

# BUILDER



THE MAGAZINE OF THE CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

## Annual Renovation Issue

**Construction Fraud:  
Don't Be a Victim**

**Understanding ERV**

**Market Report: Manitoba Bold**

**2013 Kitchen & Bath Trends**

**Renovator Profile:  
Sakiyama Construction**

**Church Time:  
Renovation and Renewal**



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**Michael McDonald**  
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## HOME OWNERS HELP BUILD LASTING CONNECTIONS

In more than 500 communities across Canada, independent Home Hardware Building Centre and Home Building Centre Owners help build houses and lasting relationships. And sometimes one even leads to the other. Looking for materials to build his own home, contractor Matt Denomme turned to Michael McDonald of McDonald Home Hardware Building Centre with his blueprints in 2007. Michael and his staff impressed Matt so much that he's worked with them ever since, from projects as familiar as decks and homes to those as diverse as school pavilions – sharing knowledge, resources and expertise that helps them both build their businesses.

With massive buying power, job site deliveries, credit services, Top Notch Rewards, project packages and home and cottage plans, independent Home Owners like Michael have all the resources to help builders like Matt succeed no matter whose home they're building.



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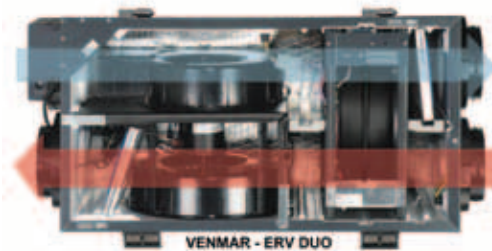
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## BMO Releases First-time Home Buyers Report

TORONTO — In BMO's *First-time Home Buyer's Report*, Canadians who are planning to buy their first house in the next five years expect to spend approximately \$300,000, with an average down payment amount of \$48,000 (16%).

The report also revealed:

- On average, first-time home buyers expect to be mortgage-free in 20 years, with 20 per cent estimating it will take between 10-19 years;
- Those planning to enter the real estate market for the first time are twice as likely to choose a fixed rate over a variable rate mortgage (46% versus 20%);
- First-timers who expect interest rates to stay the same or decrease over the next five years still prefer fixed rate over variable rate mortgages (39% versus 23%);
- Six-in-ten (63%) first-time buyers have made cutbacks to their lifestyle to save for their first home, with just one-in-four (27%) expecting their parents or other family members to help them pay for their first home;
- The majority (59%) of first-time buyers have had to hold off buying

## 2013 Construction Cost Guide Available from Altus Group Canada

TORONTO — Altus Group's Cost Consulting Team has released the *2013 Construction Cost Guide*. The 2013 Guide provides construction costs for a variety of property types on a national scale, covering the scope of Canadian markets: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Halifax and St. John's. Within these markets, the Guide provides current analysis, unit rates, measurement and application of cost per square foot for a variety of building types.

Highlights of the 2013 Guide:

- Premium Outlets added in response to increased growth and activity in the retail sector;
- Observations related to Construction Cost Escalation with some degree of normalization generally with zero escalation in certain areas; and
- Detailed data and descriptions including a breakdown of costs by 13 different building types.

To request a copy of the guide, visit [www.altusgroup.com](http://www.altusgroup.com). 

their first home because of increasing housing prices


According to the report, two-thirds of first-time buyers (66%) say the latest changes to mortgage regulations, which included reducing the maximum amortization for government-insured mortgages to 25 years from 30 years, have not affected their buying timeline, while one-in-five (19%) say they will have to wait longer before buying as a result.

The BMO First-time Home Buyers Report was conducted by Pollara. Survey results cited in this report are from online interviews with a random sample of 2,000 Canadians 18 years of age and over, conducted between February 25 and March 5, 2013. 

## Vancouver Consumers Say the Time is Right to Buy but Not Sell

VANCOUVER — A recent REW.ca Real Estate Consumer Confidence Survey reveals an upward trend—and increasingly brighter outlook—in consumer sentiment toward buying a home in the Lower Mainland. According to the survey, a slight majority (54%) of residents think it is a good time to buy over the next three months, while only 34% believe it is not a good time to buy. The findings mark a year-long rise in consumers' opinions towards purchasing property. A similar REW.ca survey in March 2012 found that only 46 per cent of consumers felt good about buying. Confidence grew to 50 per cent in last September's survey.

	Total (495) %	Good time to buy	
		Yes (307) %	No (188) %
Prices will go down/market correction/housing bubble	26	23	32
Prices are high	13	2	32
Interest rates are low	13	20	2
It's a buyer's market/too many properties for sale	11	18	1
Housing market is soft/sales have slowed down	9	12	3
Prices are low/reasonable	8	12	1
Prices will continue to rise	6	7	4
Housing prices have stabilized	5	6	3
Concerned about the economy	4	2	7
Good time of year to sell	3	4	1
HST/taxes concerns	2	2	4
Economy is improving	1	1	-
Interest rates will go up	1	-	1
Upcoming election	<1	<1	1
It's a seller's market	<1	-	1
Miscellaneous	1	1	2
Nothing/no comment/none	11	10	12

But as consumer confidence about buying increases, sentiment toward selling homes continues to slide. The survey showed that 63 per cent believe it is not a good time to sell; almost half cited concern about dropping property values to explain their pessimistic outlook, while 20 per cent blamed slowing sales, and another 12 per cent said there were too many properties for sale. 



