

Christmas light installation a growing industry

By Stephanie Gleason, Wall Street Journal

At Christmas time, Shirley Pepys often sits across the street from her home in Newport Beach and covertly listens to the ooohhs and aaaahhs of delighted passersby.

Pepys, a retired business owner, has been decking her home with boughs of holly – and much more – for the past 20 years. With each year, the décor has become more elaborate. Her display now features twinkling lights, illuminated snow, a family of faux penguins and a four-minute light show coordinated to “Carol of the Bells.”

Everything is custom built. But not by Pepys. For the past two years, she has enlisted Dillon Wells, an audiovisual professional, and his family to put together the full display, paying under \$15,000 for the whole shebang.

More Americans are forgoing the difficult and sometimes risky endeavor of installing their own holiday lights, asking professionals to take their place on the ladder. National chain Christmas Decor, which has 40,000 clients across the U.S., says it has seen sales increase 11 percent every year for the past four years.

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