

BUILDER



THE MAGAZINE OF THE CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

RENOVATION



Annual Renovation Issue

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Developing Zero-Peak Houses

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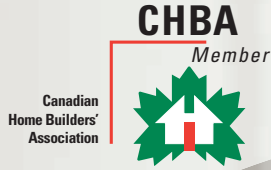


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COVER

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Home BUILDER Magazine is published by Work-4 Projects Ltd. six times a year. Editorial/Advertising: 4819 St. Charles Boulevard, Pierrefonds, Quebec, Canada, H9H 3C7. Tel.: 514-620-2200, E-mail: homebuilder@work4.ca.

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Getting FIT: Solar PV Contracts in Ontario



The Lily Lake 10-MW solar farm in Peterborough, Ont. is nearing completion. Image courtesy of Hatch, www.hatch.ca.

ONTARIO — According to the Canadian solar research company ClearSky, \$7.9 billion will be spent on solar PV in Ontario between 2010 and 2015. The firm also estimates that solar PV provides 12 times more jobs than nuclear energy per unit of energy produced, and 15 times more jobs.

Canada's Economy Rates a 9th Place High "C"

OTTAWA — According to The Conference Board of Canada, Canada's Economy grade is expected to stay in the middle of the pack, with a high "C" and 9th place in 2011, down from a low "B" but a 10th place ranking in 2010. Australia and Sweden are expected to be among the top economic performers, earning "A" grades in 2010 and 2011—the only two peer countries to do so. Switzerland, Belgium, and Norway are also expected to be top-five performers in both years.

The U.S. is expected to earn the same grades as Canada—a "B" in 2010 and a "C" in 2011—despite its different underlying economic context. The financial crisis was much more severe in the U.S., and the American economy is experiencing what some have called a job-less recovery. Ireland is expected to slowly recover in the Economy ranking, rising from 15th in 2010 to 8th in 2011.

The solar photovoltaic energy industry has burgeoned in Ontario under a feed-in-tariff program introduced by the Provincial government two years ago. Under this program, the Ontario Power Authority currently guarantees a fixed price for a 20-year contract.

On February 24, 2011, the Government of Ontario offered an additional 257MW (ac) of solar contracts, bringing the total given to the Ontario solar industry to 2,680 MW (dc) worth of contracts (including contracts awarded through RESOP, the Korean Consortium and the FIT Program). Of this, only 220 MW dc had been built by the end of 2010, leaving 2,460 MW dc remaining to be built.

Those numbers provide a great opportunity for manufacturers, developers, installers, electricians, EPC providers and others to do a significant amount of solar business between now and 2014. However, a draft Long Term Energy Plan (LTEP), published in November 2010, states that the Government's goal for solar energy in Ontario is around 2,700 MW (dc). As a result, the next couple of years will most likely see significantly lower volumes of new contracts going forward.

Housing Starts Moderated: CMHC Releases First Quarter 2011 Report

OTTAWA — According to Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation's First Quarter 2011 Housing Market Outlook, housing starts moderated in the second half of the year following a strong start in 2010. CMHC predicts housing starts to edge lower in the first quarter of 2011, after which they will trend gradually higher, reaching a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 178,990 units by the fourth quarter.

With the exception of Alberta and British Columbia, housing starts are forecast to be down in all areas of Canada. In 2012, housing starts are forecast to increase in British Columbia, Alberta, and Ontario, and to decrease in the remaining provinces. Measures recently announced for government-backed mortgage insurance will moderate housing starts activity as some potential buyers will be required to save a larger minimum down payment, or buy smaller, less expensive homes, in order to qualify for mortgage insurance.

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The Magazine of the Canadian Home Builders' Association
Vol. 24 No. 3
May/June 2011

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New Housing Market Report: Ontario

By Michael Collins-Williams

In 2010, Ontario's housing market rebounded from a very challenging year in 2009. When all was said and done, Ontario starts experienced a 20 per cent increase over 2009 to reach 60,433 units in 2010. The year 2010 really began on a high note as home buyers, anticipating higher mortgage rates and the HST by mid-year, moved their purchases forward into the latter part of 2009 and early 2010 and this translated into a very active level of construction activity throughout the year.

The GTA high-rise condo market was a particular bright spot last year with a near record of over 20,000 sales recorded throughout the year. High-rise condo sales have continued at a blistering pace through the first few months of 2011 with a mix of first-time buyers, move-up buyers and investors involved in the market. CMHC had forecast Ontario housing starts to weaken from 2010 levels, reaching 56,200 units in 2011 and 59,500 units in 2012. However, owing to economic uncertainty, CMHC has since suggested starts will range between 49,000 and 68,000 units this year and next.

Over the last few years Ontario has experienced a drastic shift from low-rise housing to multi-unit housing with the most glaring headline numbers being demonstrated by the sea of cranes across the Toronto skyline. While the debates rage over what this all means now and in the future, I do know that the shift from ground-oriented to high-rise housing is the result of a number of factors. Land supply for ground-orientated housing has been substantially restricted through a number of public policy choices by both provincial and local governments and the current inventory of available lots are at historical lows. Furthermore, many consumers are being priced out of more traditional forms of housing and are seeking more affordable options in the multi-unit sector.

With our historically low interest rates and continuing strong immigration, we still have a market for new homes, but a rise of interest

LHBA Launches Campaign to Benefit New Home Buyers & Local Business

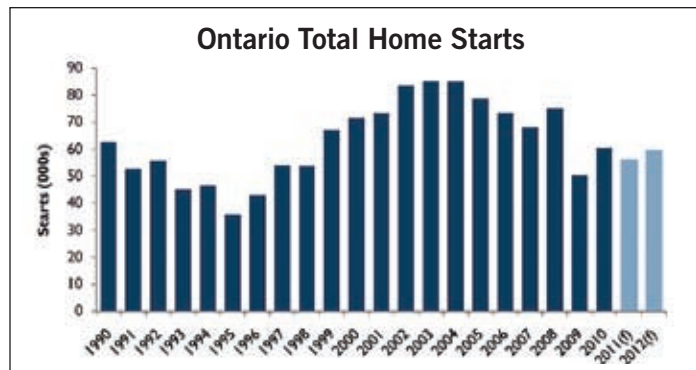


LONDON—The London Home Builders' Association has launched an innovative savings program to assist New Home Buyers with expenses usually not included in the sale price of their house: the finishing touches to help put the personal stamp on their new home.

The Ultimate New Home Housewarming Gift will include savings from local retailers and service providers on furniture to landscaping and all things in between, and could save new home buyers over \$7,000. Some savings could also help new home buyers with costs to upgrade or stage an existing home in preparation for sale. With retailers still joining in, the value is anticipated to continue to grow.

The Ultimate New Home Housewarming Gift is available to buyers once they complete an Offer to Purchase for the construction of a new home or purchase of a new inventory home with a participating LHBA Builder between April 9 and December 31, 2011.

Buyers looking to receive their package can find details and a complete, regularly updated, list of participating retailers, service providers, and builders at www.lhba.on.ca.



SOURCE: CMHC

rates by a couple points could change sales numbers very quickly. This is not a dire prediction of a collapse but rather a caution: This is not a traditional market and we have to watch it very carefully and ensure that government-imposed costs are kept in check to protect long-term housing affordability as well as the tens of thousands of high-quality jobs supported by the residential construction industry.

Michael Collins-Williams is a Registered Professional Planner and Director of Policy at the Ontario Home Builders' Association.

Alberta Builder Connect: A New Tool for the Trades

EDMONTON—Finding skilled people is one of the biggest challenges facing the residential construction industry today. In response, the Canadian Home Builders' Association-Alberta (CHBA-Alberta) has developed Alberta Builder Connect (ABC), a job search tool for those who want to begin or continue a career in Alberta's residential construction industry. ABC is owned by the CHBA-Alberta and each of the five local associations, which include CHBA-Calgary Region, CHBA-Central Alberta, CHBA-Edmonton Region, CHBA-Grande Prairie Region, and CHBA-Lethbridge & Region.



A no-charge service for Alberta's CHBA members, job postings can include anything that is industry specific, whether you are looking for an Architectural Technologist, Marketing Manager, Sales Professional, Site Superintendent, or anything in between. The idea is to provide member companies with another tool to attract skilled jobseekers. Potential employees simply log into their Career Management Centre and register for Careers Direct, which instantly notifies them of a recent job posting matching their specific employment interests. For more information, visit www.albertabuilderconnect.com.

Remembering OHBA Executive Director, David Horton

TORONTO - OHBA Executive Director, David Horton, passed away on Sunday, May 1, 2011. For 25 years, David was OHBA's rock of Gibraltar, its spirit, its determination and its driving force. Our industry has lost a great man who was a wonderful, supportive friend to so many people. On behalf of Home BUILDER Magazine, our sincere condolences to David's family, friends and colleagues at OHBA and within our industry.



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By Peter Norman

Modest inflation can provide a boost for real estate and housing...

Peter Norman is a member of the CHBA Economic Research Committee and is Chief Economist at Altus Group (formerly Clayton Research), the leading provider of independent real estate consulting and advisory services.