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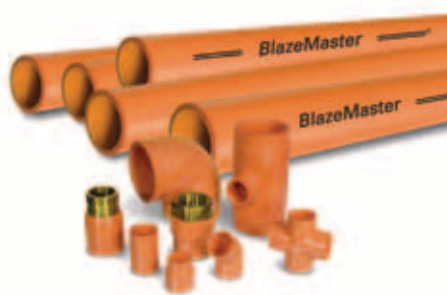
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## HHHBA Awards \$2,500 Bursary to Two Brothers

HAMILTON — The Hamilton-Halton Home Builders' Association (HHHBA) recently awarded their bursary to two deserving Mohawk College students. The funds are aimed at assisting the most deserving graduates of the construction and renovation technician programs to launch their own construction or renovation company.

The HHHBA launched this bursary program with Mohawk last year at their annual fundraiser BBQ during their milestone 70th anniversary year. More than 100 builders, renovators, trades and suppliers attended the event to support this great program.

The HHHBA has committed to fund the bursary for a minimum of three years and hopes it will lead to great successes and help graduates successfully start their business.

This year, the bursary was awarded to **CHRIS** and **JASON FORD**, two brothers from Brantford, Ont. Chris and Jason both left longtime jobs at the Ford plant in Oakville to pursue their dreams of working and renovating together. Chris and Jason

have excelled in their studies and have become leaders to their younger classmates. The brothers plan on using the \$2,500 bursary to start up their own company called **Ford Brothers Construction**. ■

## CHBA New Brunswick Announces New President

FREDERICTON — The Canadian Home Builders' Association New Brunswick is pleased to announce the appointment of **RICHARD (RICK) TURNER** as President.

Rick brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the Association and the industry after serving forty years as a land development specialist with **Hughes Surveys and Consultants** in Saint John, New Brunswick. His experience in the land development industry ranges from planning developments to managing surveying, engineering and land development construction activities. He has experience in most aspects of land development approvals required from all levels of government. ■



From left: **Allan Roshko**, **Chris Ford** (award winner), **Brad MacDonald**, **Jason Ford** (award winner), **Mathieu Langelier** (Executive Officer, HHHBA)

## Association to Association

Does your regional or provincial Home Builders' Association have news or information to share? A recent survey or poll? A new program or fundraising initiative? If you have a newsworthy item that would interest other Association members across the country, please e-mail your 250-word entry to Judy Penz Sheluk at [editor@work4.ca](mailto:editor@work4.ca) for consideration. Please put "Association to Association" in the Subject line.

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By Peter Norman

Quietly late last year, Statscan made major revisions to the data on residential capital investment.

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.

## When the Data Becomes the Story

In the business of market analysis, the goal is to gauge, to the best possible extent, trends in past and present activity in order to forecast future activity. Analysts therefore depend very heavily on the quality of the underlying data used to assess trends in underlying activity. When those data are changed substantially, that's when the data becomes the story.

A great deal of the data we rely on comes from Statistics Canada, which has a tremendously good reputation internationally in terms of the quality and relevancy of its data on the Canadian economy. From time to time Statscan finds it necessary to revise data and this always presents a challenge to analysts who rely on these data in their models.

Quietly late last year, Statscan made major revisions to the data on residential capital investment, which includes the principal data we use in composing trends on the size and composition of the residential renovation market. Often data revisions are pretty inconsequential. This time, they tell a lot about trends over the past few years in the renovation sector.

### Key Changes

Key changes suggest that trends during the recession and recovery, including the period of the federal stimulus renovation tax credit, evolved substantially differently than we previously thought:

- **The recession:** Consumer confidence eroded quickly at the beginning of the recession and renovation spending fell as a result. But not, it turns out, by as much as previously thought. Between Q3 2008 and Q1 2009 renovation spending declined 1.5 per cent as opposed to the 4 per cent previously estimated.
- **The Tax Credit:** The Homeowner Renovation Tax Credit (HRTC) was introduced in the 2009 federal budget as an emergency stimulus measure and expired in January 2010. Previously it was estimated that over that period renovation spending leapt ahead by some 18 per cent. Now it turns out the impact was not so rosy. New estimates by Statscan put the impact at 10.6 per cent growth in that year.
- **The Hangover:** It's well known that any tax or stimulus measure that is temporary will have a "hangover"—spending, which was moved forward into the tax credit period from activity that would otherwise have happened anyway in the months ahead, will make spending fall after the cessation of the credit. Previous estimates of the size of this hangover were a modest decline in renovation spending of 1 per cent over the two quarters immediately following the cessation of the credit. Revised estimates show that the hangover was more than a 4 per cent decline in spending during that period.
- **The Return to Growth:** Since the middle of

2010 residential renovation spending has generally been on an upward path. Both the original estimates and the revised ones suggest that growth in residential renovation spending is now progressing at about 3 per cent per year (before adjusting for inflation).

