

BUILDER



THE MAGAZINE OF THE CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL RENOVATION ISSUE

R2000 Turns 30

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Lower Sackville, NS



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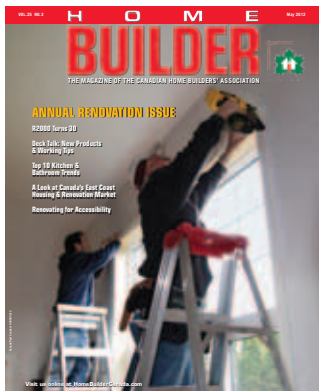
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COVER

John Devai and Alex Jacko install vinyl windows in Montreal.
Photo by Home BUILDER Magazine.

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R-2000 turns 30 this year. As the updated 2012 R-2000 Standard is about to be implemented on July 1, 2012, it is only fitting that this should also be Canada Day.

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This month, resident expert Jon Eakes looks at some innovative new products that make life on the job just a little bit easier, safer and more secure.



Reduce the Paper Burden with Electronic Records of Employment (ROEs)


OTTAWA, Ont. — Whether you operate a large or small company, Electronic Records of Employment (ROEs) are secure, improve accuracy, reduce fraud, and enable quicker payments for EI claimants. ROE Web allows employers and payroll service providers to create, amend, view, print, and submit electronic ROEs online. Most importantly, going electronic increases productivity and saves time, and eliminates the tiresome task of filling in forms by hand. It also reduces the paper burden: no papers to fill in, mail out, or file and store.

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1. Register: Complete and sign the registration form, which is available on the Service Canada website, www.servicecanada.gc.ca/roeweb. On

the form, name an ROE Web administrator, called a Primary Officer (PO), to manage the ROE Web account on behalf of the organization.


2. Visit: The PO must visit a Service Canada Centre and provide two pieces of identification (one with a photo) and the registration form.

3. Activate: Within 20 business days of submitting the forms, the PO will receive an activation code and instructions on how to activate the ROE Web account. 

Construction in Canada Enters Second Decade of Strong Growth


OTTAWA, Ont. — According to a new forecast of labour supply and demand, *Construction Looking Forward, 2012-2020 Key Highlights*, published by the Construction Sector Council (CSC), Canada will need an estimated 319,000 new construction workers from 2012 to 2020 to keep pace with increased construction demand and to compensate for an estimated 219,000 retirements. This means that construction will need to replace more than 20 per cent of its current workforce over the next decade.

According to the forecast report, the national construction labour force is estimated to rise by 100,000 workers between 2012 and 2020 to meet demand associated with increased construction activity. Much of the expansion will be driven by major projects in non-residential construction. With the exception of a few provinces, residential construction markets continue to recover at a slower pace compared to previous peak levels of activity and employment.

Regionally, Prince Edward Island, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia follow the overall national pattern of recovery and expansion across the outlook period. Employment in some regions grows as much as 20 per cent from 2012 to 2020. Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador report very strong employment growth, and at peak times, major resource projects exhaust the available workforce for some skilled trades and occupations in these provinces. Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia report more moderate year-to-year changes in total construction employment. 

Incandescent Bulbs Going Out With a Bang

ROSSLYN, Va. — It appears the impending phase-out of incandescent bulbs may be influencing buying habits. Two National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) indexes on lamp shipments in the U.S. released in March may speak volumes about consumer psychology. Shipments of CFLs decreased by 6.6 percent in 2011 compared to 2010. Conversely, incandescent lamp shipments rose 16.4 percent during 2011. A preponderance—62.1 per cent—of the increase over 2010 occurred during Q4. As for the combined incandescent-CFL market in 2011, incandescent lamps increased its market share to 82.8 percent.

In Canada, it will become illegal to import inefficient incandescent lighting across the country effective January 1, 2014. Also in 2014, energy efficiency levels will be increased for 100- and 75-watt light bulbs, with higher levels expected for 60- and 40-watt bulbs by the end of that year. The 2014 implementation date was set to “allow for innovations in technology” and to improve recycling options for new energy-efficient bulbs, which last far longer and use less electricity than incandescent bulbs, but contain mercury, and will give federal and provincial governments time to come up with a “better approach” for disposing of compact fluorescents. 



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Nine 'Discovery Homes' in Sudbury Incorporate LEEP TAP

SUDBURY, Ont. — A select group of Sudbury area home builders—**Monkhouse Homes, Dalron Homes, Noront Design & Drafting, J. Robert Construction** and **Principle Contracting**—have taken energy efficiency to the next level by building nine new 'Discovery Homes' in Sudbury. The homes incorporate a number of energy-efficient technologies as part of a new Technology Adoption Pilot (TAP) coordinated by EnerQuality Corporation. The Ontario Power Authority (OPA), Natural Resources Canada, Enbridge Gas Distribution and Union Gas are contributing to the initiative.

Technologies include solar ready, perimeter walls with 2" double-foil, triple-glazed windows, modulating furnace, high-efficiency water heater, drain water heat recovery, R60 attic, blown fibre glass, condensing tankless water heater, ground source heat pump, insulated concrete

forms and under-slab insulation.

The innovative selections are the culmination of Natural Resources Canada's Local Energy Efficiency Partnership (LEEP) next-generation technology identification and selection process. The LEEP project began over a year ago with the goal of helping home builders prepare for new 2012 energy building code standards. It also aimed to meet the growing expectations of home-buyers for more energy efficient homes.

Ontario Home Builders' Associations in London, Sudbury, Hamilton-Halton, Niagara and the Greater Toronto Area, have all embraced the LEEP and TAP initiatives. Funding for the LEEP and TAP initiative has been provided by Natural Resources Canada, the Ontario Power Authority, Enbridge Gas Distribution, and Union Gas.

Bryan W. Tuckey Selected as BILD President and CEO

TORONTO, Ont. — The Building Industry and Land Development Association's Board of Directors is pleased to announce the selection of **BRYAN W. TUCKEY** as President and CEO, effective May 22, 2012.

Tuckey has a history of collaboration with BILD and the Ontario Home Builders' Association (OHBA) through his past roles as York Region's Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Director of Community Planning at the City of Toronto and the former City of North York. He has a broad skill set that will enable him to lead and be the face of the Association, its members and staff.

BILD engaged recruitment firm **ODGERS BERNDTSON** to launch an international search for a new President and CEO at the end of last year, following the sudden passing of **STEPHEN DUPUIS** in September 2011.

The Board of Directors wishes to thank all BILD members for their continued support throughout this process and expresses gratitude to **JOE VACCARO**, OHBA COO, who stepped up and took on the additional role of BILD Acting President over the last six months providing stability and continuity when it was most needed.



Bryan W. Tuckey



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By Peter Norman

Each existing home sale, on average, generates about \$10,000 of incremental renovation spending.

A Wild Ride for Residential Renovation

Recession, stimulus funding, changes in federal insured loan insurance rules, commodity price roller-coaster, a slow economic recovery: It has been a wild ride for the residential renovation sector over the past few years.

Residential renovation spending (defined as the sum of residential alterations, improvements, conversions and repairs) is an important contributor to our economy. All told, it is a \$66 billion dollar industry and accounts for 56 per cent of all residential construction investment.

The Tax Credit Delivered

The buoyancy of the residential renovation sector in Canada, despite the deep recession and slow recovery seen in other sectors, is in part thanks to the effects of the federal stimulus program. The Department of Finance recently released an analysis of the Homeowner Renovation Tax Credit (HRTC), which was introduced in the 2009 federal budget as an emergency stimulus measure and expired in January 2010. What is the key conclusion? It provided strong short-term stimulus to the economy:

- Some 3 million homeowners took advantage of the credit (about 1 in 3 owner-occupied households) and received an average rebate of \$700.
- About \$2.3 billion was paid out by the program (about 75% of what was originally set aside).
- Total residential renovation spending rose sharply (18%) over the period the credit was offered (and contributed to a strong annual showing of some 9.2% growth in 2010, as illustrated).

Was it effective in its aim of stimulating incremental spending? Alterations spending alone rose some \$6.7 billion over the tax credit period. Using a “stretch” assumption that all the growth was stimulated by the program, a possible \$3 in spending was generated for every \$1 of HRTC.

Growth in the Reno Sector Back on Track

The fears that the tax credit simply pulled spending forward—and that the stimulus “wave” would result in painful “ebb”—only partly came true. The growth in the renovation sector certainly slowed sharply after the cessation of the credit. On a quarterly basis, renovation spending actually fell in each of the second, third and fourth quarters of 2010, although spending was still up by a modest 2.3 per cent for the year as a whole. And based on data from 2011, renovation spending appears to be back on track.

Key Drivers Going Forward

On balance, key drivers of renovation spending going forward are mixed, and so growth over 2012 and into 2013 is expected to be modest but still short of the strong growth experienced in the years prior to the recession.

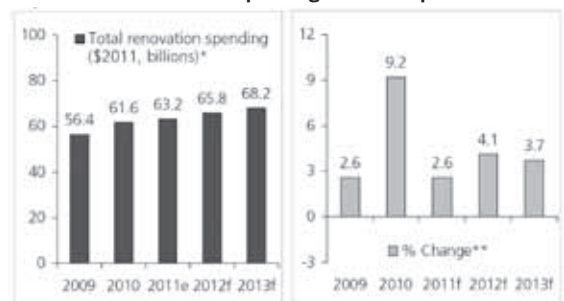
- The relative buoyancy in recent months in terms of

existing home sales is a positive factor for renovation, as each existing home sale, on average, generates about \$10,000 of incremental renovation spending (albeit down somewhat from close to \$15,000 per sale in the mid 2000s).

- Home equity lines of credit (HELOCs) are the top method of borrowing for renovation work (followed by refinancing a mortgage and borrowing with unsecured lines of credit). Estimates by Altus Group peg the amount of borrowing with HELOCs for renovations at about \$5 billion per year. The recent changes to mortgage insurance rules in Canada tightening up on eligibility for HELOCs have likely had some modest dampening effect on renovation demand.
- The underground economy continues to be a concern. According to the CHBA Pulse Survey conducted by Altus Group in early 2012, 39 per cent of CHBA renovator members cite the underground economy as a critical problem. Cash operators, who account for more than one-third of the market by some estimates, cost the government tax revenue and the industry in terms of quality control and unfair competition. Other major concerns by renovators expressed in the survey included increasing builder liability and shortages of trades.
- Due to the prevalence of borrowing related to residential renovation work (whether through HELOCs, loans, mortgage refinancing or other means) the level and direction of interest rates can play a significant role in the forecast. Currently, interest rates remain exceptionally low, and this has undoubtedly played a positive role in terms of sustaining renovation demand. Signals from the Bank of Canada suggest that short-term rates will start to increase in late 2012 or early 2013, but conditions in the bond markets still signal that any rises in rates that may be in the offing over the next few years will be mild at best.

The residential renovation sector is a key growth leader in the economy. The economy continues slowly to recover from the recent recession, but key drivers for renovation spending are generally positive. Expect real (after inflation) growth over the next few years to be in the 4 per cent range. ■

Residential Renovation Spending Back on Upward Track



* Includes conversions and repairs; ** Adjusted for inflation.

Source: Altus Group Economic Consulting based on Statistics Canada data

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.