Optimism in Moderation

In many ways the Canadian economy has roared back to life, turning in seven consecutive quarters of positive GDP growth since the depths of the recession and adding 480,000 net new jobs to the workforce. At the end of 2010, the economy was some 4.7 per cent larger than at the trough of the recession and had just surpassed its previous peak set in late 2007.

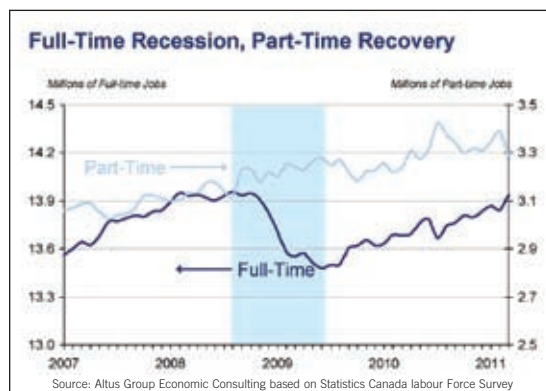
Headline job growth has been encouraging. Total employment has more than recovered recessionary job losses. But underlying trends in labour markets are weaker. Despite the headline growth in jobs, Canadians are still working fewer hours than prior to the recession. Moreover, the employment rate (ratio of jobs to adult population) remains well below its pre-recession peak across the board and in most age groups, particularly the youth cohort.

Canada experienced a “full-time recession” but a “part-time recovery.” In the depths of the recession (October 2008 to July 2009) fully 450,000 full-time jobs were lost while part-time jobs actually rose modestly. Since July 2009, one-quarter of all net job growth have been part-time positions.

The positive aspect to this situation is that there is considerable capacity today to grow the workforce without significant labour supply constraints. The employment rate is lower than its pre-recession peak in all provinces except for Newfoundland. Canada-wide it is 2 percentage points lower than the peak, and even in high participation provinces like Alberta it remains almost 4 percentage points lower.

All told, optimism in our economy’s progress and its potential impact on housing demand is good, but the details behind the headlines are still somewhat cautionary. Optimism in moderation!

In terms of the housing sector, performance has been moderate recently. Total Canada-wide housing starts slowed to 173,100 units seasonally adjusted at annual rates (SAAR) in the 1st quarter of 2011, according to CMHC, down about 4 per cent from the 4th quarter. This represented the third consecutive decline in housing



Since July 2009, one-quarter of all net job growth have been part-time positions.

starts since the recent peak in early 2010. Both single-family and apartment units contributed to lower overall starts.

Starts were lower in the 1st quarter in all provinces except Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Ontario and were unchanged in PEI. The existing home sales picture was rosier in the 1st quarter of 2011, rising some 4 per cent from the 4th quarter.

Inflation: Friend or Foe?

The most notable economic indicator in recent months has been the rise in inflation. Most consumers are facing higher prices primarily at the gas pump and in the produce section of the grocery store (both at about 19 per cent rise year over year) and the consumer price index, which is a weighted average of the typical “basket” of all goods and services purchased by a household, is up 3.3 per cent.

But while the gas pump prices may be annoying to drivers, helpfully, modestly higher prices in general are being more than matched by stronger wage growth. Average weekly earnings have advanced some 4.2 per cent in the past year.

Modest inflation can provide a boost for real estate and housing, which has traditionally been thought of as a hedge against inflation. And while inflation may have the effect of elevating nominal interest rates, it also devalues the value of homeowner’s mortgages and, in as much as it leads to higher nominal wage growth, improves affordability for existing owners over time.

The real importance of inflation indicators on housing are the signals that they may send to policy makers setting interest rates. If the Bank of Canada sees sustained inflation rising above a target band of 1-3 per cent it will move its key overnight interest rate up, which will, in turn, affect rates charged first on variable rate and eventually on fixed rate mortgages. The good news is that the Bank remains sanguine about recent inflation indicators, referring to them as being influenced by temporary factors. The Bank still sees “underlying inflation” as “subdued.”

Based on the Bank’s disinterest in recent inflation and its concern over the rise in the value of the Canadian dollar, it is still very unlikely that we’ll see any substantial movement on policy interest rates this year.

Housing Forecast Moderate

Single-family starts will continue to moderate and will be lower overall in 2011 than 2010. Slightly higher apartment starts in 2011 are likely, due to strength in Ontario and Alberta. All told, we expect to see about 175,000 housing starts in 2011—down about 8 per cent from the prior year. 2012 may prove to show the opposite pattern with single-family units showing more strength, but apartments waning modestly.



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By Dr. Guy Newsham

A combination of strategies could result in a “zero-peak” house.

Developing and Demonstrating Zero-Peak Houses

Researchers at the National Research Council’s Institute for Research in Construction (NRC-IRC) are exploring ways to design and operate houses so that their electricity use is minimized during periods when regional demand for power is at its highest. This work is being undertaken with Ontario university collaborators at Waterloo and Carleton.

Demand for electricity across a region is not constant. It can vary greatly by season and time-of-day, yet utilities must be able to meet the demand without any disruption in service. At the highest-use times (“peaks”), utilities often must import additional capacity from neighbouring regions, deploy peak capacity generators, or find ways to reduce demand.

The first two approaches can be very costly and have high GHG output. Building even more generating capacity to meet a projected growing demand for power in the coming decade is also expensive and can be challenging in many ways. Unfortunately, the consequences of not acting may be blackouts. Therefore, there is growing interest in reducing demand at peak times, and the residential sector, responsible for 29.5 per cent of electrical energy use in Canada, has a big role to play.

When do these peak periods occur? In the short term, it is southern and eastern Ontario that faces the greatest challenge during summer heat waves when air-conditioners are running, particularly in the late afternoon to early evening—a time when people arrive home from work or school, yet many businesses are still open. Households might use three times more electricity on a hot summer afternoon than during the morning on other summer days (see graph).

Analyzing Smart Meter Data

Using smart meter data provided by partner utilities, NRC-IRC researchers are analyzing how homeowners consume electricity during peak periods. They will also use simulations to explore options for house design and operation that could reduce demand during peak-use times, and then apply the most promising techniques to a full-scale test house.

One approach researchers have evaluated is Ontario’s voluntary peaksaver program. In that program, a signal from the utility ensures participating air conditioners don’t run constantly during peak times. The a/c might run for 15 minutes and then be turned off for 15 minutes, even though the house has not yet reached the desired temperature. The temperature in the house will slowly rise, but often this is not a hardship and it greatly helps utilities ensure grid stability.

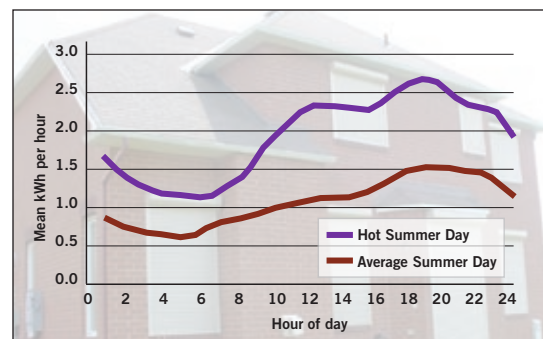
Other techniques NRC-IRC is looking at include:

- Turning on the a/c earlier in the day to pre-cool the house before the expected heat wave hits, to see if this can reduce a/c usage later in the day.
- Using timers on devices such as dishwashers and

clothes dryers, so they start automatically during non-peak times.

- Installing motorized blinds on windows to reduce the need for cooling.
- Using local generation, such as rooftop photovoltaic (PV) panels to reduce demand from the grid (PV production tends to be highest when summer power demand across the grid is highest).
- Storing off-peak electricity in batteries for use during peak hours.

While technologies can help to cut energy use, human behaviour is just as important. Evidence suggests that households can voluntarily adjust the times they use some appliances to avoid peak periods, given appropriate incentives and information. The move to time-of-use pricing of electricity is an example of this.



Average energy use per hour for a large sample of houses in southern Ontario (2008), for a hot (peak) summer day vs. all summer days.

Ideally, a combination of these strategies could result in a “zero-peak” house, one that draws no electricity from the grid during peak times. The zero-peak period might last for only an hour or two and happen only a few days of the year. But those hours could make a big difference for energy suppliers, and ultimately in energy costs for everyone.

NRC researchers plan to demonstrate this concept at a full-scale test house in Ottawa this summer. While it might not be cost-effective for real homes to reduce their peak power use to zero in the near future, the test house will be a proof-of-concept that it is possible. From these studies technologies and strategies that are currently realistic and cost-effective will be identified. The result will be a house that can substantially reduce its peak energy use.

In most other parts of Canada, which don’t experience the same prolonged heat and humidity, the most important peaks are mornings and evenings in winter. The need to address peak use in these regions is not as urgent right now, but many of the same concepts discussed above will work in winter too (think pre-heating instead of pre-cooling, for example).

For more information, visit www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/projects/irc/zero-peak.html.

Dr. Guy Newsham is a senior research officer in the Indoor Environment program of the NRC Institute for Research in Construction. He can be reached at 613-993-9607 or guy.newsham@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca



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By Fanis Grammenos

Neighbourhood Externalities: Money Can Grow on Trees

Economists talk about externalities when calculating the cost-effectiveness of any operation. Mostly they mean that the costs or damages to others downstream, or in the future, are excluded from a calculation. But are externalities always a cost? Could externalities be benefits, unforeseen profits and, if so, how would we know?