All told, the revisions are pretty substantial. The total size of the residential renovation sector in 2012 was \$60.8 billion. Previous estimates had it at \$65.8 billion. Renovation is still a substantial sector and an important part of the Canadian economy, but just a bit smaller than we thought. The data has become the story.

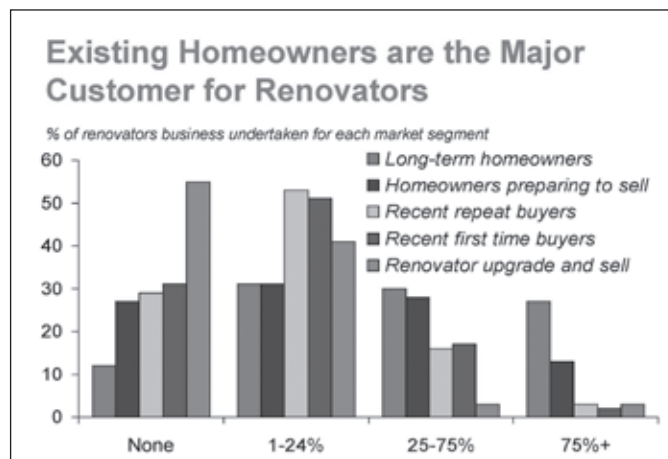
### Pulse Survey Shows Optimism

Responses from the 46th CHBA Pulse survey, conducted by Altus Group, show that renovators are generally optimistic about the future, but continue to face certain challenges.

Some 37 per cent of respondents report that activity has increased in the past year (relative to 24 per cent reporting lower activity) and fully 42 per cent expect higher renovation activity in the year ahead.

The underground "cash" economy remains a substantial concern for renovator members who responded to the survey with some 28 per cent singling it out as a problem—but this is down from more than 50 per cent a couple of years ago. Other concerns for renovators include more onerous municipal regulations and building code requirements.

This year's Pulse survey also gave us insight into the renovation customer (see Chart). Most renovators reported that a substantial amount of their business was related to upgrades to homes of long-term owners for their own needs, and/or owners preparing to sell. Recent buyers represent a generally smaller proportion of the renovation market. Fewer than 50 per cent of renovators reported engaging in speculative activity, such as buying a property and fixing it up for resale. ■



SOURCE: ALTUS GROUP BASED ON CHBA PULSE SURVEY



By Bo Mocherniak

In Canada, the average fraud loss is higher than the global average. In construction, the average loss was an astonishing \$628,500.

With over 30 years experience with audit, acquisitions, divestitures and valuations, Bo Mocherniak, CA, CBV, provides services to both public and private companies in Canada and the United States. Bo is National Sector Leader for the Real Estate and Construction Group of Grant Thornton Canada, a member of the Grant Thornton International Real Estate Sector Group and past Chair of Grant Thornton LLP. He can be reached at bo.mocherniak@ca.gt.com.

## Construction Fraud: Don't Be a Victim

### *The 10 most common fraud schemes in the construction industry*

Construction fraud. Media stereotypes around these two words can feel pervasive and unfair. But did you know it's actually much more likely that construction companies themselves will be victims of fraud?

If you are involved in construction, you might wonder how easy it really is to lose money to fraud perpetrated by employees, contractors, subcontractors and venture partners. In fact, construction fraud may be even more common than you'd think.

In Canada, the average fraud loss is higher than the global average. In construction, the average loss was an astonishing \$628,500. That's not small change. The growing prevalence of construction fraud is not a myth or the product of hype—it's happening, and the stakes are high.

One of the first things you might ask yourself is why and how this is happening. What are the things that can create the right environment for construction fraud to take place? The causes can be many, but what we typically see are things like economic pressures, a lack of internal controls, increased opportunity for collusion, vaguely-worded contracts, using large amounts of cash, cost-based contracting, not clearly defining scope, and risky joint ventures. However, by understanding the environment in which fraud can happen, you can take steps to mitigate against it.

Let's start with the 10 most common fraud schemes in the construction industry:

1. Non-payment of subcontractors and material suppliers by delaying lien waivers, falsifying lien waivers or using project cash receipts to pay bills for other projects.
2. Billing for unperformed work by overstating the units of production accomplished or the labour and equipment actually used.
3. Manipulating the schedule of values and contingency accounts. This can be done in several ways, including: failing to update schedule of values (SOV) line items as buyouts or changes are made; charging phony bills received from shell companies; failing to associate subcontractors or vendors with specific SOV line items; hiding cost overruns during the project; and using a contingency to cover non-reimbursable costs.
4. Diverting lump-sum cost to time and material cost by initially budgeting expenses as a lump-sum then billing for time and materials related to change orders.
5. Substituting or removing material, including using lower-grade material that requires subsequent repairing or replacing or that leads to a structural or system failure, and taking material from the work

site for personal use.

