



2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

House Specialties

www.house-specialties.com 847-587-9500

HELLO FRIENDS, CLIENTS, AND VENDORS

At the beginning of each year I do strategic planning. I reflect on the state of my business, analyze the financial data of the previous year, reflect on the successes and failures of the previous year, and consider the path forward in the new year.

Having a practice of reflection and analysis always stirs in me a sense of gratitude. I am deeply aware that what grows this business is not my business acumen or sleepless nights...it is the loyalty of my customers, the trust of my referral partners, and the support of my House Specialties team and vendors. If you are one of those folks, please accept my deep, deep thanks. The success of this business is because of you.

The past year was a difficult one for House Specialties and a stressful time for me personally. The current labor market has made it hard to find and retain quality staff. This reality—plus a number of unforeseeable setbacks—made 2023 a challenging year. I spent more time than I wanted working *in* the business, rather than *on* the business. This is the reason we didn't reach our full potential last year. Moving forward in 2024, staffing is the most important issue.

The following pages will take you through the ups and downs of House Specialties in 2023 and give you a view into our strategy for 2024.

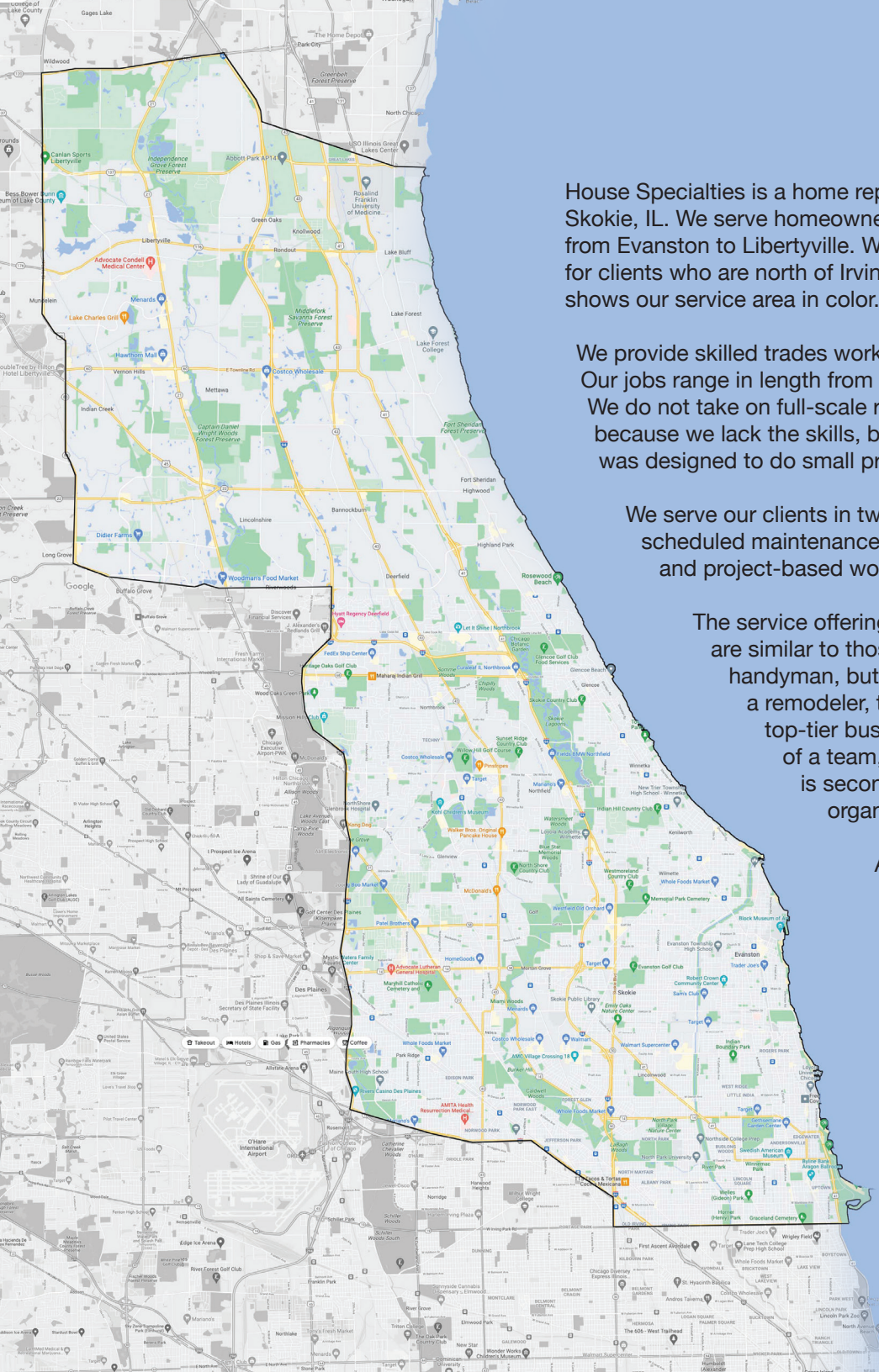
Thank you so much for your trust in us, your support and your business.