By M.M. Armstrong

Update on CCHT Housing Research

Since 1999, the Canadian Centre for Housing Technology (CCHT) has assessed innovative housing technologies, supported manufacturers' product research, and developed and provided performance information for builders and homeowners.

Most of the research makes use of twin R-2000 research houses, which are identical in size, construction and orientation. Researchers compare the performance of an innovative product or technology in one house (called the test house) to the standard conditions maintained in the adjacent reference house. CCHT also features a third building called the InfoCentre/FlexHouse. This article summarizes some recent CCHT projects.

Roof-Integrated Photovoltaics (PV): Since November 2010, NRC Construction researchers have been collaborating with NRCan to investigate the performance of innovative roof-integrated PV products. This project aims to quantify not only the energy production potential of roof-integrated PVs, but also to assess the performance of these products as roofing systems.

A roof-integrated PV system was installed at the InfoCentre and monitored in 2011-2012. In NRC's Dynamic Roof Testing Facility, air leakage, wind dynamics and water penetration tests were conducted as part of a durability evaluation. The results from these two research activities are being used to benchmark an energy simulation model so that it can be used to predict whole house energy performance at selected locations across Canada. Researchers hope that the outcome of this project will enable them to identify technical barriers to the adoption of this technology. Completion is planned for this year.

Multi-Residence Smart Power System: The FlexHouse was retrofitted with a system capable of simulating a variety of realistic occupant-driven electrical loads, with the goal of demonstrating the operation of an energy management system, which was being installed and commissioned at time of writing. This is part of a project to explore integration issues of energy power systems, including power generation, storage, and management.

Modulating Direct-Vent Wall Furnace: In February 2011, NRCan assessed the energy performance of a modulating propane-fired, direct-vent wall furnace system. The assessment included a five-week, side-by-side comparison with a high-efficiency central furnace at the twin house facility.

Mini-Split Heat Pumps: NRCan is currently leading a project to verify modelling predictions that a mini-split zoned-heating system has the potential to produce energy savings, when compared to a central AC (cooling) and condensing-gas furnace (heating) system, without any

loss of occupant comfort. A side-by-side comparison has already been conducted in cooling and heating seasons.

Air-Source Heat Pump Water Heaters: Heat pump hot water systems heat water using energy taken from the air surrounding the equipment. The purpose of this project, using the twin-house facility, is to evaluate the performance of these systems and their impact on whole house energy consumption, including space heating and cooling loads. Assessment took place in the 2011-2012 heating season, and is planned for the 2012 cooling season.

Modulating Geo-Heat Pump: One CCHT twin house was retrofitted with a commercially available modern variable-capacity ground source heat pump that can emulate the performance of a variety of commercially available designs, including full output, two or more output levels, and full variable operation. The heat pump made use of two of the existing vertical ground wells at CCHT. The energy performance of the heat pump was compared to a high-efficiency condensing gas furnace during the 2011-2012 heating season, and will be compared to a 13 SEER air conditioning system in the 2012 cooling season.

Central High-Efficiency Cold Climate Heat Pump: This year, the heating and cooling performance of a high-efficiency central air source heat pump with an inverter-driven variable speed compressor will be assessed using the twin houses. The heat pump operation will be compared to a conventional heating and cooling system consisting of a condensing gas furnace (96% AFUE) and a 13 SEER central air conditioner. This design of heat pump employs the same, highly efficient technologies that can be found in mini-split heat pumps. Cooling performance will be assessed this summer. Heating performance testing and options for backup heating will be assessed this fall and winter. Future testing is planned for a centrally zoned version and possibly a hydronic heating version.

FlexHouse Retrofit: CMHC is planning a renovation to the FlexHouse unit beginning this spring. The goal of the retrofit is to upgrade the FlexHouse design to demonstrate the latest in accessibility technologies. The renovation will also convert the FlexHouse unit into two separate dwellings to show how housing can adapt to evolving household needs and lifestyle changes.

CCHT is a partnership between the National Research Council of Canada, Natural Resources Canada's Canmet-ENERGY, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Additional funding for the various projects was provided by: The NRCan Office of Energy Research and Development (OERD), the NRCan Office of Energy Efficiency (OEE), the Gas Technology Institute U.S., and Mitsubishi.

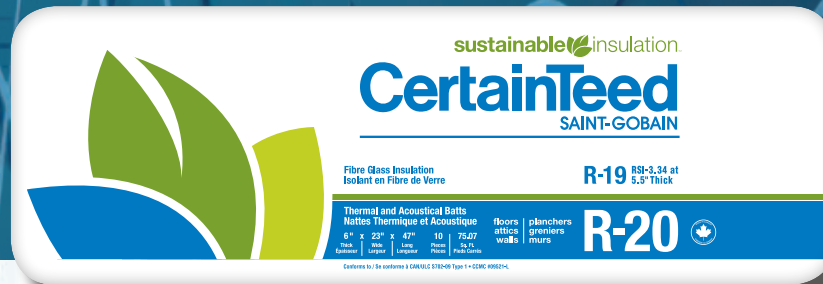


Mini-split system compressor (centre) installed at the CCHT Experimental House, pictured above a traditional ducted central air conditioner compressor.

Marianne Armstrong is a Research Council Officer at NRC Construction. She can be reached at 613-991-0967, or marianne.armstrong@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca. Details about CCHT can be found at: <http://www.ccht-cctr.gc.ca>.

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By Fanis Grammenos

Examples
of renewing
the city
block and
street are
increasing.

Fanis Grammenos heads Urban Pattern Associates, a planning consultancy, following a 20-year research career at CMHC. He can be reached at fanis.grammenos@gmail.com and his work viewed at: <http://blog.fusedgrid.ca/>

Renovating Cities: One Block at a Time

Just like buildings, cities need a good makeover once in a while. And the reasons are pretty much the same for both. Time has battered their infrastructure, which has either reached or surpassed its life expectancy. Also, during this life-cycle, new systems have emerged that do the job better and, sometimes, at lower cost.

These two drivers, wear and tear and the new, efficient systems, would be sufficient reasons to start the renewal phase. But there is an even more compelling reason—cultural change—and, with it, our own expectations and aspirations. Cultural change is not simply about shifting music styles and dress codes. It is predominantly about the way we do practically everything in the city. The way we shop, communicate, become informed, do business, make friends, meet mates, entertain and educate ourselves, and take care of children. In the last 60 years cultural change that covers these activities has been momentous and it demands that the city accommodate it.

Take the typical downtown block and its surrounding four streets, for example. It used to have buildings arrayed in sequence, soldier-like, separating the private domain from the public realm; private life behind the perimeter “wall,” public life on the street side. That’s the model of the past, when streets were the spaces where people strolled, socialized, sold and bought wares and struck business deals. The same block is now a walled island surrounded by a moat of cars, buses and trucks, the result of our enjoyment for convenience: door-to-door commuting, and errand running in the comfort, speed, flexibility and privacy of a car.

The City Block

The city block can and has responded to this new urban cultural condition by reclaiming one of the surrounding streets, or creating “streets” inside the block or both. In some cases, an inside or outside “square” is also part of the response, completing the gamut of the public realm functions that the contemporary street can no longer sustain. In other instances, the traditional hard corner of the building recedes to become a street side court, an added bonus for pedestrians. This set of responses syncs with quiet and concentration, hopefully in the presence



A reclaimed street becomes a stage.



Negotiated open space downtown—grounds for change.

of greenery, where conversation can extend beyond a hurried yelling of codified phrases. Unfortunately, tranquility and green space are in gross undersupply in most city centres.

The good news is that examples of renewing the city block and street are increasing. Typically, residential, office or hotel towers jut up from a common base of lower buildings that include longitudinal or transverse “streets” or both. Usually, the structures occupy most of the block but are no longer opaque to through movement; people can traverse it in one or both directions, peacefully, safely at their own pace. This block permeability lessens the need for four-sided car access, opening up the possibility for reclaiming at least one street for pedestrians.

Land economics demand maximization of the building footprint. An outdoor space within the bounds of site requires creative thinking and a City willing to make bold decisions for its citizens’ benefit. An uncommon example in Ottawa shows that an imaginative deal was necessary in order to create a most cherished outdoor space in the heart of a city. To turn part of the site to an open, green space, the developer was given two road lanes, one at each end of the block, for access and egress from the underground parking. Being on a hill slope, this 200-foot-by-125-foot open space provided a natural setting for stepped, amphitheatric seating. Traffic suffered little from the change, access to parking was made non-disruptive and the citizens got an unprecedented gift. Imagine the attraction of a downtown where many of its blocks are treated in a similar way. The recipe is simple: make city blocks permeable to people and selected streets impermeable to cars.

Modern-day Paris owes much of its functionality and charm to a powerful bureaucrat, Baron Haussmann, who renovated the city in the 1860s by slicing avenues, grand boulevards, squares and parks through the old, rundown, labyrinthine city fabric; a task contemporary municipalities would not even dare contemplate.

In today’s cities, renewal can happen in less ambitious and disruptive ways, one or two blocks and streets at a time. When driven by the new cultural realities, such renewal can gradually transform dull urban spaces into charming places.



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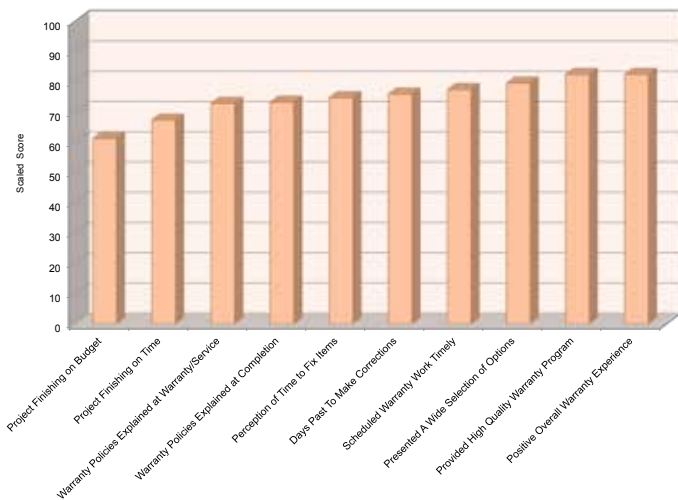
By Tim Bailey

Renovating the Customer Experience

Renovations can make tired old places into dramatic new spaces. Unfortunately, renovation projects are often filled with challenges for both renovators and customers. With so many variables, it is no wonder that home renovation problems consistently rank among the top consumer complaints across Canada. Customer satisfaction research for Canadian renovators brings to light some common complaints from renovation customers.

#1: Project Finishing on Budget

The number one area for dissatisfaction from renovation customers is that the final renovation missed the mark on budget. A dramatic 63 percent of survey respondents indicate that their renovation project finished over the projected budget, with 37 percent reporting



This chart illustrates some of the other lower scoring areas in the renovation customer experience. Problems for some companies are seen as opportunities by others. The most successful companies capitalize on being great where others struggle to be good.

their projects finishing over budget by 10 percent or higher.

It is the myriad of unknowns that make the original renovation budget virtually impossible to hit. These unknowns include the changes often requested by customers during the project—which typically create customer delight until the final tally is done. When it comes to the renovation budget, it is critical that renovators

work carefully on managing customer expectations, while also using inoculation techniques frequently; administering small doses of possible worst-case scenarios to increase customer immunity and fend-off a full blown outbreak of customer dissatisfaction should some of these scenarios materialize.