6. Change order manipulation, including altering work scope, removing scope descriptions, adding charges, omitting design specifications in the original scope of work, and improper price reductions for work substitution.
7. Falsifying payment applications by covering up the purchase of personal items or funnelling money to a phantom company controlled by an employee; other examples include inflating invoices beyond actual costs by using profit or mark-up formulas.
8. Subcontractor collusion, including bid rigging, bribes, kickbacks, false or inflated change orders, undervalued deductive change orders or phantom subcontractors.
9. Diverting purchases and stealing equipment/tools by billing for equipment or tools for the jobsite which are then used for other subcontractor projects or personal use, or billing for tools not required by job specifications.
10. False representations, which could involve using undocumented workers; falsifying minority content reports, test results or insurance certificates; non-compliance with environmental regulations; and misrepresentation of small business status.

The benefits of understanding construction fraud risks, knowing how to mitigate them and taking proactive measures to combat them, are many—not only in what you can avoid, but in what you can gain. It not only can save you money, but a strong fraud strategy can help you steer clear of penalties for violating industry standards or regulatory requirements, avoid project delays or cancellations, maintain costs at stable and predictable levels, and control reputational risk.

We all know that construction fraud can be very dangerous if it involves the use of substandard or unsafe materials. A good fraud prevention program may also prevent injury or loss of life and the legal calamities that workplace accidents entail. Other gains include potentially reducing your insurance costs, ensuring a fair competitive process and enhancing your reputation.

Current levels of construction activity and investment in Canada are very high right now, making fraud prevention an even more important priority. Now, more than ever, the construction industry needs to implement proactive, preventive measures, and to invest the time and money to put a fraud prevention and detection plan into action. Take action now to prevent fraud before it happens. ■



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By Tim Bailey

The practice of delivering complete homes with zero deficiencies will always increase the probability of amassing engaged customer advocates.

Tim Bailey is Division President of 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.

## Complete and Ready Homes Win Every Time

There are two questions or schools of thought that occasionally arise in home building. Is it better to leave a few somewhat “obvious” items incomplete when homeowners conduct their pre-delivery inspection to prevent them from seeking out many more items for “the list” — and then complete these items quickly to wow the homeowners? Or is it better to have all items completed by the pre-delivery inspection to create delighted homeowners?

Scenario 1 Homeowner Experience (sample items)	Score	Responses	Total
Home was clean and ready	9	25	225
Quality of workmanship	9	25	225
Conditions of job site	9	25	225
Problems corrected before move-in (most of them)	9	25	225
Days past to make corrects (timely)	10	25	250
<b>Totals</b>		125	1150
<b>Total Home Buyer Experience Score Contribution</b>		<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>9.20</b>

### Missing Pieces Miss the Mark

It should be noted that there are not many—or possibly any—consumer-goods made today where these “schools of thought” would even make the agenda for a board room discussion. Home building is certainly unique in that regard. For example, an auto manufacturer does not contemplate whether a mirror or control knob should be left missing from the vehicle when the customer arrives for the pre-delivery inspection to prevent the customer from completing a more detailed examination—or with the hope that the customer will be wowed when those items are quickly installed before the car is driven off the lot. Consumers would find this to be a questionable product experience and would have heightened concerns regarding the overall quality of the purchase. That same analogy rings true for nearly all items purchased by consumers and that is what sets the expectations of today’s home buyers.

Fortunately, many home buyers tend to have some tolerance for the unique and complicated business of home building. This means that a few deficiencies or incomplete items won’t necessarily jeopardize the potential for creating customer loyalty. However, the practice of delivering complete homes with zero deficiencies will always increase the probability of amassing engaged customer advocates.

### The Score Card Comparison

It is interesting to analyze these two schools of thought in the form of “customer satisfaction survey data” to better understand their impacts. The following demonstration data is a simplified illustration of how customer satisfaction survey results may appear for a high-performing builder based on 25 closings with survey questions scored on a 10-point scale. The demonstration data is for illustration purposes only, as it only includes a small sampling of typical survey questions. It does, however, show the pattern often seen in customer satisfaction research.

This first scenario considers the 25 closings with some items being incomplete at move-in but corrected in a timely manner. This resulting customer feedback survey data often appears as follows:

A second scenario considers the same 25 closings and scores all items for the builder the same as in Scenario 1 except in this example, all items are completed prior to move-in. This resulting customer feedback survey data often appears as follows:

Scenario 2 Homeowner Experience (sample items)	Score	Responses	Total
Home was clean and ready	9	25	225
Quality of workmanship	9	25	225
Conditions of job site	9	25	225
Problems corrected before move-in (all of them)	10	25	250
Days past to make corrects (N/A)	N/A	0	0
<b>Totals</b>		100	925
<b>Total Home Buyer Experience Score Contribution</b>		<b>Weighted Average</b>	<b>9.25</b>

As the weighted averages indicate, the scoring is higher for Scenario 2 where home buyers are answering that all items were complete by move-in. Customer satisfaction research generally finds correlation between overall survey scores and the overall loyalty of home buyers and leading builders know that when it comes down to generating recommendations and referrals from homeowners, every point counts.