To know confidently, we need to do some arithmetic. Consider this simplistic example: the reflected sunlight from a newly erected glass tower has caused an overload on the cooling systems of an adjacent building. Could someone have calculated in advance the cause and effect of that glass reflection, or the cost of the additional cooling capacity?

Let us assume, speculatively, that the entire building surface had a special selective coating that absorbed 80 per cent of sunlight and turned it into electricity. In that case, the math would show a reduction in the cooling load and production of power: two profits, a direct and an indirect profit.

There are many cases of profit-making, of unintended benefits, of positive externalities. Fortunately, the complicated arithmetic has already been done objectively and reliably (see reference).

Two of the many design elements in a neighbourhood development are trees and parks. Both are usually factored in as the necessary cost of compliance with municipal regulation, or as the cost of developing an attractive, picturesque streetscape.

Research and good math now show that trees and parks can be moved from the debit to the credit column of the ledger, in fact can earn money in the short and long term. They do so in many ways

and without including hard-to-price health benefits: by cutting cooling and heating costs; reducing water runoff; reducing garden watering; saving on conveyance piping; stormwater plant load; capturing and storing CO₂ and harmful emissions; reducing ambient temperatures and raising property values and the tax base.

Here are some rounded figures of what one tree can do in an average year for a house, a neighbourhood, a municipality and the city:

- Intercept 9,000 litres (2,000 gal) of rainfall
- Save 200kWh of electricity in cooling
- Save 3 mil Btu in heating
- Capture 0.7 kg of four harmful air pollutants (added for simplicity)
- Capture 200 kg of CO₂
- Reduce storm infrastructure costs

- Reduce storm end-treatment costs
- Increase property value near a planted space

To turn all these additive benefits into money, let's take an example of a 16 ha (40 acre) neighbourhood with 400 houses and 500 trees, some on its streets and some in a small, local park. We take the available summary calculations and, using averages for simplicity, we get the following figures separated by the beneficiaries: the homeowner, the developer and the city at large:

Total monetary gain in savings from 500 trees and a small park:

- The homeowners get \$29,000 in reduced heating and cooling costs combined.
- The city saves \$245,000 in infrastructure costs and \$200 in water treatment costs.
- The developer gets a share of the upfront savings in storm water infrastructure.
- The capture of CO₂ saves \$1,200 and is equivalent to removing 100 cars from the road.
- The capture of harmful pollutants saves \$2,200.
- The developer earns an average of 16 per cent sale price premium.

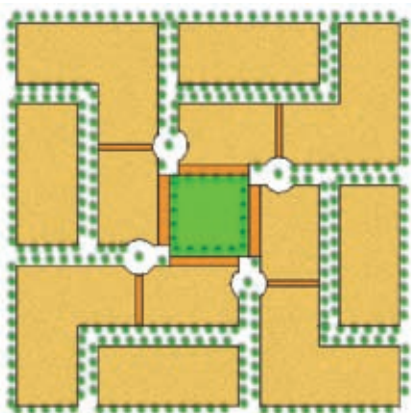
Altogether this neighbourhood would save \$267,000 the first year and \$32,000 each additional year. As energy prices rise, and the value of carbon increases in trading, so too will the hidden benefits of this neighbourhood, and we just scratched the surface. Other positive outcomes include the avoidance of energy gas production, and the reduced frequency of garden watering. And so the chain continues.

The developer has two additional hidden benefits: an alluring sales pitch and, most likely, faster sales, a critical factor in profitability.

Green profits grow like trees, slowly, and they last. No one would plant an olive tree expecting to sell olives a year later. It takes about 10 years for the first meagre crop, but the tree can live for more than 1,000 years. It is a long-term investment plan; a variety of green chip shares. The same is true for planting trees and creating neighbourhood parks.

These generalized figures avoid the confusing conditionals that appear in research reports. They paint the big picture, the order of magnitude of the uncounted benefits. The details may vary in each case. But the overall picture is clear: the veiled currency that has been eluding circulation is green.

Reference: The Value of Green Infrastructure: A Guide to Recognizing Its Economic, Social and Environmental Benefits (Center for Neighbourhood Technology, 2010), available in PDF downloadable form at www.cnt.org.



A 16 ha (40 ac) neighbourhood with a central green space.

Fanis Grammenos is a principal of Urban Pattern Associates and was a senior researcher at CMHC for 20 years. He can be reached at fanis.grammenos@gmail.com, and you can see his planning work at www.fusedgrid.ca



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Financing Services



By **Tim Bailey**

It is too late to inoculate for a disease that has already occurred.

Tim Bailey is General Manager of AVID Canada, a leading provider of customer loyalty research and consulting to the home building industry. Through the AVID system, Tim's team improves referrals, reduces warranty costs, and strengthens the brand of its industry-leading clients. He can be reached at tim.bailey@avidglobal.ca.

Manage Customer Expectations with Inoculation

The field of medicine has long known that a small dose of a disease can immunize against a full-blown outbreak. Similarly, home builders can use the concept of inoculation to administer a dose of reality to ward off dissatisfaction with home buyers. In fact, inoculation is an essential technique to manage customer expectations and increase homeowner delight. Like modern medicine, the concept of inoculation used by home builders needs to be well understood and properly administered in order to provide an effective prescription for customer loyalty.

In its basic form, inoculation in home building is simply strategic communication. The objective is to give a tiny dose of unpleasant news to home buyers to increase their immunity to realities that may occur during their home building experience. Properly executed, inoculation allows a builder to discuss some of the realities of home building and some of the problems that could happen but often don't. This small dose of unpleasant news reduces the likelihood of a customer contracting a massive case of disappointment and dissatisfaction if problems do occur. There are a few key principals for using inoculation to manage expectations:

Pre-emptive

It is too late to inoculate for a disease that has already occurred. Therefore, home builders need to be pre-emptive and constantly prepare home buyers for what might happen. Honesty builds credibility, and upfront, transparent communication with home buyers provides a solid foundation for delivering an exceptional customer experience. This early communication also provides a strategic opportunity for a builder to define its role as the "expert" and to develop its position as a "trusted advisor" to home buyers.

Identification

There are literally thousands of points of failure that can occur in home building, and it is imperative for a builder to know where specific "pain points" may occur with customers. Much like the medical profession conducts research to know what it should be immunizing for, home builders need to measure and monitor their processes and customers for specific problems a home buyer may experience. Discussing every possible problem will create unnecessary fear and uncertainty. Conversely, missing out on the opportunity to inoculate for a highly probable pain point will increase the risk of homeowner dissatisfaction. Builders should look at customer data and talk to staff and trades to understand not only where things go wrong, but what upsets or worries customers. You need to measure what you need to manage.

Acknowledgement

Any issue that could create dissatisfaction is a problem to both the builder and the buyer and needs to be

addressed. Recognition of a potential problem provides an opportunity to explain to a home buyer the prescribed course of action should the problem occur. This creates another occasion to instill confidence and trust, the cornerstones of customer delight.

Clear Explanation

Once a home buyer is informed of a potential problem, it is imperative to clearly explain what it is and why it may happen. This is a great time to take off the hard hat and to assume the role of teacher, describing some of the aspects or complexities of home building that a buyer may not understand. As the expert, a home builder needs to be precise and clear on what the potential problem may be, why it may occur, the impact that it may have, and the plan of action should it occur.

Projection

Although builders should take full responsibility for the home building process and their customers' experience, they should also discuss potential problems beyond their control. These could include the availability of specific trades or certain materials, or possibly delayed municipal approvals or inspections. Projecting matters that fall beyond the control of the builder not only exposes a home buyer to what may occur, but also fosters additional home buyer knowledge and understanding. Note, however, that "projection" can only be used on issues that do not fall within the control of the home builder; it is a weak argument to project uncertainty where a builder has complete control.

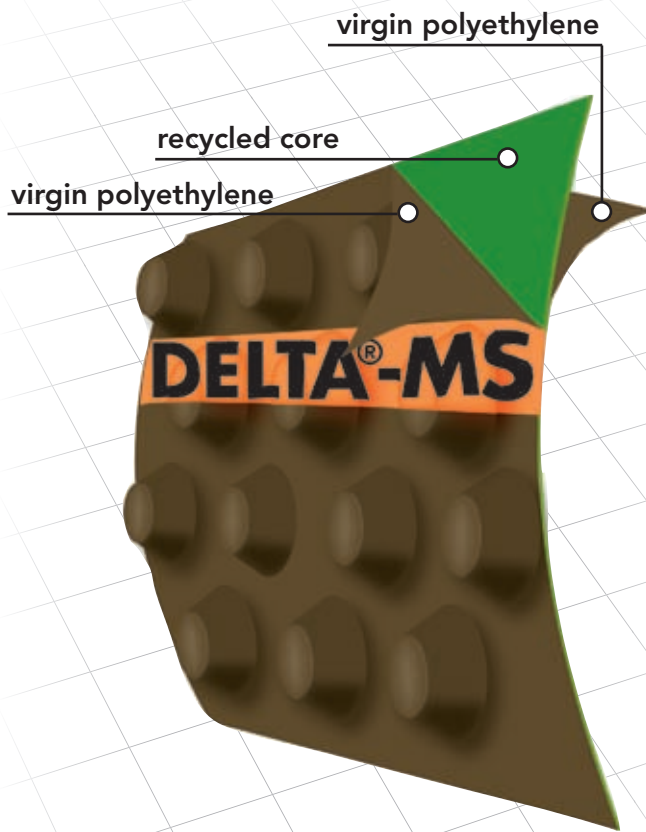
Resolution

To successfully use inoculation to manage expectations, a home builder must explain how any potential problem will be resolved. Warding off an outbreak may cause some side effects, but a home buyer must feel confident that the remedies available are tested, effective, and will bring the desired results. Home buyers expect builders to be experts and to deal with issues effectively. That's why builders must provide the customer with frequent updates, and clearly explain the processes that are in place to monitor progress.