#2: Project Finishing on Time

Renovations often bring surprises, which make timelines as challenging to manage as budgets. The number two customer frustration is the length of time taken to complete the renovation. Only 25 percent of respondents indicate that their renovation project finished on time or early, with 39 percent reporting that their renovation finished one to four months later than projected. The impact of a renovation on the daily life of a customer can make every day of the renovation seem like an eternity. The timeline often becomes a ticking time bomb for customer frustration and must be managed with that same level of concern. Initial projections must be realistic, while erring to the side

of under-promising in order to over-deliver. Organized systems for communication are needed throughout the project to foster increased customer satisfaction.

#3: Warranty Policies and Procedures Explained at Time of Warranty Service

The next common areas for dissatisfaction from renovation customers relate to warranty and service. These deserve special attention, as many of the lower scoring areas in the total renovation experience are rooted here. After budget and timeline irritations, customers are indicating that they are not being adequately provided with detailed information on warranty policies and procedures at the time of warranty service. Only 21 percent of respondents indicate that they strongly agree that they were provided with detailed warranty information at that time.

#4: Warranty Policies and Procedures Explained at Project Completion

Following closely behind, customers are also indicating that there is a lack of explanation of warranty policies at the time of project completion. When surveyed, only 25 percent of respondents indicate that they strongly agree that they were provided with detailed warranty information at completion. There is tremendous opportunity to increase customer loyalty and differentiate from the competition for renovators that diligently employ a formal warranty service program. Clearly communicating the warranty service program is the first step to alleviating this customer frustration. Ensuring the warranty service delivery is consistent with this program will turn an area of customer frustration into an opportunity for customer delight.

#5: Perception of Time to Fix Items

Time is of the essence and items noted as incomplete or deficient at the end of a renovation project are like open wounds in the battle for customer loyalty. The faster a renovator can remedy these items, the higher the probability that this customer will survive to be an advocate. While 70 percent of respondents indicate that the time taken to correct items is about as they expect or less, there is tremendous opportunity to exceed expectations within that group, while also striving to win over the remaining fraction of customers that feel these fixes are taking longer than expected.

Managing the Customer Experience

Every successful renovation project is a fine balance of art and science. Managing the customer experience requires similar expertise. Just as a renovation project can turn a tired old place into a dramatic new space, leading renovators can transform uncertain prospects into loyal and profitable ambassadors.

Tim Bailey is General Manager for Avid Ratings Canada, a leading provider of customer loyalty research and consulting to the home building industry. Through the Avid system, industry-leading clients improve referrals, reduce warranty costs, and strengthen their brand. He can be reached at tim.bailey@avidratings.ca.

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By Jesse Klimitz and Frances Jewett (above)

Smart no-cost design decisions will save money and improve resale value in the long term.

Lasting Renovations Include Accessibility

Boomers are setting new trends in every industry, especially housing. As this large population group ages, demand for houses that accommodate people with disabilities is growing. In recent years, the concept of universal design or adaptable housing (houses that can be easily modified to meet the changing needs of residents) has become increasingly popular for aging homeowners who are considering renovating or downsizing.

"More and more people are choosing to stay in their homes later in life rather than move to specialized facilities, and therefore it is important to think about the future and incorporate a basic level of accessibility when renovating a home or condo. This in turn may increase the resale value of a home," says Susan Ruptash, Principal Architect at Quadrangle and AccessAbility Advantage.

Accessibility should be a consideration in every home renovation project. Whether or not improved accessibility is a current priority, smart no-cost design decisions will save money and improve resale value in the long term. Renovations should always make the home more adaptable to the changing needs of residents.

Renovating for Accessibility

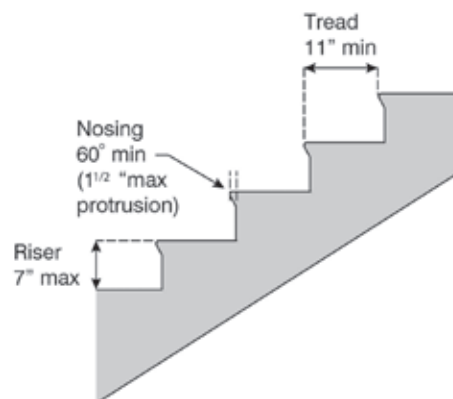
Renovation tips which incorporate a basic level of accessibility include:

#1 Home Entry:

Exterior doorway thresholds are a common barrier for mobility device users and seniors with limited gait. Install thresholds no higher than 1/4" and replace typical decking near the threshold with slotted boards to allow for water and snow accumulation to drain away.

#2 Stairs:

Falls on stairs are a major threat to the health, independence and confidence of seniors. Soft treads should be avoided. An easy solution is to remove cushioning under carpeting or use a slip resistant, grit finish on wooden treads. Also, consider creating colour contrast between stair risers and treads. Use best practice dimensions for stairs as illustrated in the diagram.



Use best practice dimensions for stairs.

#3 Adaptable Design:

The majority of Canadian seniors will live in their own home as they age and will require adaptable and accessible spaces. Consider the following simple and cost effective tips.

- Stack closets above one another and incorporate knock-out floor panels for future hoist way adaptations.
- Consider the location of wall studs to allow for future door widening.
- Integrate flexibility in kitchens by including movable storage, adjustable shelving, clear counter space beside all major appliances and clear knee space under the kitchen sink.
- Create accessible spaces with open concept planning by removing unnecessary doors and walls to provide for flexible space.
- Prepare for future grab bar installation in bathrooms by installing plywood paneling behind drywall around the shower, bath and toilets.



Avoid steps and barriers at entrances.

#4 Other tips:

- Keep exterior walkways well lit with motion activated or timed lights.
- Install windows with low sills no higher than 30" to provide views to the outdoors for wheelchair users.
- Use slip resistant flooring such as low-pile carpet, laminate, cork and linoleum.
- Paint the side edge of doors with colour contrast to adjacent surfaces for visual acuity.
- Install lever handles on doors, faucets, cabinets and window hardware.
- Consider newer innovations such as digital tab keyless locks and intelligent home systems.

It's now more important than ever to add value to homes by ensuring that accessible features are in place and that spaces can be easily adaptable to meet changing household needs for residents in the long term. 🏠

Frances Jewett is the Business Development Manager for AccessAbility Advantage, a joint venture between March of Dimes Canada and Quadrangle Architects Limited. Jesse Klimitz is an Accessibility Expert and Intern Architect for AccessAbility Advantage and Quadrangle Architects Limited. Frances and Jesse can be reached at info@AccessAbilityAdvantage.ca.

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Home Improvements

Four Atlantic Renovators Share Their Insights

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK



"We have secured professional sub-trades that know our work ethic and productivity standards." — John Roberts, John Roberts Trimmer Homes, Inc.

JOHN ROBERTS TRIMMER HOMES, INC.

According to CHBA's 45th Pulse Survey, on average, Atlantic Canada renovators reported increased activity, with the expectation that renovation activity will continue to increase further over the next 12 months. We checked in with four Atlantic renovators for a few more details.

Newfoundland: John Roberts Trimmer Homes, Inc., Paradise

John Roberts, Owner / President

I have been in business for 30 years, specializing in medium to large residential renovations and new home construction, as well as small to medium commercial renovations and new construction. Budgets for larger residential renovations, which include substantial interior and exterior work, usually range from \$100,000 up to \$500,000. It is commonplace for initial expectations to exceed budget constraints in this industry. The key to making them come together successfully is communication and, in some situations, educating the client.

The challenges are plenty, but some stand out more than others. City regulations and permit approvals are one such challenge renovators face. Permit approvals have taken up to six months. During this time clients may be displaced. With our improving local economy over the last number of years, this problem is becoming all too common. Day-to-day challenges of managing sub-trades is also ever present. We have secured professional sub-

trades that know our work ethic and productivity standards. This ensures inefficiencies do not play a factor in ballooning costs for our clients.

One of the greatest opportunities facing renovators today is technology. The ones that invest in technology reap the reward of more efficient crews. More efficient crews, coupled with secured professional sub-trades, ensure a company stays as competitive as possible.

The trends that we are seeing when it comes to renovating homes are adding on to the existing home or purchasing older properties and completely renovating the older home. The customers that we are seeing renovating the homes are mostly between the ages of 35 to 45. Your readers might be surprised to find that the average renovation cost for our Newfoundland based company is \$150,000 to \$200,000.

New Brunswick: Harold Kaye Construction, Lower Cove

Harold Kaye, Owner

We have been in business since 1975 and a company since 1986. While we don't have a specialty, per se, many of the renovations we undertake are the result of an underlying issue,

versus just a cosmetic upgrade. For example, recently we were called to a home where ice damming had caused water to leak through the roof to the outside walls, causing mould. There was so much involved to resolve the issue, it just made sense to gut the bathroom and start over. Of course, our goal is also to make sure the "after" is beautiful and functional.

The most common areas for renovations are kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, replacing and/or repairing floors (ceramic and hardwood are currently the most popular), siding and windows. The budgets typically fall between \$10,000 and \$40,000. Of course, clients want the most for the least, and are seldom realistic with their budgets. I think that is primarily because they don't see the little costs in

► 20



Harold Kaye

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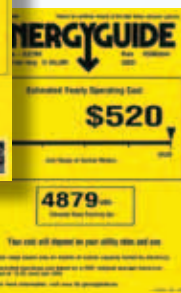
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HAROLD KAYE CONSTRUCTION

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a job, which can add up to additional costs. To manage customer expectations, I let them know about these costs, explain in detail what could happen, and try to be really accurate on an estimate before the job starts. But I always stress that it is only an “estimate.”

I think the biggest challenge facing professional renovators today is the rising cost in building materials and labour. There is also limited availability of experienced carpenters in the Sussex area, especially for smaller companies. There’s just a lot of competition for experienced skilled trades.

Nova Scotia: ShireBrook Developments Inc., Halifax

Andy Parsons, President; Keith McMaster, General Manager

Keith McMaster: Andy Parsons has been a builder / renovator for so long that he claims he “helped build the house he was born in.” We met when he built my first home in 1987.



Andy Parsons and Keith McMaster

In 1993 we began Shirebrook as a land development company and Andy was building the homes on the properties. In 2002 I joined on a fulltime basis and we focused on new construction and renovations.