It is again important to note that these scenarios are only “demonstration data.” However, they are certainly indicative of results noticed in customer satisfaction research and provide quantitative reinforcement to the importance of delivering complete and ready homes.

### Perfection at Possession Wins Every Time

Leaving a few obvious items deficient for homeowners to put on “the list” to prevent those homeowners from seeking out many more items is not a sound strategy for success. Having a few items incomplete in order to try to wow homeowners with rapid response is similarly a precarious plan for creating customer loyalty. There will be homes that have incomplete or deficient items at closing due to the complexities of home building but those should be the exception. Maintaining a goal toward complete and ready homes at closing should always be top priority.

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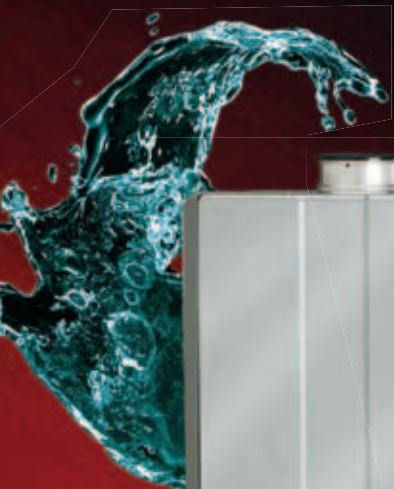
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By John Burrows

## Current NRC Construction Housing Research

NRC Construction undertakes a wide range of research and technical activities in support of the housing sector. This article highlights a few projects of interest to builders.

### Building Envelope and Materials

NRC Construction researchers have been investigating the performance of innovative roof-integrated photovoltaic products. Over a 12-month period (September 2011 to September 2012), the test roof generated over 2 MWh of electricity. A computer model will be developed to predict whole house energy performance at selected locations across Canada. In addition, NRC Construction is developing design guidelines and installation standards for photovoltaic panels that will address wind loads and weather resistance.

A major investigation of housing window/wall construction details has been completed. The findings will help builders manage rainwater and air leakage.

### Intelligent Building Operations

Pollutants are noticeably higher in homes with attached garages compared to homes where the garage is a separate structure. NRC Construction has initiated activities to understand the situation and provide better solutions for minimizing pollutant transfer. To enable full-scale experiments, a two-car garage was attached to the existing Indoor

Air Research Laboratory (IARL). The structure will be used to assess the effectiveness of two selected technological solutions: exhaust ventilation in the garage itself, and pressure control between the garage and home. NRC will also measure existing concentrations and types of pollutants in 36 homes with attached garages and the effectiveness of measures designed to reduce the transfer of pollutants into the living space.

### Evaluation of Indoor Air Quality Solutions and Technologies (IAQST)

NRC Construction is in the midst of developing test methods to assist manufacturers of air handling equipment in developing products and labelling systems that can be used by builders and consumers to make informed purchasing decisions. To date, residential protocols have been developed for Initial IAQ Performance of Portable Air Cleaners (PACs) and IAQ Impact of Heat and Energy Recovery Ventilators.

In the second phase, three additional technologies will be evaluated: IAQ Impact of Indoor Passive Panel Technologies (IPPT), Long-term Performance of Portable Air Cleaning Devices, and IAQ Impact of In-duct Air Cleaning Devices.

NRC Construction's leading work in indoor air quality

is embodied in the IA-Quest decision support tool, which contains a database developed from NRC-tested products. It provides the ability to predict the emissions for different building constructions and ventilation schedules. IA-Quest is being expanded to include additional building materials and emission compounds and is due for release later in 2013.

Another indoor air quality concern is the hazard posed by mould. Work is underway to develop laboratory-scale systems capable of simulating the dynamic environmental conditions found in Canadian homes and establishing boundary conditions for mould growth. Results will then be used to develop realistic environmental testing conditions suitable for evaluating the effectiveness of building material treatments aimed at preventing mould growth.

The 2010 National Building Code requires homes to be "radon ready" so that active sub-soil mitigation systems can be more easily installed should there be a positive test. The effectiveness of active sub-soil depressurisation is well known and is accepted as the best method to reduce radon concentrations in homes. NRC Construction is investigating the risk of re-introducing radon into a home or neighbouring home from exhaust air intake. In addition, the cost of operating radon ventilation systems will be assessed.

### Developing and Demonstrating Zero-Peak Houses

The objective of this completed project was to explore ways to dramatically reduce household electricity use during periods when utility-wide electricity use is at its highest. Results demonstrated that a combination of practical operational modifications (such as air conditioner cycling and doing laundry later in the evening) and commercially available technology (exterior shading, modest PV array, energy-efficient lighting) dramatically reduced the peak electrical demand from the grid on the hottest days of the year.

### Fire Safety

NRC Construction has completed a research project investigating the characteristics of residential fires and typical combustible furnishings with the goal of establishing simulation fires to be used to solve fire-safety problems. The project focused on fires that can occur in apartments, semi-detached houses, duplexes, row houses, secondary suites, and residential care facilities, as these have a potentially greater impact on adjacent suites. The results provide quantitative information on combustible contents in residential dwellings, rates of fire growth, and duration of the intense period of a fire. Designers and code authorities can draw on this comprehensive offset of data to get a better understanding of the impact of fires on various aspects of a dwelling. ■



A roof-integrated photovoltaic system (right side of roof) was installed at the Canadian Centre for Housing Technology InfoCentre.