Peace to you,



Lightning Atkinson
business owner





House Specialties is a home repair company based in Skokie, IL. We serve homeowners on the North Shore from Evanston to Libertyville. We also work in Chicago for clients who are north of Irving Park Road. This map shows our service area in color.

We provide skilled trades work for small home projects. Our jobs range in length from one hour to several days. We do not take on full-scale remodeling projects...not because we lack the skills, but because this company was designed to do small projects with excellence.

We serve our clients in two ways: scheduled maintenance subscriptions and project-based work.

The service offerings at House Specialties are similar to those of a traditional handyman, but with the high skill level of a remodeler, the professionalism of a top-tier business, the dependability of a team, customer service that is second to none, and a high level of organization.

As a premium provider, our rates are higher than those of an individual handyman. We have processes and systems to ensure our projects go well, we carry significant insurance, we train our team members, and we turn down jobs that are not a good fit for us.

Our clients are homeowners who want to maintain and enhance the investment they have made in their homes. They value long-term trusting relationships and high-quality work over low prices and quick fixes. They appreciate a well-run business that makes their lives easier.

→ non-structural carpentry

→ licensed electrical work

→ plumbing

→ handywork

NON-STRUCTURAL CARPENTRY

42% of projects

- 3 front/side doors installed
- 7 interior doors installed
- 30 doors tuned-up/aligned
- 3 shelves installed
- 5 gates repaired
- 23 shutters installed
- 4 damaged door jambs rebuilt
- 5 sets of weatherstripping installed
- 20 locksets installed
- 2 closet systems installed
- 8 bifold doors repaired
- 12 trim jobs
- 1 pull-down attic ladder replaced
- 1 pet door installed
- 1 pet door removed
- 4 deck repairs
- 3 kitchen counters installed
- 8 handrails installed

HANDYWORK

28% of projects

- 11 new storm doors installed
- 12 old storm doors repaired
- 8 caulk jobs
- 37 pieces of art hung
- 14 window blinds custom cut & installed
- 2 rain barrels assembled and installed
- 9 stuck windows freed-up and lubricated
- 5 TVs installed
- 2 shower grab bars installed
- 6 bathroom exhaust fans installed/replaced
- 1 kitchen vent hood installed
- 1 doorbell repaired
- 5 hose reels mounted
- 4 dryer vents rebuilt

LICENSED ELECTRICAL

23% of projects

- 19 new receptacles installed
- 18 receptacles or GFCIs replaced
- 85 light fixtures installed
- 10 ceiling fans installed
- 1 electric vehicle charger installed
- 25 switch/dimmer replacements
- 6 new circuits created
- 29 LED retrofits installed
- 9 smoke detectors installed

2023 projects

PLUMBING

7% of projects

- 4 kitchen sinks installed
- 4 kitchen faucets installed
- 1 garbage disposal installed
- 4 toilets replaced
- 9 toilets repaired
- 10 bathroom sinks installed
- 9 bathroom faucets installed

staffing

client information

In 2023 we completed 108 projects in addition to our scheduled maintenance subscriptions. We served 145 homeowners, of which 86 were first time clients.

56% of new customers are referred by someone who trusts us (the blue numbers below).



- » 23% were referred by an existing client
- » 16% found us using an internet search
- » 15% were referred by our vendors/suppliers
- » 12% were referred by other contractors
- » 10% saw one of our work vans
- » 7% previously knew the business owner
- » 6% were referred by realtors

set-backs

House Specialties hired five new full time employees in 2023. None of these employees lasted 90 days.

In September, one of our work vans required a new transmission costing almost \$4000.

The IRS mis-read a tax form we submitted with \$0 due, and sent us a bill for \$1500. Eventually this was corrected, after approximately 7 hours of phone calls over 3 weeks.

The week before Christmas one of our work vans was broken into while parked at a job. In the 20 minutes we were gone, our large miter saw was stolen. Repairing the van and replacing the saw cost about \$1400.