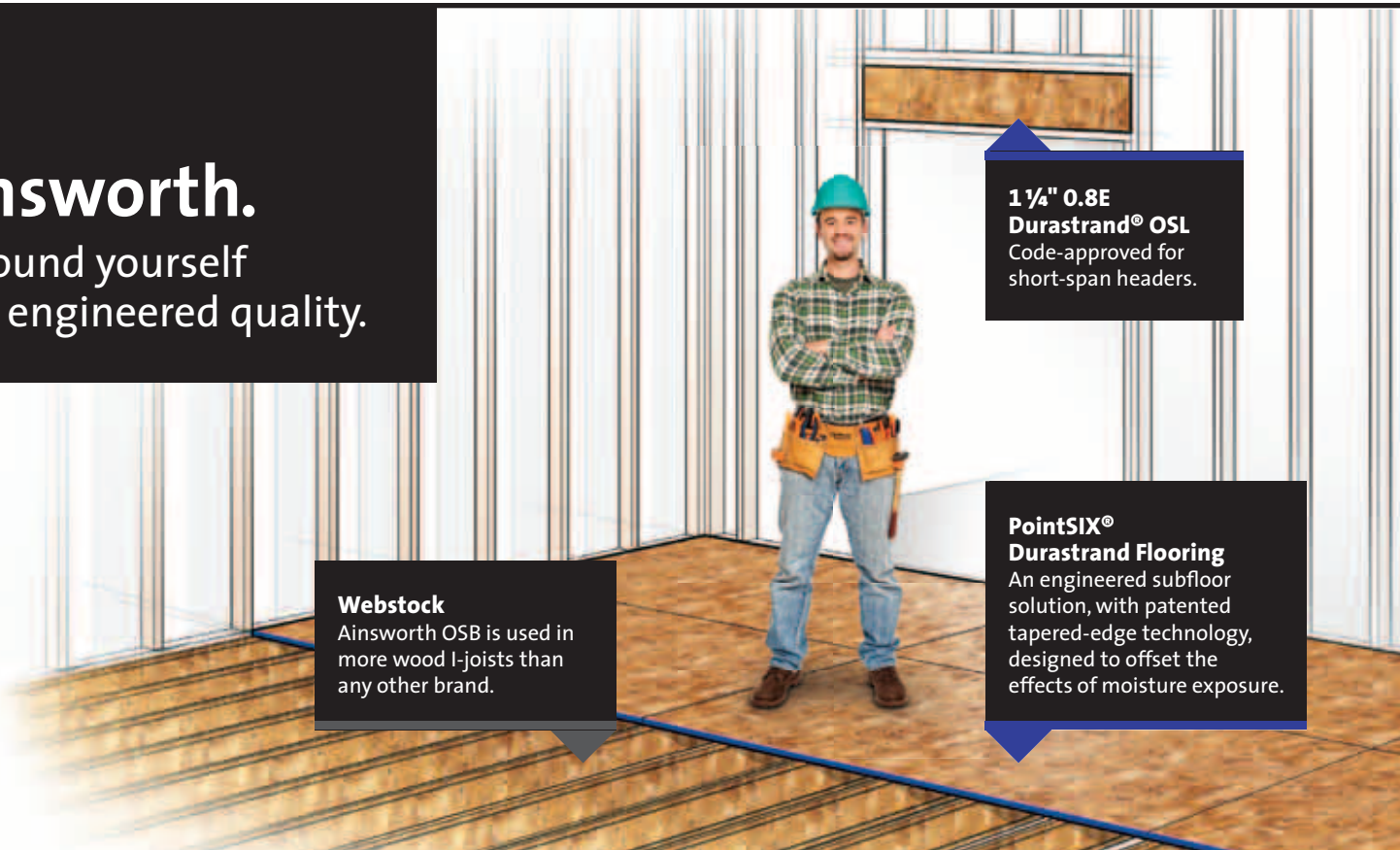
By having two owners involved on a daily basis we offer a great deal of expertise to our client. We are able to provide leading edge technology to our customers when they are considering a renovation. Our carpenters are a diversified, knowledgeable group and they understand that our clients expect a high level of quality service.

We also perform a number of renovations on older homes in the Halifax – Dartmouth area. Many of these properties are 100 years



old or more and can offer their own challenges. It is imperative that you have an understanding of how they were built, materials used and an awareness of on-site concerns (asbestos, wiring, old plumbing, framing methods used, etc.). We acknowledge and appreciate that a large part of our success is the professionalism of our tradespeople, along with the engineers and designers we work with.

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We do a variety of projects but two of the most common requests are bathrooms and kitchens. It seems that most people want to spend \$10-15,000 at the low end on these projects or it goes to the opposite end of the spectrum. The upper range can be \$25-50,000 per kitchen. On these projects it seems that clients have a reasonable expectation of costs.

Where we often see unrealistic expectations is in the larger renovations and additions. People are often surprised at how much an addition or a complete gut and reconstruction costs. I think it has something to do with the fact that many built their homes 15-20 years ago and are equating those construction costs to today's project. Costs have significantly risen. To address this we try to get an idea of what a person has for a budget. Many don't want to give this to you (I think they believe we will charge as much as your budget is, which isn't true), but we need to tell someone upfront that their expectations are unrealistic.

Our biggest challenge continues to be having sufficient numbers of competent, highly trained labour. We have taken the approach that we will develop most of this expertise

in-house, by offering training, maintaining a competitive wage and benefits plan and making ShireBrook a place people want to work at. We believe that loyalty is a two-way street and it is a win-win-win for us, our employees and, most importantly, our clients.

Prince Edward Island: L & L Home Improvements Ltd., Alma

Larry Adams, Owner

I've been in business for 23 years now. About half of our business is renovations and the other half new home construction. When it comes to renovations, the most common jobs are basements, bathrooms and kitchens.



Larry Adams



When it comes to kitchens, the average budget is in the \$15,000 to \$20,000 range. Bathrooms range from \$5,000 to \$10,000; basements from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

Most of the time, our customers' expectations are realistic, however, occasionally they are not. When that happens, we do our best to work with the client to change the project enough so that it will work within their budget and still give them a final product that they are happy with. Most times, however, I am finding our clients are becoming far better informed as to products and installation than they used to be. Because of this they are willing to spend a little more money to get a better and longer lasting finished product.

Probably the biggest challenges we face in our area is an aging workforce and a shortage of new, younger people getting into the trades. I suspect this is true across Canada. 🏠

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The Atlantic Provinces

A Look at Canada's East Coast Housing Market

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK

This month, we have the pleasure of reporting on what's happening in the residential construction industry in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador.



Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association

Paul Pettipas, Chief Executive Officer

In October 2011, the Halifax Shipyard landed a \$25-billion contract to build new combat ships for the Canadian navy over the next 20 years, and immediately Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association (NSHBA) builders reported an increase in traffic at open houses and model homes. Consumers had spent the majority of 2011 in a "looking mode," and now they were now ready to commit.

This was evident in the single-detached segment of the market in Halifax where starts increased for the first two months of 2012. On a year-to-year basis, singles were up nearly 43 per cent over the first two months of 2011.

Sales of existing homes were up 33 per cent in the first two months. This is a positive sign for renovators, with many of the homes being in the established and older sections of the community.

To some extent the shipbuilding contract has overshadowed Shell Oil's announcement of close to a billion dollar investment in drilling for oil off the coast of Nova Scotia. Each of these high-profile, long-term projects will create solid opportunities for new home builders and renovators in Nova Scotia.

New Homes:

In January 2010, the Nova Scotia Government brought on changes to the Provincial Building Code that added an Energy component to the code. After three years of consulting

with the NSHBA and other stakeholders, Nova Scotia has a prescriptive code of EnerGuide 80 and the builders had the option to use a Performance path as well.

Leading builders immediately saw the advantage of the Performance Path to show their customers that they built beyond the code and, after two years, the average EnerGuide rating was an eye-opening 84.6.

This was aided by the Provincial Government's initiative through Efficiency Nova Scotia to put in place a rebate program for new home purchasers based on the energy efficiency of their home:

- EnerGuide rating 83 & 84 = \$3,000
- EnerGuide rating 85, 86 & 87 = \$5,000
- EnerGuide rating 88 or higher = \$7,000

The program has been embraced by builders and purchasers alike and has led to a number of homes being built with ratings in the 90s.

Renovation:

Halifax is an older city with an aging housing stock that is ripe for renovations. Along with this, Halifax, and for that matter Nova Scotia, has an aging population that requires specific renovations to allow them to remain in their home.

The Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association (NSHBA) is now a licensed provider of the Certified Aging in Place (CAPS) training in Nova Scotia. This licensing is through the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) located in Washington, D.C. NSHBA members and industry professionals now have the opportunity to gain specialized training to give them the knowledge to work with clients and help them to make choices that will allow them to remain in their homes safely, independently and comfortably. They will attain the Certified Aging in Place Specialist designation.

An aging housing stock with an aging popu-

lation provides great potential for Nova Scotia renovators. CAPS gives them knowledge to service this market in a professional manner.



CHBA-New Brunswick

Claudia Simmonds-Lipka, Chief Executive Officer

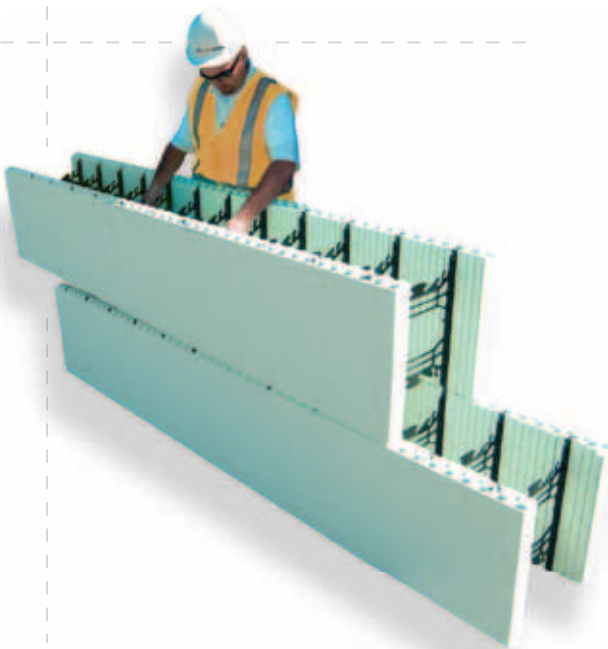
The economic outlook in New Brunswick continues to be impacted by a reduction in capital investment throughout the province, particularly in terms of public sector capital expenditures. The growth in exports of refined petroleum products and potash production have been offset by weakness in the forest sector, although there was some success reported in natural gas exploration activity in 2011. CMHC forecasts moderate GDP growth of 1.2 per cent is forecast for the province in 2012 and 1.5 per cent in 2013.

Despite positive net-migration in some centres, the softness in employment, especially full-time employment, has had a dampening effect on housing market activity. With no significant increase in employment anticipated in the near term, single starts are forecast to decline to 1,500 units in 2012 followed by a further decline to 1,415 units in 2013.

Multiple starts in New Brunswick's three large urban centres showed some weakness in 2011, however, semi-detached starts, which account for a significant portion of total starts in Greater Moncton, have remained stronger. CMHC's overall forecast for multiples will be down provincially in 2012 to 1,450 units, followed by a further decline to 1,385 units in 2013.

On the resale market, inventory of available homes remained at historically high levels in New Brunswick's large urban centres in 2011. The average sale price is expected to rise to \$162,000 in 2012 and \$164,000 in 2013.

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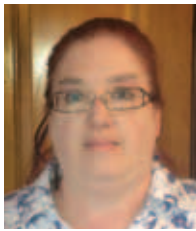
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Lori Pearce, Executive Officer

PEI's economy largely hinges on two traditional industries, tourism and agriculture; both have continued to be affected by the strong Canadian dollar, although there is room for some optimism. As a result of a smaller 2011 potato harvest in Maine, the demand could increase for PEI potatoes, and we are also seeing growth in soybean production. Information technology and biosciences are also emerging, and will provide some support for the provincial economy. CMHC forecasts PEI's economic growth at 1.3 per cent in 2012 and 1.7 per cent in 2013.