John Burrows is an engineer and technical writer. For more information on NRC housing research, subscribe to Construction Innovation at [www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/ci-ic/](http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/ci-ic/).



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By Fanis Grammenos

Though church closures may be inescapable, there is a creative alternative to conversion or demolition: renewal.

## Church Time: Renovation and Renewal

Canadian statistics about faith and churchgoing show an institution in crisis—a crisis for the church, but a real opportunity for communities, developers and builders. Here are some foreboding clouds with a silver lining.

Until 1971 less than one percent of Canadians said they did not partake in any religion. By 2011 the number jumped to 23 percent. Church attendance numbers show the consequences of this sharp rise in absence of faith. In 1985 almost 50 per cent of women and about 37 per cent of men attended church at least once a month. A mere 20 years later the numbers are 30 per cent of women and 25 per cent for men. A similar drop occurred in Quebec in a shorter 10-year period, between 1988 and 1998: from 48 per cent to 29 per cent; almost one fifth of the population discontinued attendance.

This is not a particularly Canadian story. Compare the almost one quarter of Canadians going to church in 2011 with 5 per cent of Swedes and 3 per cent of Danes; figures may be low for Canada but it has roughly more than five times the churchgoers of Scandinavia.

With dropping congregation numbers, the church coffers can't match the expenses for running and maintaining their buildings. This is especially true for older ones with high heating costs and large maintenance bills due to the complexity of the structure and the labour-intensive detailing that must be respected. Being in financial straits and seeing mostly empty naves, parishes choose the inevitable: closure of buildings and either conversion or demolition.

The United Church of Canada closed more than 400 churches in the last decade. In Quebec, 340 places of worship have been closed, converted or demolished in the same period. All denominations experience the same trend, and the pace of closures is accelerating. Though church closures may be inescapable, there is a creative alternative to conversion or demolition: renewal.

### The Opportunity

Just as old houses can be preserved, renovated and change use, so can churches, with the added advantage of a usually central, accessible location and a memorable building image. Old large houses have been turned into fine restaurants, law and consulting offices to mention only a few use changes. But churches with their uncommon, specialized building shell offer fewer options of conversions. The neighbourhood may also object to another restaurant with its evening traffic and required parking.

When conversion is not an option, old houses and other buildings are demolished and the site redeveloped. The logic that applies to churches, however, is somewhat different: whether through conversion or demolition, a community function disappears from the neighbourhood that is essential to its vitality and vibrancy.

Is there a way to avoid this loss? Yes, growing small

and combining functions; the same strategy that the post office and banks have adopted: a small counter in a neighbourhood store, and a teller machine practically anywhere.

For a church there is no better union than with housing, particularly homes that are moderately priced for seniors or struggling families. Such a union preserves the function of the displaced building and in many cases can also retain some of its cherished interior elements and decorations that are imbued with symbolism and memories.

Such a rebirth of building and its function benefits all parties. The church continues its spiritual mission in the parish, the neighbourhood gains residents and becomes more lively, the municipality gains additional tax revenue, and the developer constructs a viable, profitable building. With smart, flexible building design and management, the church space can, in time, be used for other community functions planned or unforeseen.

There are many examples of this creative thinking. Combining uses, making unions between compatible and mutually supportive functions creates smart and viable communities. The trend is catching on and you can now see a university attached to a shopping mall in Surrey, B.C., another university on top of a Canadian Tire store in Toronto, Ont., and movie theatres or municipal libraries inside a large multi-storey, galleria-type buildings that house many functions.

The time for transformation and renewal of church buildings is ripe and an obvious opportunity to enrich communities is calling. 🏠



Church on the Hill in Boston, Mass., combines a church with an 18-storey apartment.

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>.



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## Sakiyama Construction Ltd.

# A Longstanding Winnipeg Tradition

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK



**Projects now cover the gamut, from turn-of-the-century historic homes to traditional residences and ultra-contemporary projects.**

Builders and renovators come from many different cultural and educational backgrounds, but I'd venture a guess that not too many come into the business with a degree in microbiology and chemistry. That, however, is exactly the case with **GRANT SAKIYAMA**, president of the Winnipeg, Manitoba-based award-winning **Sakiyama Construction Ltd.**

"I did end up in the family business after university," said Sakiyama. "My father would have been happy if I'd decided to go right into the family business after high school, but he also wanted me to pursue my other interests, and so he encouraged and paid for my post-secondary education at the University of Manitoba."

Grant's father would be **SHIG SAKIYAMA**, a man who was known for his quality of work, innovative design and detail. Many of his homes were featured in the Winnipeg Home Builders Association's Parade of Homes during the 1960s under the banner of **S. Sakiyama Construction**. In 1989, the company became Sakiyama Construction Limited with Shig as president and Grant as vice president. In 1992, Grant became and still remains president of Sakiyama Construction Ltd.