The concept of inoculation in home building must be carefully crafted and strategically administered. Improper use of this technique can create a collage of uncertainties and expose a minefield of potential problems that will unnecessarily instill fears and concerns in home buyers. Properly applied inoculation techniques create home buyers who know in advance what could happen and are much better prepared to deal with problems should they arise. This results in increased customer delight, which drives referral sales and decreases service costs — a healthy prognosis for every home builder. 🏠

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By Frances Jewett,
B.A.Sc., P.Eng.

Proactive organizations are completing accessibility audits.

Frances Jewett is the Business Development Manager for AccessAbility Advantage, a joint venture between March of Dimes Canada and Quadrangle Architects Limited. AccessAbility Advantage provides one-stop-shop consulting on accessibility and complying with the AODA, including accessibility audits, accessible design services, support with developing policies and procedures, and accessible customer service training. She can be reached at fjewett@accessabilityadvantage.ca.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Accessibility for people with disabilities is slowly improving across Canada, and Ontario is the first province to put the onus on businesses to make their places of work barrier-free for customers and employees. Other provinces are likely to follow.

The Ontario Government is introducing five sets of mandatory standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). These standards require public and private sector organizations to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility for customers and employees with disabilities. The legislation is part of the Ministry of Community and Social Services' (MCSS) plan to ensure that, by 2025, people with disabilities are able to participate in and enjoy opportunities available to people without disabilities.

Defining Disability

The AODA employs the Ontario Human Rights Code's definition of disability, which includes physical, mental health, developmental and learning disabilities that can be either visible or unseen. A barrier is anything that keeps someone with a disability from participating fully in society because of his or her disability. These can be physical obstacles, such as stairs without accompanying ramps, although even bigger challenges result from service related, attitudinal barriers, such as inadequate support and insensitivity to people with different needs.

As part of that legislation, every business in Ontario that provides goods or services to the public and has at least one employee will have to comply with Accessibility Standards for Customer Service by January 1, 2012. Non-compliance could mean missed business opportunities and hefty fines. Additional standards to address the built environment, employment, information and communication, and transportation will be phased in next.

The Customer Service Standard requires that organizations develop policies, procedures and practices and train staff on how to serve and communicate with people with disabilities. This must be achieved through 2011 to comply with the deadline of January 1, 2012.

Do you have to comply? Simply put, if your organization has at least one employee with a phone on their desk, or who interacts with people who don't work for your organization, you must comply. "Of the 360,000 businesses in Ontario, some are making progress in implementing changes, but many don't even know where to begin," says Gail Mores, Director and Accessibility Specialist with March of Dimes and AccessAbility Advantage. "We help organizations get started by providing practical advice, recommendations and training."

The biggest concern for most organizations relates to accessible building improvements. The AODA is not yet requiring that existing structures be made accessible; the proposed legislation addresses new construction and renovation. However, proactive organizations are com-

pleting accessibility audits which are useful for future planning. Accessibility improvements can be incorporated into ongoing maintenance at little or no additional cost and, over time, facilities are transformed into highly accessible space. One in seven people in Ontario has a disability and, with the aging population, that ratio will rise to one in five by 2025. Accessibility will necessarily increase property value.

AODA Standards

Customer Service Standards: The first set of standards to come into effect relates to customer service and affects organizations that provide goods and services to the public. Public sector organizations must have complied by January 1, 2010; private sector firms by January 1, 2012.

The next three standards will be harmonized and put in place in 2011.

Information and Communications Standards: The proposed standard outlines how businesses and organizations may be required to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities.

Employment Standards: The goal of the proposed standard is to help employers create equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

The proposed standard:

- sets out specific requirements for the recruitment, retention and accommodation of people with disabilities; and
- applies to all organizations in Ontario with at least one employee.

Transportation Standards: This standard is the only one that is sector-specific; that is, it relates specifically to modes of transportation that come under the jurisdiction of provincial and municipal governments.

Due to the volume of public responses, it is not known when the final standard (Built Environment) will be released.

Built Environment Standards: The goal of the proposed standard is to break down barriers in buildings and other structures for people with disabilities by proposing requirements in areas such as:

- entrances, doorways and ramps;
- parking spaces;
- signs and displays; and
- recreation, such as parks and trails.

We anticipate that only new construction and renovations will be required to comply with this standard in the near-term and that it will eventually be integrated with the Ontario Building Code (OBC). ■

Source: Ministry of Community and Social Services. For more information, visit www.AccessAbilityAdvantage.ca.



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SUPER 7 GROUP

Building in Quality from Kitchens to Cabanas

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK

ERINN TEEUWEN

A Toronto-based remodelling, construction, landscaping, and design company, the award winning **Super 7 Group** has been serving the GTA for over 20 years. Interior projects cover the gambit, ranging from kitchen and bathroom renovations, to basement renos and recreation rooms...but the company doesn't stop there. It also specializes in outdoor landscaping, everything from decks and patios to gardens and driveways. We managed to catch up with the company's founder, **LORENZO MARCHELLETTA**. Despite a more than full workload, he took the time to answer our questions with an equal measure of intellect and humour.

Home BUILDER Magazine: Tell me a bit about your first projects vs. today. How have things changed in 20 years in the renovation industry?

Lorenzo Marchelletta: Almost everything has changed. The price of a sheet of drywall was \$3.20 when I first started, now it's almost \$12. I used to do large volumes of pressure treated fences for new subdivisions. At the time the going rate was \$19.00/lin ft., installed. Now the price is around \$24.00/lin ft., installed. That's an increase of about 26 per cent. That

may sound like a lot, until you consider that the price of lumber alone has gone up almost 40 per cent.

HBM: Why do you think the gap is widening?

LM: Newcomers to the business often believe that the best way to get the job is to do it cheaper than their competition. Once they realize they are losing money, they cut corners to compensate and the end result is shabby work and an unhappy customer who thinks that all contractors are con artists. It's a vicious cycle.

HBM: How much impact has the HST had on your business?

LM: It's made it harder for reputable companies that won't work for cash. Combine that with the newbie's cut-rate costs, and it's tough to compete with the "curbsiders". TV shows and DIY stores are only making the competition portion of business worse. Just because someone has a drill and a truck, doesn't make them a contractor. You wouldn't believe how many times I have gone to price a job, only to be told by the customer that they've decided to hire a firefighter...not just because it was less expensive, but because they felt at ease with "someone who saves lives for a living" building their basement!

HBM: Your website offers a Plan it Green alternative – described as "a philosophy dedicated to sustainable planning and green design." Are consumers willing to pay more for green renovations?

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20 ▶ LM: The philosophy is only five years old. And yes, it is a difficult sale. Within the company, we always separate waste, and recycle all we can. It doesn't cost us more, but it is a bit more work. We use it as a sales tool, and customers do feel good about it. But, customers do not like spending more on green initiatives, although items like insulation upgrades are an easy sale. Immediate savings on heat loss always seem to be on the priority list, vs. something like solar panels.

HBM: You're a member of BILD. When did you join, why, and what are the benefits?

LM: I actually joined BILD after reading an article in the Toronto Star. I thought it sounded like a fantastic organization. It turned out that many of the sub trades that I used [when I first started out] were already members. They saw my proposal to join, called me up, and we reconnected and started working together again.

The benefits are tangible and intangible: surround yourself with professionals and every-



One of the most popular exterior design requests Super 7 Group receives is for a cabana.

thing else falls into place — that's what relationships are all about. In fact, BILD is sort of like Facebook...someone make a movie already...

HBM: You're also a member of RenoMark. How important is this sort of designation for today's renovator?

LM: We have been a RenoMark member since 2005 and it is absolutely the best money I have

ever spent. Many of our customer inquiries come from the RenoMark website. Despite all previous talk about hiring curbsiders, there are people who want to deal with professionals. And I have yet to be asked to waive the HST when someone has found us through RenoMark.

HBM: How important are government funded initiatives? What sort of initiatives do you think would offer the greatest assistance to consumer and renovator?

LM: Honestly, I never saw any big waves of interest for government initiatives. Most of our clients do remodels because they need and want them done. If there are a few dollars they can get back, well, that was a bonus.

