

## **Borders:**

It is important for borders to fit and to lay flat before quilting in order to have the best possible results. Sewing on a border and then cutting it off at the end is the recipe for wavy borders. If the border is wavy and does not lie flat, there will likely be pleats and puckers after quilting or the longarm may have to make tucks in the border.

Before beginning any borders, the first step is to measure the quilt top. First compare the top and bottom edges with the center of the quilt to see if they are the same. Do this by folding the top and bottom to meet in the center of the quilt. If they are not the same and the difference is greater than 1/2", determine why and make the necessary adjustments before proceeding with the borders. Check the seam allowances in the blocks, sashings and between the blocks. If the difference is less than 1/2", you can carefully ease it in when attaching the borders. Repeat for the side edges of the quilt.

Next you will need to measure the quilt top in 3 places, down the center and down the length on each side of the center, but not necessarily along the edges. You will then average these 3 measurements to determine the length to cut both side borders. Mark the centers of both the quilt top and borders. Pin, matching center and ends of borders to those of the top, easing in any fullness as needed. Repeat this process for the opposite direction, measuring across the quilt top to determine the length for top and bottom borders and attach in the same manner. Refer to the handout on applying borders for additional information.

If you have a pieced border made of blocks or strips, there is more opportunity for wavy borders. It is a good idea to stay stitch along the outer edge to prevent the many seams from coming apart when it is loaded on the frame and when the quilt is rolled during the quilting process.

Sometimes borders are oversized with the intent to trim them down after quilting. Keep in mind that you have paid for the quilting you are cutting off. Cutting after quilting also removes part of the design.

Whenever possible, cut borders on the lengthwise grain of the fabric. The lengthwise grain has less stretch than the crosswise grain. Press borders carefully to avoid stretching and press from the top. Also check to be sure your borders are square.

If you want nice borders, take the time to measure, press and square correctly.