Increased migration to the province is expected to support the local housing market, although our numbers are smaller compared to other markets in the country. Single-detached

construction starts are projected at 375 units in 2012 and 335 units in 2013. Multiple-unit starts are expected to reach 425 units in 2012 before falling further to 375 units in 2013.

On the resale housing market, CMHC forecasts sales to be 1,375 units in 2012 with an additional pullback to 1,300 units in 2013. The average MLS sales price is expected to be \$153,000 in 2012 and \$155,000 in 2013.



CHBA-Newfoundland and Labrador
Victoria Belbin, Chief Executive Officer

In Newfoundland and Labrador, energy and mining project development, as well as current production and mining activity, will remain the key drivers of growth. Capital investment will also provide a significant level of stimulus for the provincial economy.

A moderate slowdown in activity was

recorded during the first half of 2011 (compared to levels at or near historic highs), however activity increased in the second half. Some indicators show that the provincial single-detached housing market will continue to slow down moderately compared to previous years. Yet early indicators for the first quarter of 2012 are showing that home sales and prices are increasing.

In 2011, a stronger labour market and low mortgage rates were offset by the continuing rise in house prices. This trend is expected to continue in 2012. A total of 2,400 single starts are expected in 2012 and 2,250 units are forecasted for 2013. In addition, multiple-unit construction will slow to 800 units in 2012 and 750 units in 2013, after reaching 876 units in 2011.

The mid-priced condo market continues to develop at a slower than anticipated pace, but smaller households and a rapidly ageing population are expected to support condo and rental demand in St. John's over the forecast period. Higher single-detached house prices should also stimulate additional demand for semi-detached attached housing among lower income buyers.

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BY GARY SHARP

30 Years of Leadership



R-2000 turns 30 this year. As the updated 2012 R-2000 Standard is about to be implemented on July 1, 2012, it is only fitting that this should also be Canada Day.

The R-2000 Standard and R-2000 houses are something the Canadian home building industry and Canadians everywhere can be proud of. R-2000 led the world in energy efficient housing in 1982 and it steps up again in 2012. R-2000 is a housing system developed by Canadian builders, researchers, manufacturers and government which made Canadian housing technology the most advanced in the world. Every energy efficiency housing program in the world that has followed has been based on R-2000 “house as a system” thinking.

The key elements of R-2000 were, and remain:

- A Technical Standard that sets out stringent energy performance targets
- Builder training and licensing
- A quality assurance system to evaluate, inspect and test every house
- A sophisticated computer modelling program to evaluate each home for optimal energy performance.

The R-2000 Standard is a dynamic standard. Canadian builders, product manufacturers and researchers are an ingenious lot. To meet the stringent targets of R-2000, improved building techniques, new construction materials

and more efficient mechanical systems were developed and implemented. What appeared to be lofty goals in 1982 were met, through hard work and creativity, and today, every house in Canada has elements in it that were developed through R-2000.

To keep R-2000 on the forefront of housing technology, the Standard is periodically reviewed and updated. The 2012 R-2000 Standard is 50 per cent more energy efficient than the 2005 R-2000 Standard. In terms of Canada’s EnerGuide Rating System, this means that a house built to the 2005 Standard will score 80, while a house built to the 2012 Standard will score approximately 86 or higher.

It’s not easy to build houses that meet the R-2000 Standard. It’s even more surprising when you realize that R-2000 is a voluntary Standard. These are builders who choose to build R-2000 homes. Companies that build and certify their houses to the R-2000 Standard are making a statement about the homes they build.

Two such companies are **Urbandale Construction** of Ottawa, Ont. and **Scotian Homes** of Enfield, N.S. Each of these builders has completed, and opened to the public, houses that meet the

2012 R-2000 Standard. Urbandale opened its house on February 16, 2012 and Scotian on April 13, 2012. Both are well ahead of the planned July 1, 2012 implementation date for the updated Standard.

What makes an R-2000 house special? It is all based on the “house as a system”—the core belief of R-2000.

The key components of the “house as a system” include:

- The environment where the house is constructed. The climate varies significantly across Canada and the house being built must be designed to consider this.
- The building envelope. There are many different approaches, materials and building techniques that can be used to build the structure that separates the inside environment from the outside environment.
- The mechanical systems. This includes the systems to heat and cool the space, heat the water and provide a healthy indoor environment for the occupants.
- The people. Houses are built for living and the lifestyles and needs of the people who live there must work in harmony with the other elements of the system to achieve the best energy efficiency, indoor air quality and environmental responsibility.

None of the items above can be considered exclusively of the others because they all interact. Changing one of the elements can significantly change how the house performs.

Gary Sharp, P. Eng. is the R-2000 Coordinator at CHBA in Ottawa. He has over 30 years of experience in the residential building industry. Gary is also responsible for the CHBA Builders’ Manual. R-2000 is supported by CHBA in partnership with Natural Resources Canada. R-2000 is owned by Natural Resources Canada. To get more information on R-2000 or to become an R-2000 builder, visit www.chba.ca or contact gary@chba.ca

Feature	Urbandale Construction	Scotian Homes
House style	Single family detached	Single family detached
Ceiling insulation	R-51	R-60
Wall insulation	R-28	R-30
Basement wall insulation	R-20	Insulated Concrete Forms approx. R-22
Basement floor insulation	R-10	R-10
Window type	Vinyl, double glazed, low-e, argon, insulated spacers	Vinyl, triple glazed, low-e, argon fill, insulated spacers
Space heating/cooling system	Ground source heat pump	Air source heat pump
Water heating system	Gas - instantaneous heater	Solar with electric back-up
Ventilation system	HRV & whole house	HRV & whole house
Heat recovery system(s)	Air & drain water	Air
Environmental Materials	Cork floors Countertops with recycled material Insulation with recycled content	Low-VOC paints Locally produced walnut floors Insulation with recycled content
Water saving fixtures	Toilets, showers, taps	Toilets, showers, taps

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DECK TALK

New Products and Working Tips

BY JON EAKES

I was asked to write about decks but you all know how to build decks. So I thought I would simply share some new products and working tips.

New Product: Getting the twist on deck foundations

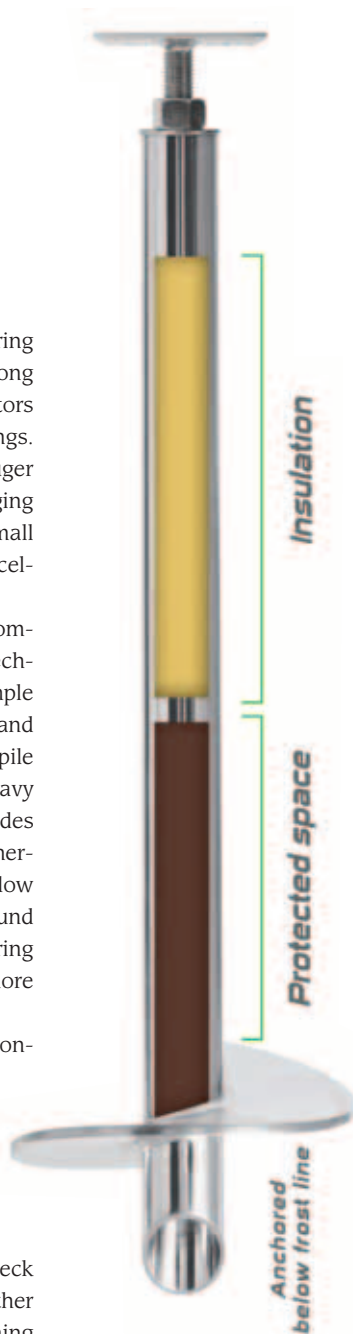
Screw piles for decks and other structures requiring solid frost-protected support have been around for a long time—and generally looked at sceptically by contractors more familiar with concrete columns and massive footings. The basic concept is attractive and easy to grasp: an auger that will drive itself deep into the ground without digging a hole; the blade that then acts as the footing; and a small smooth shaft that will not move with ad-freezing—an excellent concept for cold climate building.

A look at the “Thermal Pile” from a Canadian company called **Postech Metal Foundations** (www.Postech-Foundations.com) shows the coming of age of a simple idea in a complex climate. Aside from the CCMC listing and careful considerations to the building codes, this screw pile has thicker walled tubing for more lateral support, heavy galvanization for rust protection, various sized auger blades for different soils (after all, this is the footing) and now thermal insulation to prevent frost penetration via the hollow tube. All Postech screws go at least six feet into the ground and there is a torque meter to measure soil density during installation, which assures load bearing capacity. No more guesswork.

These are all the types of elements required for a contractor to have confidence that the screw pile has moved from an interesting idea to a rapid, efficient and reliable foundation for your structure—and your reputation.

Working Tip: Wandering beams

Sometimes we work just too hard trying to get deck posts all in a perfectly straight line despite rocks or other obstructions. Whether you are going around a swimming pool or around a rock, the reality is that beams that do not



show on the outer edge of the deck have no need to be perfectly straight—in fact they can wander all over. The only requirement is that their top surface is perfectly flat and horizontal. Having a joist span a couple of inches more or less really makes very little difference to the structural integrity of the deck.

New Product: Get into the groove

Applying stains or waterproofing to a deck always has the problem of extra work or double coatings when you go back and try to get into the visible portion of the groove between boards. With a spray gun we tend to overspray the surface while trying to get into the groove. The smoothest application is with a paintbrush on our knees. Paint pads don't touch the groove at all—until now.

Sur-Line now has a deck Stain Pad with a Groove Tool. Flip the handle and just like the keel of a sailboat, the groove pad retracts to load stain or work on flat surfaces. Flip the handle back and the groove pad drops down to fit the groove between boards as narrow as 1/8”.



With the pad extending just less than 3 inches on each side of the groove pad, the tool covers half of each board. This allows for rapid wet-on-wet coverage as you work the full length of each board on the deck.

That high wrapped front and back edge to the pad helps prevent wear or ripping when going over rough boards or exposed fasteners. ► 30



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28 ▶ Working Tip: Water repellents should be applied THIN... [just like the can says]

The most common error with transparent water repellents is to try to soak them heavily into all the cracks. It is like a force stronger than us; we just want to fill those cracks. So we ignore the instructions right on the can that specifically tell us to apply a very thin coating. The only harm done is getting a milky white haze for a few months, and wasting a lot of expensive water repellent—unless you put it

on really thick and then it will peel. What part of “thin” did you not understand?

New Product: The end of smelly toxic end cut treatments

I am delighted to tell you about the new Cut-N-Seal end cut treatment. Traditionally end cut treatment has been about the most obnox-

ious smelly highly toxic stuff that we had to use on every end cut or hole drilled into pressure treated wood to assure the full protection against rot. Gloves and even clothing worn while applying this stuff were always condemned to never go back into inhabited space because the odours never got out of cloth. In addition it was bright green, greatly bothering our clients although we promised them that by the end of the summer they wouldn't notice. Oh, there are transparent end cut treatments available, but they smell even worse. Hence, many of us just didn't use end cut everywhere we should have.