I think an initiative of saving the HST if you hire a reputable, licensed contractor would be more successful. After all, we pay HST on supplies and subcontractors. We put people to work, who then pay income tax. We pay for permits and other related fees. How many people need to get a piece of the same pie? 🏠

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Resale Housing Market Report:

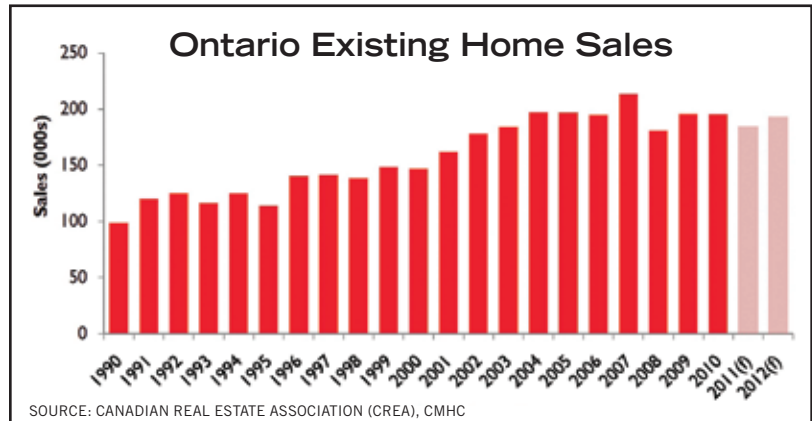
ONTARIO

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK

The dream of home ownership is alive and well among Ontario renters, with 70 per cent reporting that they would like to buy at some point in the future, according to a poll released in late April by the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA).

The poll also revealed that 81 per cent of Ontarians believe it is more difficult to own a home now than it was for their parents, and 89 per cent of Ontarians in general are concerned that home ownership will become even more difficult in the future.

"We have an obligation to protect the affordability of home ownership for future generations," says **BARB SUKKAU**, president of OREA. "From its impact on job creation to the healthy and stable environment it provides for raising a family, home ownership matters to people, communities and Ontario."



Over half (54 per cent) of renters cited affordability as a key reason for not owning a home and 70 per cent surveyed indicated they would be more willing to consider owning if the government offered more tax breaks and incentives to offset costs for first-time buyers.

According to CMHC's First Quarter 2011 Housing Report, the drag on sales from fewer first-time buyers and rising mortgage carrying costs will be more than offset by healthy labour

market conditions and stronger net migration by 2012, although owing to economic uncertainty, Ontario sales will range between 165,000 and 217,000 transactions this year and next. Current trends suggest sales will moderate by mid-year before posting gains into 2012. Balanced markets will help Ontario home prices grow more slowly versus long term averages, but closer to the general rate of inflation in 2011/12.



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Strength in Numbers

RenoMark Celebrates 10 Years

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK

It's been a decade since the launch of RenoMark™, and while the executive of the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association (now BILD) liked the concept from the get go, no one anticipated the sort of nationwide acceptance the program would ultimately receive.

"The idea was brought to us by our ad agency of record, the **Brand Factory**," says **STEPHEN DUPUIS**, president and CEO, BILD. "In 2001, after some input from our Renovators Council, we introduced RenoMark as a purely local [GTA] program. Almost immediately, other local HBAs started enquiring about it."

Ironically, RenoMark gained early traction in Western Canada with Calgary, Edmonton, Central Alberta (Red Deer), Saskatoon and Manitoba (Winnipeg) signing on in 2006-2007. Early adopters in Ontario were Durham, Dufferin, Niagara, Ottawa, Peterborough, Elgin-St. Thomas and Windsor. In 2007, the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) and Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA) officially endorsed RenoMark.

The CHBA and OHBA endorsements spawned the next wave of growth with Greater Vancouver and Regina coming aboard, followed quickly by Ottawa, Hamilton-Halton,

London, Waterloo and Greater Barrie. Last year, RenoMark broke through in the Atlantic Provinces with New Brunswick signing on with four locals under its umbrella (five including PEI). This year, Nova Scotia signed on with Central Nova HBA currently gearing up for a launch during Renovation Month.

Very few locals of any size have not adopted RenoMark.



How It Works

RenoMark has grown to more than 30 locals across Canada. In fact, very few locals of any size have not adopted RenoMark (NFLD is the current exception). "Locals have adopted RenoMark for one of two reasons: because they want to grow their renovator membership base or because they want to add value to help retain their existing base," says Dupuis.

RenoMark can best be defined as a non-profit franchise model: BILD holds the master licence and sub-licences to each local, and all locals have a sub-licence with each of their participating contractors. BILD also creates each local RenoMark website according to a template, although a quick review of any RenoMark website shows a number of variations,

based upon local differences, such as sponsors, events, and other initiatives. The cost to the local is \$50 per member per year; some locals pass on the cost, others offer RenoMark as a value-add. Under the Code of Conduct, the contractor commits to carrying a minimum \$2M in liability insurance.

Marketing the Brand

Each HBA is responsible for marketing of their RenoMark program. "At BILD, we have integrated our Reno Awards into our Home Show feature called Destination Renovation, and this has worked very well for us, as has separating the awards from the main builder awards," said Dupuis. "Those that have Home Shows go that route. Some do Parades of Renos. Some do seminars. Everybody is doing something different based on their local strengths. We all do public relations."

Some initiatives are in the early stages, like the Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association's (GVHBA) second annual reNOVATION Awards Gala; others, like the Association's 18th annual Parade of Renovated Homes, are focusing on the growing RenoMark brand.

"Both popular renovation activities are presented by FortisBC," says **PETER SIMPSON**, president and CEO, GVHBA. "This year's gala was attended by more than 200 members and guests; certainly it was viewed by our Renovation Council as a successful event. We presented awards in 26 categories, including best condo, green, accessible and heritage renovations, as well as two RenoMark Renovator of the Year distinctions."

DONNA MOORE, Chief Executive Officer, CHBA – Calgary Region, is equally enthusiastic about CHBA – Calgary's RENOMARK Renovation Tours. "They have proven to be a great testament to the quality of relationship forged



Stephen Dupuis



The gang from Calgary's Home Completions received over 200 guests during the Reno Tour.



Each HBA does their own marketing of the RenoMark brand. This condo reno by My House Design/Build Team Ltd. was a winner at the GVBHA's second annual renOVATION Awards.

between a RenoMark renovator and their client. When the homeowner is willing to hand over the house keys and proudly allow Calgarians to come see the results for themselves, you know it has been a successful partnership."

One HBA has even expanded upon the

Renovation Parade theme. The past year, the Manitoba Home Builders' Association (MHBA) RenoMark Renovation Parade shifted focus from a one-day open visitation of six or seven projects, to a Video Parade that will be posted on their website, and available for viewing, for an entire year.

"Nine of our renovators created videos under four minutes that enabled them to show and discuss a particular project," said **MIKE MOORE**, president, MHBA. "These ranged from kitchens to bathrooms to whole house. A local digital media firm shot and edited the videos which are being used both on the MHBA site and the individual renovators' sites. Initial reaction has been very positive with each receiving thousands of hits in only a few months. Plans are in place to expand upon the number offered this fall."

The Future Is Bright

Currently, there are about 800 RenoMark contractors across Canada—an amazing success story in just 10 years. But while the expansion of RenoMark has been nothing



short of remarkable, the future growth of the program will not be in adding locals, but in the participating locals attracting new members.

"The next 10 years will be about taking RenoMark to the next level," says Dupuis. "For example, RenoMark is now a standing report at the Canadian Renovators Council meetings... it's a great way to keep the profile up." 🏠

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Trendsetters:

Kitchen and Bath Designers Reveal 13 Trends for 2011

According to the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA), kitchen and bath dealers on both sides of the border entered 2011 with optimism, and for good reason. When comparing 2010 results to the prior year, members surveyed for the NKBA Kitchen & Bath Market Index (KBMI) reported an increase in showroom visits of 21 per cent...pretty good numbers. But the really good news is that the visitors weren't just visiting. The KBMI reported kitchen remodels sales volume up 110 per cent, bathroom remodel sales volume up 50 per cent, and combined kitchen and bath revenue up 117 per cent.

So what's hot in kitchen and bath design? To find out, more than 100 North American designers participated in an NKBA survey to reveal design trends in the marketplace for 2011. It's important to note that these are overall trends across the United States and Canada; they won't necessarily appear in all geographic areas.

KITCHENS

Shake It Up

While Traditional remains the most popular style, the Shaker style began a rise in popularity in 2009 and gained momentum in 2010. By the end of the year, Shaker has supplanted Contemporary as the second most popular style used by NKBA member designers. Cottage was the only other style to garner at least 20 per cent of the market.

1 Kitchen-Shaker: Courtesy of O'Neil Cabinets.

Maple vs. Cherry

As 2010 began, cherry was specified by more NKBA member designers for use in kitchen cabinetry than any other wood, with 78 per cent of designers using cherry in the past three months of 2009, compared with 64 per cent for maple.



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This year, the numbers are nearly reversed; cherry has fallen to 71 per cent, while maple has risen to 76 per cent.