Over Labor Day weekend, Lightning sustained a non-work power tool injury that prevented him from working in the field for several weeks. We covered our commitments by paying another company to provide us with experienced carpenters.

Recruiting, vetting, and interviewing candidates to hire 1 new employee costs:

- » 18-20 hrs of management time
- » \$560 of fixed costs including:
 - job posting fees
 - interview materials
 - background checks

After selecting a candidate, the onboarding/training/outfitting of the new employee costs:

- » 30-40 hrs of management time in the first week
- » 60 hrs of employee time in the first 2 weeks
- » \$400 of uniforms
- » 80-160 hours of management time over the first several months coaching and training the new employee

In the first quarter of 2024, while this report was being compiled, we added two new employees to our team. This added capacity will set us up for success this year. When you meet them, please welcome Ty Williams and Tom Reinfranck.

Your home is likely your largest investment, and maintaining that investment is an important part of responsible home ownership. Our maintenance subscription is a great way to care for your home and protect that investment.

The subscription includes quarterly visits from a home repair technician to complete everything on our maintenance checklist. If you have other projects, we'd be happy to tackle them during these visits or return on another day.



WINTER SERVICES

- clean furnace and replace air filter
- clean lint out of dryer and dryer vent
- scrub out washing machine
- clean dishwasher and filter
- clean garbage disposal
- replace batteries and test smoke/CO detectors
- vacuum refrigerator coils
- change refrigerator water filter

SPRING SERVICES

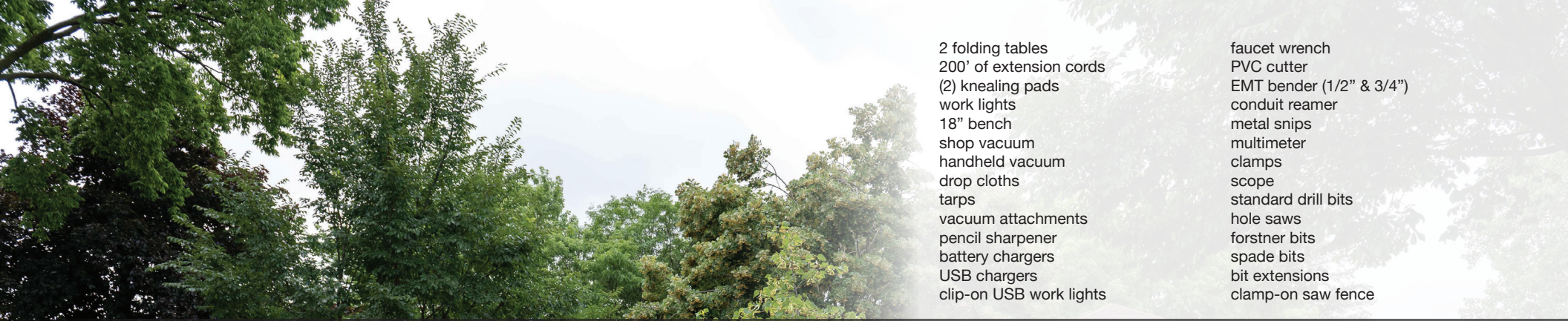
- clean furnace and replace air filter
- clean lint out of dryer and dryer vent
- scrub out washing machine
- clean dishwasher and filter
- clean garbage disposal
- drain and flush water heater (optional add-on)

SUMMER SERVICES

- clean furnace and replace air filter
- clean lint out of dryer and dryer vent
- scrub out washing machine
- clean dishwasher and filter
- clean garbage disposal
- replace batteries and test smoke/CO detectors
- vacuum refrigerator coils
- change refrigerator water filter
- pressure wash house (optional add-on)

FALL SERVICES

- clean furnace and replace air filter
- clean lint out of dryer and dryer vent
- scrub out washing machine
- clean dishwasher and filter
- clean garbage disposal
- replace pad in whole-house humidifier



READY FOR ANYTHING...

Our vans contain the tools for scheduled maintenance work, carpentry, electrical, and plumbing repairs. We carry all necessary job site equipment, and we stock parts for the most common *while you're here* repairs.