### Changes Through the Years

In the 1990s, Sakiyama Construction Ltd. specialized in residential and commercial remodelling; by 2000, the company's focus changed, with an emphasis on residential additions and remodelling, large complex projects, and select custom-designed homes. Projects now cover the gamut, from turn-of-the-century historic homes to traditional residences and ultra-contemporary projects. Today, Sakiyama Construction Ltd. is a designated Certified Master Renovator, a certified R2000 builder, and Grant is a Certified Renovations Professional.

Sakiyama believes designations of professionalism and related memberships are key to garnering trust with today's homeowners. "The dollar values of homes have increased significantly from 10-12 years ago and so have the cost of renovations; at that time, a huge renovation was \$300,000. Certainly that's still considered a large reno—today our renovations average \$100,000 and up—but my largest reno to date is \$2.2 million."

Regardless of the size or cost of the renovation, Sakiyama says his focus is always on problem solving, noting that "every reno has its own set of challenges; it's the ability to come up with viable solutions and implement them effectively that matters."

One thing that hasn't changed is the reason people renovate. "Historically, people love their home and their neighbourhood and they don't want to leave either," said Sakiyama.

"That was true when I started, and it's still true today. What's interesting, though, is a real shift to environmental stewardship. I routinely install energy-saving windows and lighting, low water consumption plumbing fixtures, and various high-efficiency heating systems, including some complex costly geothermal ones. Willingness to invest in these technologies certainly shows how energy efficiency has become a really important consideration."

## Making a Difference

As a longstanding member of the Manitoba Home Builders Association (MHBA), Grant was formerly on the Education and Training Committee of the MHBA. In 2012, he was the Chair of the MHBA Board of Directors.

Sakiyama has also been on the Executive of the Renovators Council of the MHBA, and currently is the Manitoba representative to the Canadian Renovators Council and the Board of Directors of the CHBA. Naturally, Sakiyama Construction is a RenoMark member.

"I've been on MHBA Renovation Council for about 14 years," said Sakiyama. "We were



one of the first adopters of RenoMark, certainly the first, if only, province-wide adopter. We decided right at the outset, as a group, to make membership in RenoMark mandatory for every renovator member of MHBA."

The focus, both at the provincial level, and the national level, is to bring public awareness to the RenoMark program. "We want to make the word RenoMark and what it stands for recognizable across Canada," said Sakiyama, "to educate the public about the advantages of our Code of Conduct vs. the risks of the underground economy."

So how is the MHBA getting the word out in Manitoba? "We have two home shows in

***This traditionally styled home now opens into a contemporary addition featuring a two-storey atrium.***

Manitoba," said Sakiyama. "The Home Expressions Show has a general focus, whereas the Kitchen and Bath Show caters to renovation. Every year we try to push RenoMark a little bit harder. We want to convey the message that we are a group of professional contractors; that we focus on things like education, current technologies and business ethics. There are things that a small business person by themselves can't do, but working together as a group, we have a strong common voice." 🏠

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# Manitoba Bold:

## *Moving Forward*



By Mike Moore, President, Manitoba HBA



The Manitoba Bold phrase was created by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce for a trade initiative, but it represents more than that; it also represents the residential construction industry as we are boldly going forward into territory where we have previously been.

In 2012, Manitoba had 7,232 new home starts, a figure unmatched since 1987. In the 1990s, Manitoba averaged 2,500 starts per year. In the early 2000s, this figure grew to just under 5,000 starts annually. However, there were no indications back then that we would be experiencing the steady growth that is happening today. This is not a one-year wonder either, as there were over 6,000 starts in 2011 and CMHC is projecting new home starts to exceed 7,000 in both 2013 and 2014.

So, what is causing this demand for new homes? Like Manitoba's economy, the answer is diversified. Our GDP growth has hovered around the 2 per cent mark for a few years and is expected to stay at that mark for a few more years. Unemployment remains well below the national average. The resale market is extremely competitive. Manitoba and Winnipeg have been sellers' markets for well over 10 years, generally averaging around 80 per cent in the sales-to-new listings ratio. Bidding wars are still the norm in the resale market, making the certainty of a stable new home price a welcome commodity. Lastly, Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program in immigration has been an overwhelming success, bringing in over 12,000 new residents a year. This has been a tremendous boost to the economy and the housing market.

### Red Flags on the Horizon

Despite all of this good news, there are a few red flags on the horizon. Land development costs are threatened by

development cost charges causing Winnipeg new home prices to increase at a rate among the nations' highest. Although the resale volume remains consistent, price increases are definitely cooling, thereby making this a less competitive market.

On April 16, the Manitoba government announced plans to increase the Provincial Sales Tax an additional 1 per cent, to 8 per cent,

### The recent Spring Parade of Homes featured 124 new homes by 37 different builders in 30 different neighbourhoods.

commencing on July 1. This will have a significant impact on the new home industry as costs for servicing land, some aspects of labour, and all materials will be impacted. There will also be additional belt-tightening as all levels of government attempt to tackle their deficits.