2 Kitchen-Maple: Courtesy of KraftMaid Cabinetry

Dark Finishes

Dark natural finishes overtook medium natural, glazed, and white painted finishes to become the most specified type of finish toward the end of 2010. Light natural and coloured painted finishes remained fairly common. The use of distressed finishes dropped significantly.

3 Kitchen-Dark: Courtesy Wellborn Cabinet, Inc.

A Place for Wine

While the incorporation of wine refrigerators fell sharply, unchilled wine storage is growing in popularity, with just over half of designers incorporating wine storage areas. Tall pantries, lazy Susans, pull-out racks, and appliance garages appear to be falling out of favour.

4 Kitchen-Wine: Courtesy Huntwood Cabinets.

Photo by Alan Bisson.

Solid Surfaces

Although granite (90%) and quartz (70%) will retain the number one and two spots in the countertop market in 2011, solid surfaces have emerged as the clear number three, rising from 14 to 25 per cent. Laminate continues to lose market share, down to 17 per cent.

5 Kitchen-Solid: DuPont Corian by DuPont Surfaces. Photo by TC Studios.

Goodbye, Colour

Homeowners seemed to be afraid of colour as 2010 drew to a close. The use of every colour except beige and gray was either flat (as in the case of bronze or terracotta) or down across the board. Meanwhile, whites and off-whites dropped only slightly, while grays, beiges and bones rose.

6 Kitchen-Colour: Courtesy Cheryl Carpenter/Poggenpohl. Photo by Miro Dvorscak.



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26 ▶

Hot & Cold

Induction cooktops haven't overtaken gas and electric models, but they're closing the gap.

7 Kitchen-Cooktop: Courtesy of Thermador.

The French door refrigerator has strengthened its position as the type specified most often by NKBA member designers.

8 Kitchen-Refrigerator: Courtesy of Liebherr.

Trashy Designs

A greater emphasis is being made to address trash considerations in the kitchen, with almost 90 per cent of kitchens including trash or recycling pull-outs. Garbage disposals and trash compactors have also become more common.

9 Kitchen-Trashy: Courtesy Rev-A-Shelf, LLC.



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A Worthy Vessel

Undermount sinks continue to dominate newly remodelled bathrooms, with 97 per cent of NKBA bathroom designers having specified them over the last three months of 2010. Vessel sinks have become the clear second choice among more than half of the member designers. Integrated sink tops, pedestal sinks and drop-in sinks are also up across the board.

12 Bathroom-Vessel: Courtesy of Kohler, Co.

BATHROOMS

Quartz vs. Granite

Quartz continues to take away market share from granite in the market for bathroom vanity tops. A year ago, 85 per cent of NKBA bathroom designers incorporated granite into a recent design, compared to just 48 per cent for quartz, but now that gap has narrowed to 83 per cent for granite and 54 per cent for quartz. Unlike in the kitchen, solid surfaces haven't gained much popularity in the bathroom. Solid marble has declined from 46 to 37 per cent, while cultured marble and onyx have increased to 19 per cent. No other material had even 10 per cent of the market.

10 Bathroom-Quartz: DuPont Zodiaq by DuPont Surfaces. Photo by Shadowlight Group

Going Green

No, we're not referring to eco-friendly spaces—we literally mean green colour palettes in bathrooms, although whites and off-whites, beiges, and browns are still the three most commonly used colour tones in bathrooms. Blues, grays, bronzes and terracottas remain in vogue.

11 Bathroom-Green: Courtesy Delta Faucet Co.

DOUBLE DUTY

If I Had a Nickel...

This trend relates to both bathrooms and kitchens. From the end of 2009 to the end of 2010, the percent of NKBA designers who specified a satin nickel faucet rose from 41 to 63 per cent in the kitchen and from 45 to 57 per cent in the bathroom, while the percent who specified a brushed nickel faucet fell. Other popular faucet finishes are bronze and oil-rubbed bronze, polished chrome, and polished nickel. While stainless steel remains quite popular in the kitchen, it's not a hit in the bathroom, where it was used in just 16 per cent of designs.

13 Bathroom-Faucet: Courtesy of Kohler, Co.

The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) is a non-profit trade association with nearly 40,000 members. For more information, visit www.nkba.org.

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21st Century Kitchens

ACC Distribution



Kitchens are a central feature in any home and this title by author/journalist Stephen Crafti showcases pages of well-designed kitchens. Each entry includes informative text by the architect or designer, the floor plan, detailed visual insets of materials and finishes used, as well as stunning full-page colour photography. Some of the featured homes have two kitchen,

one that can be used for preparation, the other used as “front of house.” Also included are covered terraces and built-in barbecues for outdoor dining. The twist? All of the homes are in Australia. An interesting visit to how green and clean is done down under. Hardcover with jacket, \$50. www.antiquecc.com.

STEPPING UP

Stairways

Schiffer Publishing



An entire book about stairways? Yes, and what’s more, it’s thought-provoking, informative, and visually appealing. Going beyond engineering and design, author / architect Hans Weidinger provides readers with a detailed look at the spatial quality and diversity of the residential staircase today. Supported by more than 230 beautiful colour photos (many of which are full page), along with 98 architectural sketches, the design spectrum ranges from minimalist concrete steps to sophisticated combinations made of wood, steel, stone or glass. Hardcover, \$34.99 US. www.schifferbooks.com

PICTURE THIS

1000 Architectural Details

A Selection of the World's Most Interesting Building Elements
Firefly Books



A reference catalogue of contemporary buildings’ structural features, the material has been selected for its capacity to inspire and propose innovative ideas on how to approach the design or construction of different parts of a project. Divided into 15 thematic chapters, each detail is numbered from one to a thousand, and each is illustrated with a close-up photograph or technical drawing and explained in a concise caption.

While primarily concentrating on commercial projects (although residential housing is covered), architects and

designers of condominiums and multi-unit dwellings are sure to find inspiration. Featured sections include primary structural elements; façades and finishes; roofs and decks; stairs, framework and glasswork; doors, windows, skylights; ironwork and blinds; and fireplaces, stoves, air conditioning. Hardcover with jacket, \$29.95. www.fireflybooks.com.

**CONCRETE
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Construction Tolerances and Recommendations for Interlocking Concrete Pavements

ICPI



The Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute (ICPI) has produced a guide for field use as a quick reference for allowable tolerances and installation recommendations. The two-sided guide is laminated to resist the wear and tear of job site conditions, and conveniently summarizes industry recommendations for typical interlocking concrete pavements. Tolerances are in metric and imperial, and include references to ICPI, ASTM, CSA and other guide documents. The guide is available for purchase or in free downloadable PDF format in the Construction Guidelines and Technical Manuals area of the ICPI online store (www.icpi.org/online-store).

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Vince Laberge
President, CHBA

Now that the federal election is over, the CHBA is looking forward to working with the new government.

Driving Our Message Home during the Federal Election Campaign

Ensuring strong and effective industry representation to governments is at the core of everything the CHBA does on behalf of members.

At no time is this critical role more important than during a federal election campaign—a time when candidates are looking for support from our industry, and from our customers. And during the recent election, CHBA certainly delivered our industry's messages to candidates!

I want to take this opportunity to thank the many Association volunteers across the country that made the recent CHBA Federal Election Campaign such a success. I was very impressed by what we accomplished.

Off to a Fast Start

As soon as the election was called, the Association released its election campaign material for use by local and provincial HBA leaders. This provided the background materials and planning advice needed to get our issues in front of candidates efficiently and effectively.

The election campaign kit was reinforced with the release of the 2011 update on Economic Impacts of the Housing Industry at the national, provincial and local levels. [You can get the reports under the "Tools for HBA's" tab, in the Members' Area at www.chba.ca]

These estimates, prepared by Will Dunning Inc., a consulting firm that specializes in housing market analysis, cover housing starts, jobs, investment and government revenues from construction of new dwellings of all types, as well as renovation, conversion and repair of existing dwellings and other expenditures relating to new residential construction.

A Focus on Three Key Themes

The CHBA campaign had a tight focus on three key messages:

- The need to adopt a single threshold rebate approach for the GST New Housing Rebate, and to commit to its timely review and adjustment to reflect new home prices.
- The need to introduce a permanent 2.5 per cent GST Home Renovation Tax Rebate to restore fairness in how renovations are taxed.
- The need for vigorous and effective action to tackle the underground cash economy in new residential construction and renovation in order to protect consumers.

In delivering these messages to candidates, the campaign made very clear why these actions were both necessary and prudent.

We pointed to the tremendous importance of our industry to Canada's economy — proven once again during the recent recession — as a generator of jobs, investment and economic prosperity.

We pointed to the vital role that federal policy plays in ensuring healthy housing markets, and creating the economic conditions that allow our industry to operate to its full economic potential.

We warned that this is not the time for government complacency in relation to housing: the economic recovery remains fragile, housing demand continues to rely heavily on unusually low interest rates, and governments continue to extract far too much money from new home buyers and those renovating their homes.

We stressed the need for appropriate federal policies and actions so that our industry can continue to contribute fully to Canada's economy and prosperity.

Overall, the Association's tight focus and strong messages allowed our leaders, at all levels, to get key issues across, recognizing the hectic pace that a four-week election campaign involves.

Our Message Got Delivered

Over the election campaign, the CHBA's messages got delivered in a wide range of ways.