- 2 folding tables
- 200' of extension cords
- (2) kneeling pads
- work lights
- 18" bench
- shop vacuum
- handheld vacuum
- drop cloths
- tarps
- vacuum attachments
- pencil sharpener
- battery chargers
- USB chargers
- clip-on USB work lights

- faucet wrench
- PVC cutter
- EMT bender (1/2" & 3/4")
- conduit reamer
- metal snips
- multimeter
- clamps
- scope
- standard drill bits
- hole saws
- forstner bits
- spade bits
- bit extensions
- clamp-on saw fence



- hammer drill (corded & 18v)
- jig saw
- laser level & tripod
- levels (78", 48", 32", 24", 12")
- wire fishing rods
- fish tapes (3)
- wrenches (metric & SAE)
- sockets (metric & SAE)
- deep sockets (metric & SAE)
- nut drivers (standard & SAE)
- chop saw (12" & 7")
- table saw 10"
- 1/2" drill 18v
- impact driver 18v
- circular saw (corded & 18v)
- planer 18v
- caulk gun 18v
- oscillating tool 18v
- angle grinder
- palm sander
- caulk gun-manual
- speed square, 3", 6", 12"
- rubber mallet
- framing square
- hand saw
- spare plywood
- hand plane
- nail sets
- combination square (small & large)
- power caulk gun
- circuit tracer
- hinge mortising jig
- lockset boring jig
- strike plate mortising jig
- pipe wrench
- basin wrench

- toilet handles
- toilet fill valves
- toilet flush valves
- toilet flappers (2" or 3")
- toilet seals & bolts & caps
- P-traps 1.5"
- P-traps 1.25"
- tailpiece extensions, 1.5", 1.25"
- faucet hoses, various lengths
- toilet hoses
- pipe fittings
- decora receptacles
- standard receptacles
- receptacle covers
- single pole switches
- 3way switches
- stacked switches
- triple stacked switches
- dimmers (standard & decora)
- fan controllers
- switch covers
- GFCI receptacles
- breakers
- EMT conduit (1/2" & 3/4")
- EMT conduit fittings (many types)
- rain-tight fittings
- armored flexibe conduit
- flex fittings
- liquid-tight conduit
- liquid-tight fittings
- anti short bushings
- knock-out reduction bushings
- wirenuts (4 sizes)
- split bolts
- device spacers
- device screws 6-32

- caulk (3 types, 5 colors)
- basic screws
- construction screws (5 lengths)
- concrete screws (3/16 & 5/16)
- pop-toggles
- screw-in hollow wall anchors
- spackle
- thread locker
- plastic bags
- rubber bands
- black touchup paint
- white touch-up paint
- wire ties

- shims
- window cleaner
- goo-gone
- nitrile gloves
- wipes
- rags
- towels
- masking tape
- duct tape
- metallic tape
- electrical tape (6 colors)
- window flashing tape
- teflon tape

- double-sided foam tape
- mastic
- band-aids
- bug spray
- sun screen
- gauze
- hand sanitizer
- shoe covers
- masks
- pull string
- trash bags
- french clete (3 sizes)
- pencils/pens/markers
- 4 saw horses



Tara Montgomery, Skokie IL



We recently hired House Specialties to complete a bedroom project. We had painted but needed help installing the new baseboard trim. We had a very positive experience with this business. They responded quickly to our request. The owner came out personally and offered a few different trim options that we liked, which was helpful. The estimate was accurate. The carpenter was a pro. The work was scheduled and then completed on time. We would definitely use this company again for projects.

Suzanne Wood, Chicago IL



This is the second time I've used them and I wouldn't hesitate to do so again. Very responsive, polite, professional and performed a quality job. This time he repaired a door facing and installed locks.

Lana Daiker, Glencoe IL



We have worked with Lightning and his team on multiple occasions and they have been wonderful! Professional and friendly; reliable and super helpful advice on the best way to get the results you want. Great people and great work!

Anat Trace, Skokie IL



The company is the most reliable one I've ever dealt with. Lightning (the owner) was responsive, punctual and very accommodating of my schedule. His work is outstanding and perfect and exceeded my expectations. The work was very involved and he took care of it in the most professional, most expedient manner. I highly recommend using House Specialties for any repairs in your home.

Ricardo Fleury, Glenview IL



The entire process was smooth. Lightning and his team's professionalism was excellent from the initial visit to performing the work. A fully online quoting and payment system was also very nice.

Jon Snyder, Skokie IL



Can't say enough about their work. Had an unplanned mini-reno and they came in with the right price. After chatting with Lightning, I had no doubt I'd choose them. I'll definitely be using their services again.

Stephen Worobec, Evanston IL



Excellence start to finish! Conscientious, attention to detail, easy to work with. Prompt, clean and efficient. Finally, a group that has the skill set and mind set and leadership to take on small to medium projects in a professional way! Would call on their services again, no question!