter **Marion D. Kelly**, work methodically yet efficiently, touching up paint here or applying grout there. Rymer, Conwell and Kelly are one of two Home Forge teams. They finished the Guess' in three weeks.

"It use to be so depressing in here, it was so drab," Guess said. "It was time for a change. This is going to make all the difference in the world."

For Frances, working with Home Forge designer **Randi DeStefano** made it all that much easier.

"Randi helped guide us through and allowed us to

make the color choices but made sure we got what we wanted."

While the average high-end, extensive kitchen remodeling costs about \$70,000 in metro Atlanta, the return on investment is a 102 percent when the house is sold, according to a study conducted by *Realtor Magazine*. Homeowners in Atlanta have been known to recoup 10 to 22 percent more on their renovations than people nationally, it said.

"In Atlanta if you put money in, you will get money back," said Meller. "If you remodel your kitchen, you should get 102 to 104 percent of the value back," he said. "If you redo bathrooms, it's between 107 to 123 percent."

Across the country, Americans spent more than \$120 billion in 2005 to improve their homes. Georgia accounts for about \$4 billion of that market, a 7 percent jump from 2004, according to research provided by FMI, a management-consulting firm for the construction industry. Americans spent \$25 billion just to renovate their kitchens and baths last year.

Meller said he wants to revolutionize the industry by creating a landscape where you have to do the work in less than a month or you can't play the game. While Home Forge is new on the block, its already expanded to two teams and completed more than 25 jobs. Meller said he plans to grow to three work crews by the middle of 2006.

"With three teams working, we hope to be profitable," said Meller, who cites his father, a WWII veteran and sales representative, as the foundation of his commitment and drive.

"In 1972 Home Depot started as just a local hardware store, but they changed the industry," said Meller, pointing out that 35 cities around the nation account for 40 percent of remodeling work. "We want to do that in remodeling and take this company national with its headquarters located in Decatur."

Because Home Forge's design staff and craftspeople are full-time, salaried employees instead of hourly subcontractors, clients are assured a consistent team dedicated to a project from start to finish. For more information on Home Forge, call 404-371-0102 or go online at [www.homeforgeremodeling.com](http://www.homeforgeremodeling.com).



Home Forge founder Bruce Meller plans to take his Decatur remodeling business national.

morphosis as a professor of organic biology.

He remodels kitchens and bathrooms.

As a former marketing strategist for United Parcel Service and a leader in the field of logistics and project planning, Meller is reshaping the remodeling industry by turning around kitchen and bath renovations in just three and a half weeks.

Most companies take three and a half months.

"I renovated my own kitchen and a friend was getting his done by a pro and called one day to complain about how long it was taking," said Meller from his granite-walled office in East Decatur Station on New Street. "It hit me that I could do it just as well but faster. It was the best business idea I had ever had, and I didn't want to be reading about how someone else did it two years from now."

Meller says his business model is different because he makes logistics his burden, not the customer's. All materials are pre-ordered, planning is

## Future of GM plant site to be determined by citizen committee

DeKalb County Chief Executive Officer **Vernon Jones** has announced the formation of a blue ribbon citizens advisory committee to look into the potential future development for the area surrounding the General Motors plant in Doraville.

The 22-member committee consists of a wide array of professionals and stakeholders from the general area. Members on this committee include:

- **Marlene Hadden**, Doraville City councilperson
- **Bob Voyles**, DeKalb Perimeter CID Chairman & president/CEO, Seven Oaks Company
- **Jill Chambers**, State representative
- **Eugene Walker**, chairman of the DeKalb Development Authority Board
- **Peter Chang**, International Village
- **Dan Vargas**, Vargas and Amigos
- **John Ahman**, Ahmann and Boyette
- **Yvonne Williams**, executive director of Perimeter Community Improvement District

"Community involvement is essential to ensure the success of a quality development," said Jones. "The potential is unlimited for this prime property."

The committee's first meeting is scheduled for Jan. 9.

290-145857 12/29,1/5,1/12,1/19JH

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF DEKALB COUNTY  
STATE OF GEORGIA

Estate of **DOROTHY MUCKLE**, Incapacitated Adult. Estate No. 1997-1730

### PUBLICATION NOTICE

The following person, **Whisteria Walton**, whose address is unknown shall be served by publication as provided by law: published in the newspaper in which the sheriff's advertisements appear for said county, once a week for four weeks, prior to the date fixed for said hearing. The notice should appear as the following:

#### NOTICE TO GUARDIAN AND CONSERVATOR

RE: CITATION FOR REMOVAL OF **WHISTERIA WALTON** AS GUARDIAN AND CONSERVATOR OF THE ESTATE OF **DOROTHY MUCKLE**, INCAPACITATED ADULT.

TO: **WHISTERIA WALTON** of unknown address.

This is to notify you that pursuant to O.C.G.A. §§ 29-4-52(a), 29-5-60(d), you are cited to appear in the Probate Court of DeKalb County on February 22, 2006, at 2:00 P.M. to show cause why you should not be removed as guardian and conservator of the estate for failure to file personal status reports and annual returns as required by O.C.G.A. §§ 29-4-22(b)(9), 29-5-60(a). Any objection must be made in writing and must be filed with the Court on or before **February 22, 2006**.

Sherry A. Wright

Clerk, Probate Court of DeKalb County

Witness, **The Honorable Jeryl Debra Rosh**  
Judge of The Probate Court

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