- Our key materials were received by over 700 candidates across the country.
- Many HBAs sponsored All Candidates Meetings, providing a venue where candidates addressed the issues of concern to Association members and their customers. These events also attracted solid local media coverage.
- Many HBA leaders held one-on-one meetings with candidates, where they were able to lay out the CHBA's concerns and positions in detail, and ensure that candidates understood why these issues matter so much.
- Letters and information packages were sent to candidates by local HBA's, most often with follow-up calls to answer any questions.
- HBA leaders wrote many op-ed columns in local newspapers that highlighted the Association's key election messages.

As Election Day approached, CHBA campaign activities were in high gear, and I am satisfied that a high percentage of those standing for election know about our positions, and why these issues matter. Now that the federal election is over, the CHBA is looking forward to working with the new government.

As I stated earlier, the election process provides our Association with an important opportunity to get our concerns, and those of our customers, front-and-centre with the men and women running for a seat in Canada's Parliament.

As your national President, I'm proud of the great job we all did, and the contribution we made to the democratic process.

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National Office, Ottawa, ON

The simple fact is that many provincially designated residential trades are not recognized under the national Red Seal Program.

► Apprenticeship and the Residential Construction Industry

For some time, the CHBA has stated its concerns with how the federal government supports the training of apprentices in Canada.

The simple fact is that many provincially designated residential trades are not recognized under the national Red Seal Program, effectively preventing young people and their employers from benefitting from the financial support given to Red Seal trades.

The CHBA believes that this situation is wrong, and that it needs to be corrected.

The Minister responsible for the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA), Diane Finley, had asked us to "to continue working with the Council to bring more trades in the construction sector under the Red Seal Program."

The CHBA has done as the Minister requested.

However, we do not see the CCDA responding to the very real and legitimate needs of the residential construction industry. As a result, the CHBA continues to have fundamental concerns and questions concerning the CCDA, its role, mandate and procedures, as well as its ability to act to ensure the Red Seal Program addresses the needs of new home builders and renovators, as well as our trade partners.

I have recently written to Minister Finley, outlining our continued frustrations with the Red Seal Program and asking her to clarify the role of the CCDA in managing Canada's apprenticeship system.

Given the economic importance of our industry to Canada, and the looming shortage of skilled people to build and renovate homes for Canadians, the CHBA will continue to press the federal government for meaningful and effective action that will help draw new people into our industry.

Expanding Support for Federally-sponsored "Green" Housing Initiatives

With the pending completion of work on the next generation of R-2000, ENERGY STAR for New Homes and the EnerGuide Rating System by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), it is the appropriate time to ask how these important initiatives will move forward.

The federal government, through NRCan, has shown tremendous leadership in supporting a robust consultation process to oversee the next generation development process. NRCan's ongoing leadership as the new initiatives are put into place will also be critical.

As we move forward, the CHBA is interested in seeing other organizations step up to the plate. NRCan needs support from utilities and others who are also looking for the energy efficiency and environmental benefits these initiatives can deliver. This support needs to include significant investment to help make it happen.

I have written to the Minister of Natural Resources, Christian Paradis, suggesting that NRCan look into

financial instruments that could support investment in these important initiatives. In a time of government restraint, this makes a great deal of sense.



National Energy Code for (large) Buildings (NECB)

The Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes (CCBFC) has accepted the advice provided by the CHBA regarding the need for further changes to the new Energy Code. The CHBA asked that the requirement for heat recovery in apartments with self-contained mechanical systems be eliminated.

The CCBFC agreed to eliminate this requirement in the three warmest climate zones but retained it for the colder zones (Prairie Provinces). The CCBFC also agreed to revisit the rules affecting the permitted area of windows as a priority in the next Code cycle in response to CHBA's concerns. The NECB will be published later this year.

Could SAM Be In Your Future?

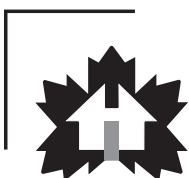
It's not too early to start planning your entries for the 2011 CHBA National SAM Awards. The CHBA, in partnership with Schlage and Trane, invites all new home builder, renovator and developer members to enter the 2011 competition.

Company size doesn't matter, nor does your geographical location or the scale of your project. If you have a project, large or small, that you are proud of, one that is a winner in your books and in the eyes of your customers, be sure to enter it in the 2011 CHBA National SAMs.

All of the material that you need, including entry forms, guidelines and tips, is now available online at www.chba.ca/SAMs. Getting an early start can give you the time needed to make sure that you have great photos to impress the judges. The deadline for entries is November 4, 2011.



TOP SAM WINNER was ParkLane Homes of Vancouver, B.C. Here the company's Ben Taddei accepts the coveted 2010 Grand SAM, presented for combined excellence in building and marketing new homes. Outgoing President Victor Fiume (left) and CMHC President Karen Kinsley made the presentation.



Making it Stick



Our topic this month deals with one of the most confusing and poorly understood items that we all drag around in our tool boxes: ADHESIVES. What is the difference between glues and adhesives? Nothing—they both stick things to things—although some would say that glues are thin and adhesives are gap filling, or glues are DIY and adhesives professional.



But before we get into all the sticky stuff, I'd like to start this column with my Blade of the Month.

Diablo wins this month with a carbide tooth recip saw blade. The tiny carbide teeth, laser welded to the blade for rough use, allow this blade to cut through tough stuff including nails and hardened drywall screws without breaking teeth. Yet this is not a carbide "grinder"—it has real sharpened carbide teeth, meaning that it will cut rapidly through wood as well. Unlike bi-metal blades that work best with constant contact, this blade works best with an aggressive orbital action: new for a blade cutting fasteners. This makes for a rapid cut through all material. This Freud laser welding technology applied to Diablo reciprocating blades may be breaking new ground in demolition and renovation work.

A Sticky Situation

We all use a small variety of adhesives, ones that we are comfortable working with but

there are so many different adhesives commonly available, you might discover that there is a better one for the job at hand that you didn't even know existed. There are several critical considerations before picking an adhesive for any given job:

Structural vs. Non-structural

Adhesives that are flexible when cured are not appropriate for any structural application. Structural joints should not slip. Although we often use silicone sealant as an adhesive to hold a countertop down to the counter frame, silicone, which is a form of rubber, must never be used where slippage might be a problem. Contact Cement is not a structural adhesive. PL Premium cures rock hard and is one of many truly structural adhesives. Carpenter glues in tight-fitting joints cure hard and will not slip, and so are considered structural for chairs and the like.

Tight Fit vs. Gap Filling

Adhesives that flow a lot, like slow setting epoxies or carpenter glues, as well as ones that tend to foam a lot, like liquid polyurethanes (Gorilla Glue) will not remain strong across a gap. Non-shrinking adhesives, like PL Premium or epoxy sticks and putties, stick to both sides of the joint and carry full strength across the gap.

The Marriage Bond

Years ago, **LePage** had a great chart to help with gluing dissimilar materials because it rated each glue type for each material type: ▶ 36

ATP 2011 Spring Catalog



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CertainTeed Gypsum introduces Diamondback™ Tile Backer, a high-performance tile backer that features an industry-first bonding technology that makes tile installation simpler, faster and less costly. Reinforced with embedded glass mats for added strength and moisture and mould resistance, Diamondback features a patent pending polymer coating with a unique textured surface that creates a strong bond, reducing tile slippage during installation.

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www.deltafaucet.ca

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Every home buyer is different. Different incomes, different goals, different personalities. That is why Genworth Financial Canada created homeownership.ca, a website specifically designed for consumers providing them with information on mortgage lending and the home buying process. Once a consumer enters the site they are encouraged to take a short survey that determines which information will be of most use to them.

This site is a one-stop resource to help homebuyers through every step of the journey with common-sense advice and information. Whether they're looking for budgeting tips, expert advice – even if they're new to Canada – Genworth Financial Canada's homeownership microsite breaks the home buying process down in easy-to-understand terms.

For more information, visit:

www.homeownership.ca

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34 ▶ good - better - best. Search for "Adhesive Chart" on my website and you can still find it. With the bond of leather and glass, for example, no one type of glue is rated "Best" for both leather and glass. However, since cements are rated "Best" for leather and "Better" for glass, cements would be the choice for this marriage bond.

Speed of Setting

The primary difference between white and yellow carpenter glues is the speed of set: they are both stronger than the wood fibres they are holding together, so relative strength is a false distinction. Therefore, you would use white carpenter glue when you need time for a complicated assembly and yellow carpenter glue when you want your clamps back as soon as possible.

Weather or Not

Most adhesives adhere best to dry surfaces, yet adhesives activated by moisture, like silicones and polyurethanes, can actually adhere better to slightly moistened surfaces.

Wet surfaces dilute the adhesive and are never good. Even when using underwater adhesives, they must be "worked into" the surface, which essentially means squeezing all the water out between the adhesive and the surface. If you aqua plane, it doesn't stick for long.

Gluer Beware: "water resistant" adhesives can be used outdoors but not in standing water. Sitting in water requires "waterproof" adhesives or "underwater" adhesives.