I complained to my friends at **Timber Specialties** and they told me they had something on the drawing board. Finally this spring it is out. Just look at the label: This stuff is considered an “irritant”—no more skull and crossbones. It is water clean-up and the pungent smell is gone. They finally figured out how to protect the cut ends with an acrylic-based material. In addition, it comes in light green to match pressure-treated wood, as well as in cedar brown. Thank you, Timber Specialties, for listening.

Working Tip: Spacing for aluminum siding and railings

Most of us know by now that ACQ pressure-treated wood has a very high concentration of copper and requires special ACQ compatible fasteners and brackets since copper reacts with steel to rust it. But many have not yet realized that ACQ is even more corrosive to aluminum than to steel. That means that if you want to put aluminum siding over ACQ pressure-treated wood, you should attach white wood strapping over the PTW using ACQ approved fasteners. Then you can apply the aluminum siding using short aluminum nails into the white wood strapping. The white wood is high and dry so it should last a long time.

Similarly, aluminum railings and other fixtures require a rubber membrane between the aluminum and the ACQ pressure-treated wood. Then stainless steel screws should be used as they will be in contact with both the aluminum and the ACQ—and SS will bridge between these two incompatible building materials best. 🏠



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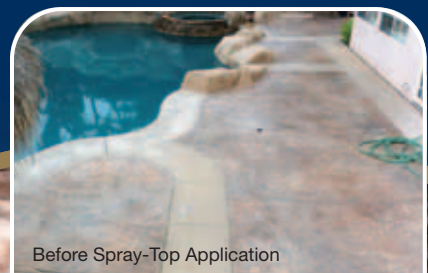
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The WMC, in partnership with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, is nearing the completion of the development of a suite of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Assessment Tools for the advanced wood manufacturing sector.

When these assessment tools become available, during late Spring 2012, they will assist the Canadian Advanced Wood Manufacturing Industry to help improve the ability of individual firms within the sector to assess and recognize qualifications of potential new entrants, who in turn will be able to access employment/career opportunities within the sector. The results of this project will help improve the employment integration of workers, including foreign trained individuals, into the industry and help individual firms to fill current and future skills gaps.

For more information on this project, please contact us at www.wmc-cfb.ca or 613-567-5511

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Hot or Not?

TOP 10 KITCHEN & BATH TRENDS



THINK GLASS

More than 350 National Kitchen & Bath Association member designers took part in the 2012 NKBA Design Trends Survey to cite the materials, product types, and styles they incorporated into their kitchen and bath designs over the final three months of 2011. While broad trends won't be evident in every local market, the following are 10 overall trends for kitchens and baths across the United States and Canada.

Glass Backsplashes

Natural stone tile and ceramic tile (including porcelain) remain the most popular material for backsplashes, although ceramic tile is on the decline. Glass, still a niche material for kitchen countertops, has been used recently by more than half of kitchen designers as a backsplash material. Other popular backsplash materials are granite and quartz; finishing off a granite or quartz countertop with a matching backsplash is quite common. The same doesn't hold true for solid surfaces; while these materials are very popular for countertops, they are seldom used for backsplashes. *Photo courtesy of Think Glass.*

Wood Wars

Cherry wood has consistently been the first or second most popular type of wood for kitchen cabinetry, jockeying for the top spot with maple each year, however, designers are slowly shifting away from both. No one other wood species is taking that market share on its

own. Instead, a number of lesser-used woods are being specified more often, including oak, walnut, alder, birch, and bamboo. *Photo courtesy of Wellborn Cabinet, Inc.*

Dark, White & Distressed

Natural kitchen cabinetry continues a steady move toward darker finishes. Among painted cabinetry, white continues to be the most popular option. Another trend to note is that distressed finishes are making a comeback. *Photo courtesy of Poggenpohl.*

LED Lighting

Energy-efficiency is clearly not a fad, but a real trend that can be seen taking hold in homes across the United States and Canada. Despite the higher initial cost, light-emitting diode, or LED, lighting is proof of this trend. However, largely due to the poor colour of the light they produce, and the mercury they contain, compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) aren't sharing in this trend. *Photo courtesy of Lutron.*



NUTONE

Medicine Cabinets

The tried-and-true medicine cabinet had been swept aside in bathroom remodels over the past several years, replaced by decorative wall mirrors. However, as homeowners look for more efficient use of space, most designers are now turning toward medicine cabinets as an effective way to gain additional storage without having to increase the footprint of a room, attenuating the need for separate shelving, cabinetry, or other storage options. *Photo courtesy of NuTone.*



WELLBORN CABINET, INC.



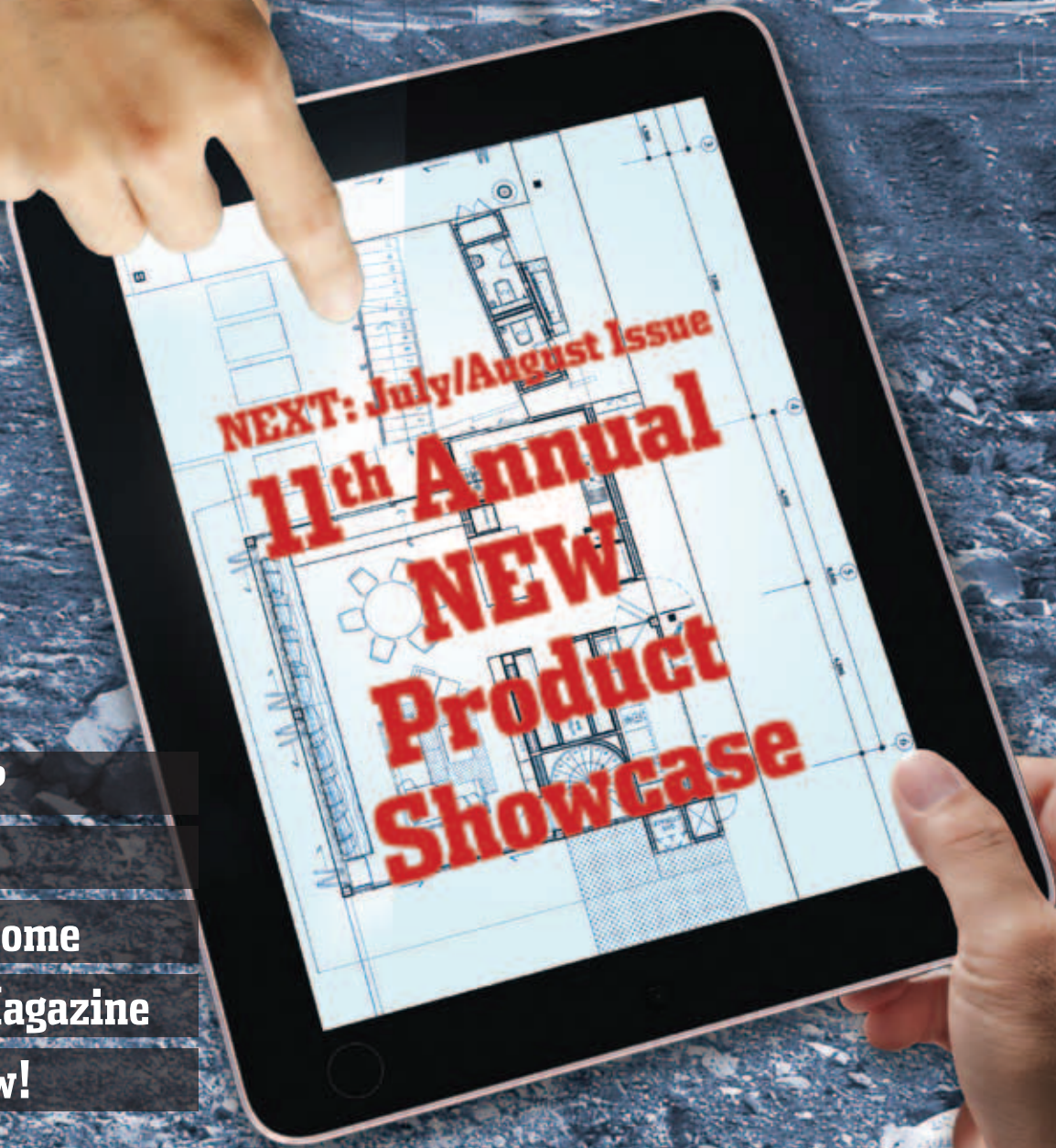
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WANTED: Editorial submissions for 11th Annual New Product Showcase. Details on page 34.





Pull-Out Faucets

The use of pull-out faucets has increased dramatically: 14 of out every 15 designers who designed a kitchen over the final three months of 2011 incorporated a pull-out faucet. These versatile models might also be mitigating the need for pot-filler faucets, which are on the downward trend. *Photo courtesy of ROHL.*

32 ▶

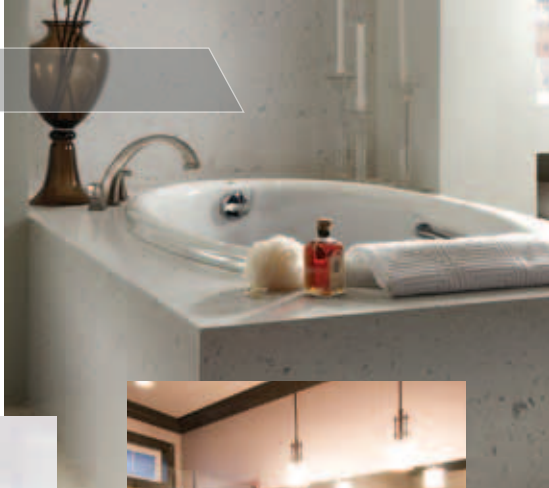
Colour Schemes

The use of gray colour schemes has risen dramatically over the past three years, although whites and off-whites continue to be the most popular colour schemes in the kitchen and bathroom, followed by beiges, bones and brown. In the kitchen, bronzes and terracottas and greens have risen over the past two years. Green was the colour trend in bathrooms last year, and its use has remained exactly the same this year. Blue has emerged as the fifth most popular colour in bathrooms. *Photo courtesy of Benjamin Moore.*

BENJAMIN MOORE



COSENTINO



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Solid Surfaces

A year ago, the use of solid surfaces was a key trend in the kitchen; this year, it's an even stronger trend, and one that impacts both the kitchen and the bathroom. At the same time, while granite and quartz continue to be the clear #1 and #2 choices, their popularity has waned just slightly. The same pattern holds true in newly remodelled bathrooms. Marble is currently the third most popular vanity top material. Also notable is the use of glass vanity tops, which has more than doubled over the past two years. *Photo courtesy of Cosentino.*

Polished Chrome is Back

Supplanted by brushed metal finishes in the past, polished chrome is staging a comeback, as is polished nickel. The increased use of polished finishes is clearly coming at the expense of brushed finishes. Only stainless steel has managed to clearly buck the trend away from brushed finishes. Bronze finishes continue to be popular. *Photo courtesy of Kohler Co.*



KRAFTMAID

Transitional Over Traditional

For the first time since the NKBA began tracking annual design trends, traditional is no longer the most popular type of design. In the kitchen and the bathroom, transitional, a blend of traditional and contemporary (typified by lines that are simpler than traditional, but a bit more elaborate than contemporary in order to create a modern classic look) is now the most common style. Contemporary is the next most common style. Shaker, arts & crafts, and cottage remain the next most frequently used styles. *Photo courtesy of KraftMaid.*

The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) is a non-profit trade association that has educated and led the kitchen and bath industry for more than 45 years. For more information, visit www.NKBA.org.

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Our 11th Annual New Product Showcase shines a spotlight on the latest and greatest in building materials, new products, design elements, technology, tools...basically, if it's new, innovative and of interest to the Canadian residential construction industry, we want to hear from you. But don't wait too long. For editorial consideration, please e-mail your brief text submission to editor@work4.ca before Friday, June 8, 2012.

The Fine Print:

- While all submissions will be considered, not all can or will be used. We reserve the right to edit to meet our space and editorial guidelines.
- Because of the volume of requests we receive, we can only consider one New Product per company. We recommend you fine tune what new product you want to feature.
- Please send only **one** New Product blurb, accompanied by **one** hi-res image to support the text. Emails with multiple attachments will be deleted.
- Products must be new to the Canadian market (not simply a new colour or logo), or ready to launch by Fall 2012.
- Please do not send repeated follow-ups asking if we are using your submission (Yes, that means you too).
- Advertising space is also limited. For advertising information and options, see page 33.

To get an idea of what we're looking for, check out our 2011 New Product Showcase at www.homebuildercanada.com/Issue2404.htm.





Ron Olson
President, CHBA

The various immigration reforms announced in the budget are welcome, and overdue.

Governments Listen – and Act!

While the recent federal budget focused primarily on the need for fiscal discipline and sets the stage for longer-term economic growth in Canada, it also delivered on a number of measures that the CHBA has been pushing for. This is very good news.

First, and most importantly, the budget recognized the importance of housing to both our economy, and the financial well-being of Canadians. Given the key role our industry played in seeing Canada through the challenges of the recent recession, such recognition is merited and essential.

Minister Flaherty's measured approach to mortgage amortization and down payment rules reflects an understanding of how critical housing market stability is to our national economy. Further government intervention would have prevented thousands of first-time home buyers from pursuing their home ownership dreams, and put existing homeowners at risk.

In the CHBA's view, such measures were not needed, and it is reassuring that the Minister appears to agree with this assessment.

Action on Immigration and Training

The various immigration reforms announced in the budget are welcome, and overdue. The CHBA has been making the case for action in this area for some time. Canada needs a system that addresses the growing shortage of skilled people in our industry more effectively; one that welcomes to Canada the skilled people we need to build and renovate homes.

We will watch developments closely as these reforms are put into place, and make certain the government continues to understand, and act, on our industry's skill needs.

Hand in hand with immigration reform, the budget also set out commitments for supporting the training of skilled people, particularly those just beginning their working careers.

Again, the CHBA has been very clear that federal training support must include all of the trades specialties involved in the residential construction industry. We expect these new programs and initiatives to do this—and we'll continue to press this case in the coming months.

An Improved Focus for Federal R&D

The budget recognized the importance of innovation within all sectors of Canada's economy. And it set out a clear policy that federal research and development investments need to support innovation and commercial application.

The CHBA has a long history of working with the federal government toward this type of research—work that supports builder innovation and that delivers value to Canadians.

Our industry has a longstanding and special relationship with the federal government in the areas of innovation and research. Decades of collaboration have produced the best housing system in the world, one we are all very proud of.

In an era of fiscal constraint, we will continue to work with the federal government to ensure research efforts are aimed at priority areas and practical outcomes, and that the level of federal R&D investment reflects the economic importance of housing in Canada's economy.

Leadership on Infrastructure Planning

Over the past few years, federal investments in basic infrastructure have been very significant. The budget left existing infrastructure funding commitments in place. The CHBA is also pleased that the federal government is initiating discussions with the provinces towards a strategic, long-term infrastructure plan.

This is something we have been calling for, and an area where federal leadership is critically important.

Federal funding represents a significant part of overall public investment in basic infrastructure. Better agreement and alignment among governments on both the state of our infrastructure, and future investment priorities, is critical. The CHBA will be involved in these consultations, and the importance of housing affordability and fairness in government-imposed infrastructure costs will be at the top of our agenda.

B.C. Building Code 'White Paper' Favours Code Uniformity

The past number of years has seen a disturbing trend toward fragmentation of Building Codes as a number of provinces and municipalities adopted regulations in an ad hoc manner. This creates a lot of potential confusion for builders, and carries the potential for unnecessary costs and risks for housing consumers.

A recent White Paper released by the government of British Columbia, entitled Modern Building Regulatory System, examines the need for greater uniformity in codes, and in their application.

The White Paper cites a number of important issues, including: inconsistent Code interpretations, local government building standards that go beyond the Code, lack of centralized decision making on Code matters, poor compliance with Code provisions, and lack of skills or Code knowledge among some system participants.

The code development system proposed in the Paper is consistent with the approach in place for the model National Building Codes, to which the CHBA contributes.

In examining the case for great code uniformity, the White Paper notes that building construction has become increasingly complex, and that new technology leads to more proposals for alternative solutions and the use of new products and assemblies that can decrease costs

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The past number of years has seen a disturbing trend toward fragmentation of Building Codes.

and improve affordability.

The Paper proposes that a provincial alternative solution and product evaluation body would be established to assist building departments with these decisions, creating efficiencies by eliminating multiple review processes. It goes on to propose that decisions on alternative solutions and a registry of acceptable products and assemblies would be made available to all building departments, and, it is assumed, builders.

This is exactly the type of thing that our Association has been calling for across the country, so that builders can innovate without the risk of regulatory barriers.

Water Issues

For a variety of reasons, water use efficiency is becoming a major issue across Canada—one with significant implications for our industry and our customers.

In some regions and communities, the ‘water issue’ is linked to constrained water resources; using water more efficiently will be essential for water needs to be met in the future. In all communities, water use is linked to infrastructure costs, both for new services and to maintain existing water treatment, delivery and wastewater treatment facilities.

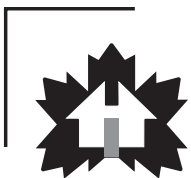
Some time ago, the CHBA requested that the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes consider including a water use efficiency objective and requirements in the National Building Codes. Our reasons are simple: Water use efficiency measures are already being adopted in many jurisdictions, and a uniform approach at the national level is the best path to a disciplined, evidence-informed outcome.

This work is now underway, and the CHBA remains involved and insistent on proper research and consultation with all affected parties. We want to see water use efficiency done right so provinces will act together in this important area. We also want to see the interests of both the environment and consumers fully considered before decisions are made.



Winter 2012 Pulse Survey

The Winter 2012 Pulse Survey of our new home builder and renovator members is now available on the CHBA website. The survey was conducted in December 2011 and January 2012 with the assistance of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Natural Resources Canada. A total of 373 new home builders and renovators responded to the 45th Pulse Survey. Results were tabulated and analyzed for the CHBA by Altus Group Economic Consulting.



Key Concerns

One of the key concerns of new home builders across Canada is the rising costs due to the price of serviced lots, with about one-third of respondents citing it as a critical problem. In Manitoba and Saskatchewan combined, the problem is reported by 58 per cent and in Ontario by 44 per cent of builders.

Additionally, the survey finds that the level of concern about rising costs due to lot prices has increased from 27 per cent a year ago to 32 per cent today. The number of new home builders concerned about shortages of serviced lots has crept up from 16 per cent a year ago to 21 per cent nationally, 40 per cent in Ontario.

Regulatory issues are also a growing problem for many new home builders. The survey finds that nearly a quarter of new home builders report more onerous municipal approvals and standards are a critical problem, up from 19 per cent a year ago. Concerns about more onerous building code requirements and environmental regulations have also increased over the last year.

Market Conditions

New home builders expect the price of a new single-detached home will go up over the next year in all regions. Nationally, 63 per cent of builders expect prices to increase, 89 per cent in Atlantic Canada, 76 per cent in Ontario, and 41 per cent in British Columbia.



SOURCE: PULSE SURVEY, WINTER 2012

New home builders across Canada expect housing starts this year will moderate somewhat, moving closer to household demographic requirements. The survey reports that new home builders forecast 186,000 units will be started in 2012, compared to the 193,950 units started in 2011.

Renovators expect stable or increasing activity in 2012. The underground economy remains a critical problem for CHBA renovator members. Work in the underground economy is of the greatest concern to renovators in Ontario and British Columbia.

While the full-time employment pattern varies from region to region, 81 per cent of all respondents to the survey report higher or stable employment compared to a year ago. Most builders are optimistic for the future: two-thirds see no change in the employment pattern, while the balance expects to hire more workers.

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Innovative Thinking



Just when you begin to think it's all been done before, a manufacturer will step up and make something just a little bit better than its predecessor. This month's selection of new products is just that: examples of innovative thinking that make life on the job just a little bit easier, safer and more secure.

Security in an Open Pick-up

The **Master Lock** company has just brought out a full line of cables, attachments and speciality locks all designed for safe hauling of equipment together with quick and easy access in open pick-up trucks. Most of their Automotive Security Locks function around cables that attach to pick-up truck friendly anchor points or to other cables. They even have a special little lock that locks the tailgate removal mechanism down. Apparently the resale of tailgates has become a big business. See videos of these locks in action on www.MasterLock.com

The FuBar Add More Fu

For some time now **Stanley** has been making better and better demolition tools under their banner of the FuBar. With the FuBar Demolition bar, which I call the "Tomahawk," they have added a new element to demolition tools. Now here is one tool that can strike, pull, pry, chisel and chop materials apart. Made to be struck with a hammer, the knife edge can be forced through wall boards faster and cleaner than any other tool while still being a general use crowbar.



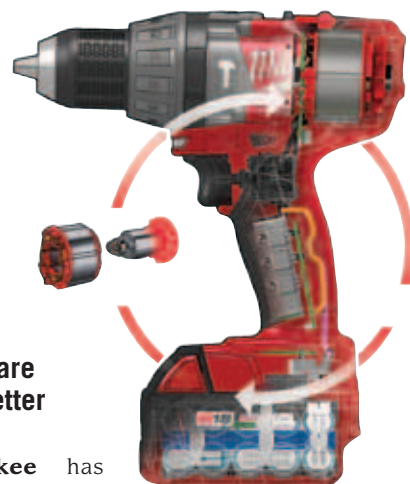
Old Ideas are Making Better Drills

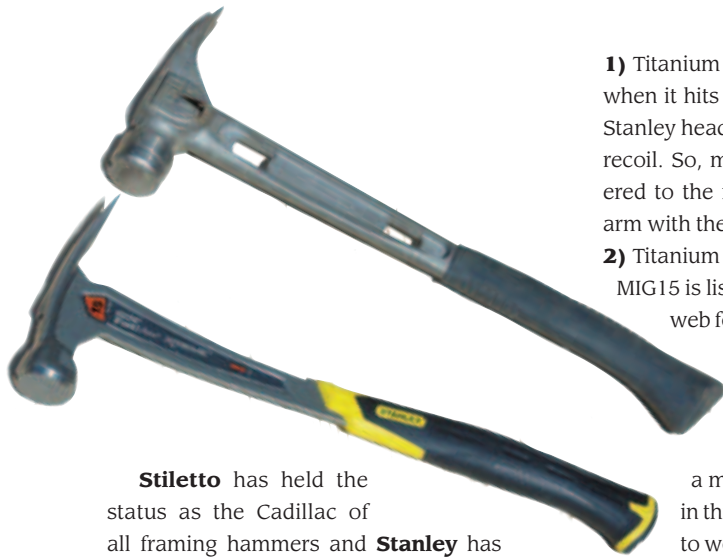
Milwaukee has launched a new line of M18 FUEL tools. The word FUEL is supposed to imply combining three key elements: great batteries, a fine tuned power controller and the reintroduction of brushless motors. Of course, better batteries and controllers are great, but I really jumped at seeing a brushless induction motor. Many years ago I had some Elu woodworking tools with induction motors. I never felt such smooth, even lightweight, power, and could find nothing like it in North American tools. So I jumped at the opportunity to see if this new tool from North America finally figured out something that the Germans had nailed a long time ago.