Outdoor use of adhesives can be limited by all the aspects of weather. Careful reading of the fine print on packaging will give you the specific information, but for a general guide I have combined your local weather report with construction weather limitations for you: go to www.CTV.ca/weather and scroll to the bottom. Check out the little window "Weather Restrictions for Home Renovations" and go to Adhesives.

Shelf Life

We all know that a dried up bottle or tube is no good, but unfortunately we all try to still use that "thickened" tube that still flows, still sticks,

but is harder to work with. The reality is that if it doesn't flow as well onto and into the surface, even if it can cure properly, it probably has not made as good a bond with the surface as a fresh adhesive. Generally speaking, most adhesives have a one-year shelf life. This is especially true with construction adhesives in gun cartridges. When they are getting difficult to gun, the best advice is to throw them out.

Still Stuck? In our July issue, Jon will deal with some common adhesive application errors and tips. Stay tuned!



Montreal-based TV broadcaster, author, home renovation and tool expert Jon Eakes provides a tool feature in each edition of Home BUILDER. www.JonEakes.com

Introducing the New GE Hybrid Water Heater

To create the next generation of water heaters, GE rethought every aspect of this appliance from the ground up. The result is an innovative new product that can reduce water heater operating cost up to 62% and save the average household \$320* per year. With advanced heat pump technology combined with traditional electric elements, this new GeoSpring hybrid electric heat pump water heater has been designed with maximum energy efficiency in mind. GE is leading the way by developing a solution that offers the same amount of hot water, while using significantly less energy than a standard water heater.



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*Based on DOE test procedure and comparison of a 50-gallon standard electric tank water heater using 4879 kWh per year vs. the GeoSpring hybrid heat pump water heater using 1856 kWh per year.

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Renovator Highlights from the CHBA Pulse Survey

OTTAWA – The most recent CHBA Pulse Survey, with results analyzed by Altus Group Economic Consulting, were presented at the CHBA Renovator's Council Meeting in Banff, Alta. Here is a recap of some of the highlights:

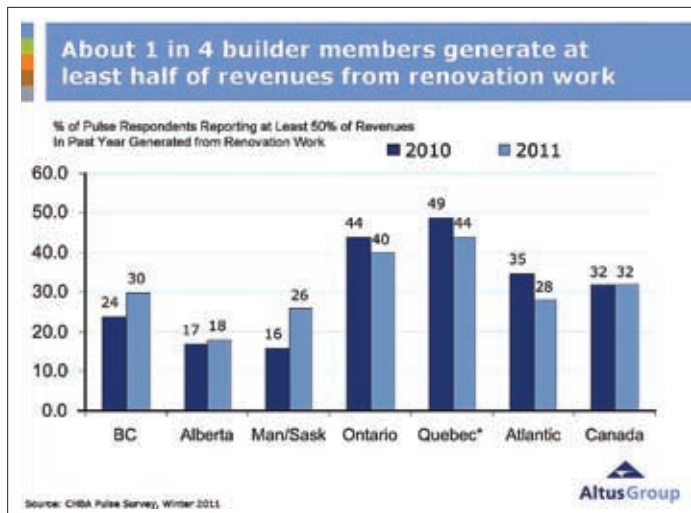
- Renovators in all regions except Ontario reported higher activity on average in the past year and in general were relatively optimistic about increased work for the next year. Residential renovation spending is forecast to reach \$57.8 Billion in 2011.
- Almost two-thirds of CHBA builder members are involved in renovation work to some degree.
- About one in four builder members generates at least half of revenues from renovation work.
- Almost half of renovation projects by CHBA/APCHQ members valued at more than \$50,000.

Not all the news was positive, however. In Altus Group's outlook for renovation spending, the firm noted that after more than doubling in the

previous 10 years, real renovation spending has stalled and homeowner renovation intentions have waned.

Top problems that renovators considered critical included shortages in trades/labour, insurance coverage, rates and premiums, builder profitability, consumer confidence, increasing builder liability and mould, although the primary concern by more than half of those surveyed was the underground economy.

The most common methods of borrowing to finance renovations (in 2009) included Home Equity Line of Credit (31 per cent/\$28,000), unsecured Line of Credit (27 per cent/\$20,000), financial institution credit card (24 per cent/\$28,000), refinanced mortgage (19 per cent/\$19,000), and retail/home improvement centre card (10 per cent/\$5,000). ■



Two-Thirds of Canadians Won't Ask for Green in Home Reno Projects

MONTREAL, TORONTO, CALGARY, VANCOUVER – Conducted by Vision Critical with more than 1,000 Canadian homeowners, The LePage Report on Canadian's Attitudes to Sustainability revealed that while an overwhelming majority of Canadian homeowners view indoor air quality and using sustainable and green building products as important, only half are aware of products to improve indoor air quality and only one in five use green and sustainable building products.

The report showed that British Columbians lead Canada in adoption of environmentally sustainable building products and in knowledge of products that contribute to indoor air quality, followed by those in Ontario and Quebec. Albertans lag behind in adoption of environmentally sustainable products and overall in following sustainable practices in the home.

With half of Canadians planning minor repairs or painting in the next six months, nearly two-thirds using professional help don't plan to ask for sustainable and green building products in home renovation projects. ■

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Taiga Building Products Ltd.	25	800-663-1470	www.taigabuilding.com
TD Financing Services.	15	866-320-3757	www.tdfinancingservices.com
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Compatibility of Fasteners and Connectors with Residential Pressure Treated Wood

BURNABY — Pressure treated wood is commonly used and preferred for residential decks, fences and landscaping. In 2003, the preservative formulations used for residential wood treatment were changed to those based on copper dissolved in an alkaline organic solvent.

This type of wood treatment requires more attention when selecting fasteners, connectors and anchors to avoid premature corrosion of the metal components and to ensure proper performance and

Owens Corning Announces Winner of EcoTouch Celebration

TORONTO — In an effort to welcome the newest edition to its product line, the new EcoTouch PINK FIBERGLAS insulation, **Owens Corning** held a contest for its customers and industry influencers, mailing out more than 10,000 puzzles to customers across the country. Customers then uncovered a secret code and entered the contest online.

The winner of the contest, selected at random, was Brian Moore, owner of **Moore Building Centre** in Killarney, Manitoba, a Tim-Br-Mart Ltd. dealer. He was awarded the keys to his new 2011 GMC Sierra Crew Cab Nevada, Edition 4x4, MSRP \$41,085, at a celebration event in Orangeville by **CHRISTINE SAMPSON**, Marketing Leader, Owens Corning Canada and **DANNY BRACKETT**, President McMaster Pontiac Buick GMC Dealership.

EcoTouch PINK FIBERGLAS insulation establishes a new benchmark for insulation performance by fusing the industry-leading thermal and acoustical performance characteristics of Owens Corning PINK FIBERGLAS insulation with PureFiber Technology. www.owenscorning.ca. 🏠



Construction Resource Initiatives Council - Symposium Initiate

OTTAWA — The Construction Resource Initiatives Council hosted its first symposium at the Toronto University Club on April 15, 2011. CRI Council's "Initiate" served a dual purpose: first, to outline the urgent issue of wasted construction resources already occupying 30 per cent of our present landfill space, and second to discuss workable solutions that will save these resources from becoming environmental liabilities and restore them to their useful lives as building materials and components. For more information, visit www.cricouncil.com. 🏠

carrying capacity. During the past seven years, several studies have been conducted to examine recommendations for the treated wood used in residential construction and the type of fasteners that should be used.

The Home Owner Protection Office, a Branch of BC Housing, has now released *Builder Insight #8*, a six-page PDF that identifies some of the most relevant of these reports. This bulletin updates the earlier version (*Builder Insight #1: ACQ Treated Wood*) and provides builders, designers, and those specifying treated wood for residential construction with the most up-to-date information available and best practice. A must download for anyone who builds decks and fences, available at www.hpo.bc.ca. 🏠



Dow Chemical Sponsors International Solar Design Competition

CHICAGO — Dow Solar has announced its sponsorship of The Dow Chemical Company Solar Design Competition. Open to students across the globe, the competition calls for the design of a building comprising three connected dwellings; each of the dwellings must use active and passive solar technologies to achieve near-zero energy solutions. In addition to the pioneering of innovative home energy designs, the competition will enable an ongoing dialogue and ideas assessment to inspire creative innovation around active and passive solar technologies.

The competition will be an entirely peer-reviewed competition that will be held online, allowing participants to interact via individual web pages and requiring each contestant to judge other submissions against predetermined criteria.

Registration will begin in August 2011 at www.dow.com/competition and will be open to individual students, student teams, or students participating with professionals in any field appropriate to the project goals. 🏠

CALENDAR

Do you have an event you want posted on our new Online Calendar? E-mail your listing to editor@work4.ca

May 24 – 27

Architecture on the Edge:
Vancouver 2011
Vancouver, BC
<http://aibc.ca/vancouver2011>

May 30 – 31

Solar West 2011
Vancouver, BC
www.cansia.ca

June 1

2011 ENERGY STAR
Participants' Meeting
Ottawa, ON
<http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca>

June 5

9th Annual Heritage House Tour
Vancouver, BC
www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org

June 13 – 15

43rd Annual NeoCon
Chicago, IL
www.neocon.com



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