It is a beauty. As their literature says, the induction motor gives this ½" hammer drill more power with less weight: Everything fits together with a slimmed down 18-volt power pack and a power controller that matches the specific needs of a brushless motor. In my hands it feels like a 12-volt tool and works like a 24-volt tool. If my experience with induction motors is any guide, this thing will last forever. If Milwaukee is serious about moving to low maintenance powerful induction motors they may be changing our whole tool box.

Hammers Going Head to Head: Stanley vs. Stiletto

A bit of science first. The weight of a 15-ounce or 24-ounce hammer is the weight of the head only. Ideally the handle is as light as possible to help reduce fatigue. The longer the handle, the more momentum is given to the head, the more power is delivered to the nail—if you hit the nail. The longer the handle the harder it is to hit the nail—hence standard and finishing hammers that need to not miss have shorter handles. Framing hammers that drive large nails need more power.





Stiletto has held the status as the Cadillac of all framing hammers and **Stanley** has decided to take them head on with their MIG 15. **Length:** although the Stiletto is almost an inch longer than the Stanley, the distance from the head to the finger crotch is the same on both hammers, so the effective swing is identical. **Weight:** both heads are 15-ounce, although the Stanley is slightly lighter overall.

Only two items show up as significantly different:

1) Titanium has a recoil of about 3 per cent when it hits the nail, while the steel in the Stanley head will have about 27 per cent recoil. So, more of the power is delivered to the nail and less back to your arm with the Stiletto.

2) Titanium is expensive so while the Stanley MIG 15 is listed for \$90, it actually sells on the web for about \$50. The web price for the Stiletto is about \$220 for the TBII 15. So the Stanley has a lot less recoil on your wallet.

If you are working all day with a manual hammer (as when I started in this business), the Stiletto is a dream to work with. If all you need is to hit an occasional nail that you can't get with the gun, Stanley's MIG 15 looks like a well designed value.

Blade of the Month

Everyone is making segmented blade knives in all sizes and styles, but the blades are basically the same. **DeWalt** has now come up with something new: Carbide dust powered



onto the cutting edge. Few people realize it, but drilling holes in drywall with twist bits will destroy the bit quickly, because that soft gypsum core is extremely abrasive. That same gypsum core takes the edge right off of our segmented knife blades. Finally we are getting some real help on the cutting edge of one of our most common tools.



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



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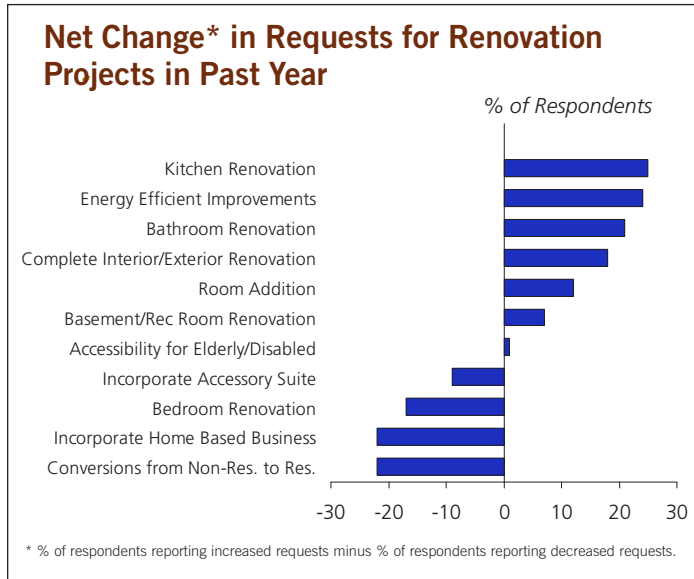
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Getting the Pulse on the Renovation Market

OTTAWA — According to CHBA's 45th Pulse Survey, renovators have reported increases in activity in the past year—about one-third of CHBA renovator members (37%) say their renovation activity is now higher than 12 months ago, about twice the share reporting a decline. On bal-

ance, renovators expect further increases in renovation activity over the next year (with 40% expecting higher activity versus 9% expecting lower). In all regions, renovators expect generally stable or improving activity levels. Overall, the average size of contracts reported by renovators responding to the Winter 2012 Pulse Survey is \$63,000 and the average duration of renovation projects about eight weeks. Project sizes are typically smaller in Eastern Canada than Western Canada. Requests are up on average for kitchen renovations, energy efficient improvements, bathroom renovations, complete interior/exterior renovations, room additions and basement/rec room renovations. An emerging critical problem for many renovators is increasing builder liability—a critical concern for about one in six respondents.



RBC Homeownership Poll: Most Canadians Would Rather Renovate Than Relocate

TORONTO — A majority of Canadians (83 per cent) would rather renovate their homes than find a new place to live if their current home needed major work, according to the 19th Annual RBC Homeownership Poll, conducted by Ipsos Reid between January 24 and 30, 2012.

Reasons for renovating ranged from wanting to make their home more attractive (66%), increasing the value (46%) and maintaining or

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repairing their home (39%). Four-in-ten Canadians (39%) said that they want to renovate to increase energy efficiency.

The rooms that typically add the most value to a house—bathrooms and kitchens—were the top home improvement projects on the minds of Canadians, tied at 43 per cent, while 33 per cent plan to renovate their basement. Almost half of respondents (46%) plan to do much of the work themselves, compared to 42 per cent who expect to hire a contractor for their renovations (up five percentage points from 37 per cent in 2010).

When asked about their renovation budget, more than three-quarters of Canadians (78%) estimated they would spend less than \$10,000 on their renovations. The majority of renovators (71%) said they would mostly finance these projects with cash or savings, while lines of credit (15%), home equity refinancing (13%), credit cards (10%) and personal loans (4%) trailed well behind.

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LEED Canada for Homes: A New Certification Model with Lower Price

OTTAWA — With more than 2,000 homes registered with LEED Canada for Homes, the program is seeing greater interest from proponents of large single family projects. In response to this heightened interest, the CaGBC has introduced a less expensive and more convenient certification model. The changes allow builders to register larger projects, possibly with multiple models, under one LEED Canada for Homes registration. Groups of homes aiming for the same certification level can then be certified in batches, providing added flexibility.

Batch certification also introduces cost savings. Each group of homes pays a single batch review fee of just \$255, which allows each home within the batch to then be certified for only \$75 per home (member rate). For more information, visit www.cagbc.org/homes. 🏠

Curb Appeal: Selecting the Right Front Door Colour

BURFORD, Ont. — When it comes to a home's exterior, curb appeal is all important, and selecting the right front door colour can create a stellar first impression. When choosing a colour, remember that colours look very different outdoors, less intense than they do indoors. To compensate **BEV BELL**, Creative Director, **Beauti-Tone Paint and Home Products Division, Home Hardware Stores Limited**, suggests choosing darker, saturated hues. Next, see how different lighting will affect the colour by viewing a colour sample on the door over the course of a day, from first thing in the morning to late at night. Finally, marry that perfect front door colour with these two simple tips:

1) If you have an aluminum storm door, make sure it stops weather, not traffic. Make a strong colour statement by using latex rust coat to paint storm doors to match entry doors. That way, they won't grab all the attention.

2) Don't paint the garage door the same colour as the front door: the eye is drawn to the larger block of colour. For a more cohesive look, paint garage doors in a similar colour to the surrounding exterior wall. 🏠



CALENDAR

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

May 28-29

HSC Regeneration Forum:
People, Places & Communities
Housing Services Corporation
Toronto, ON
www.hscorp.ca

June 1-4

75th Annual Conference and Trade Show
Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Saskatoon, SK
www.fcm.ca

June 11-13

CaGBC National Conference & Expo 2012
Canada Green Building Council
Toronto, ON
www.cagbc.org

June 21-22

3rd Annual Greening Government Conference
Toronto, ON
www.greeninggovernment.ca

Residential Construction Site Manager Occupational Designation

CALGARY — The Government of Alberta has designated residential construction site manager as an occupation under the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act. This means that voluntary provincial certification in this occupation is now available to anyone in the Alberta home building industry.

Industry training is available through the Professional Home Builders' Institute of Alberta (PHBI). The training consists of three levels. Each level includes a formal training component combined with 1,500 hours and 12 months of level specific on the job work experience. Once the training is complete, the Government of Alberta's role is to assess completion of all training components, administer the provincial exam, and grant certification.

The Alberta New Home Warranty Program funded the development of the program. The Professional Home Builders' Institute of Alberta is managing training development, the implementation of the course programs and materials, while also maintaining a registry of trainees. The program will require a minimum of three years to complete. Prior learning assessment and credit for experience is available. For more information, visit www.phbia.com. 🏠

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All Weather Windows Ltd.	24	800-638-5709	www.allweatherwindows.com
Canadian Industrial Distributors Inc.	41	877-280-0243	www.cid.ca
CertainTeed Insulation Group.	11	800-233-8990	www.certainteed.com/insulation
Delta Faucet	44	800-567-3300	www.deltafaucet.ca
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GE Appliances	19, 43	855-742-6112	www.geappliances.ca
Home BUILDER Canada.	33	514-620-2200	www.homebuildercanada.com
Home Hardware Stores Limited	3, 43	519-664-2252	www.homehardware.ca
Hurd Windows & Doors.	40	800-433-4873	www.hurd.com
Icynene Inc.	15	800-758-7325	www.icynene.com
JELD-WEN of Canada	7, 43	204-510-4745	www.jeld-wen.ca
LOGIX Insulated Concrete Forms.	8	888-415-6449	www.logixicf.com
Masterchem Industries (KILZ).	13	800-325-3552	kilzpro-x.com
Mercedes - Benz Sprinter.	4, 43	416-847-7538	www.mercedes-benz.ca
North American Fiberboard Asso.	34	847-934-8394	http://www.fiberboard.org
Nudura Corporation	23	866-468-6299	www.nudura.com
Rhino Linings Corporation.	30	800-232-8311	www.rhino linings.com
Rinnai	25, 43	800-621-9419	www.rinnai.ca
Rogers Communications	29	866-567-5778	www.rogers.com
Sage Software, Inc.	27	866-420-7289	www.sagecre.com
Schlage Lock - Ingersoll Rand.	41	800-900-4734	www.doorsecurity.ca/builderprograms
Simpson Strong-Tie Canada	17	800-999-5099	www.strongtie.com
Tufdek Tuff Ind.	6	877-860-9333	www.tufdek.com
WeiserPfiester	2	800-340-7608	www.Weiserlock.com
Wood Manufacturing Council	31	613-567-5511	www.wmc-cfb.ca

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