### New Home Warranty Act

Mandated wage increases, accessibility legislation, building and energy codes, increased taxes and additional costs for materials all contribute to higher new home costs and continue to threaten affordability in the Manitoba

market. The MHBA has been working on behalf of its membership to keep this a viable and productive market.

After many years of urging by the Manitoba Home Builders Association, the government has introduced a mandatory New Home Warranty Act. The Act should be passed this spring with regulations being developed throughout the remainder of the year. The MHBA has been extremely active in the development of all aspects of the Act and regulations. The Association has also worked very closely with the Planning Property and Development Department of the City of Winnipeg to decrease permit and inspection times.

### Parade of Homes

The recent Spring Parade of Homes featured 124 new homes by 37 different builders in 30 different neighbourhoods. This continues to be the absolute best advertising and marketing for our industry as tens of thousands of people visit the new homes over a three-week

period. The Fall Parade commences in mid-September. The Parades not only create interest in new home sales, but they also assist in promoting Manitoba's renovation industry as visitors see the latest

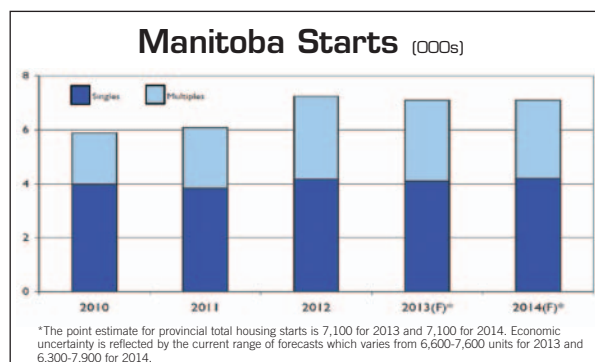
in new home products that can be added to their home.

Manitobans love to renovate. More money is spent annually on renovations than new home construction. More Winnipeggers indicated that they intended on doing a renovation in the coming year than any other city in Canada. The renovation industry continues to grow and the RenoMark brand continues to gain more recognition and acceptance.

### The Future

The CMHC crystal ball calls for a very strong and vibrant residential construction market over the next two years. In spite of occasional obstacles thrown their way, both builders and renovators continue to offer a superior product in a competitive market.

As I write this, it has been a very long winter. We are well over a month behind last year in terms of warm weather; however, we are confident that it is on the horizon. It can't come soon enough.



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# 50 Shades of Gray...

## and other 2013 kitchen and bathroom trends

As we settle into 2013, some kitchen and bath design trends continue to flourish, although consumer budgets for these projects appear to have shrunk just a bit. In the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) Design Trends Survey each year, designers are asked for the total average cost of the kitchens they design, including materials and labour. In 2010, the figure was \$44,800; in 2011, it dropped to \$40,500. In 2012, the figure rose significantly to \$51,050. The 2013 Survey witnessed another modest decline, to \$47,308.



Colour Chic

More than 300 NKBA member-designers participated in the 2013 Survey, reporting the materials, product types, and styles that they specified in their kitchen and bath designs over the final three months of 2012. While broad trends won't be evident in every local market, the following are the top overall trends that emerged for kitchens and baths across the United States and Canada:

### Cutting Edge Quartz

The use of quartz finishes has surfaced as a clear trendsetter, coming a close second to granite, with quartz coming in as the second most popular counter-surface material used in kitchens and bathrooms. Quartz significantly narrowed the gap with granite, increasing from 69 to 80 per cent in kitchens and 53 to 65 per cent in bathrooms. Granite held steady, with 87 per cent usage in kitchens and 71 per cent in bathrooms.

*Courtesy Lonetree Enterprises, Ltd. Designer Tia Moras, Co-Designer, Irena Merki. Photo by Gary Beale, B-Plus Studios, Ltd.*

### Touch-activated Faucets

Growing in popularity are touch-activated faucets, specified by 32 per cent of member designers, versus only 20 per cent of designers in 2011 and 2012. Pull-out faucets are still in the top position, as they have been since 2010, with usage rising from 88 per cent in 2010 to 94 per cent this year. Pot filler faucets grab the second spot this year, gaining five percentage points over the past year to 33 per cent.

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK



Cutting Edge Quartz

### Colour Chic

While whites and off-whites remain the top colour schemes of both kitchens and bathrooms, used in 73 per cent and 71 per cent, respectively, and beiges and bones remain the second most popular colour scheme in both rooms, gray colour schemes in both kitchens and baths have witnessed a dramatic escalation since 2010, particularly over the past year. Used currently in 55 per cent of kitchens and 56 per cent of bathrooms, shades of gray are growing in appeal, creating chic, sophisticated spaces that many consumers desire.

*Courtesy Linn's Prestige Kitchens & Baths. Designer Allison McCowan. Photo by Birdwell Photography & Multimedia.*

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White Painted Cabinetry

**22 ▶ White Painted Cabinetry**

Among painted cabinetry, white has stayed on top of the chart since last year. Given its remarkable, upward climb over the past three years, it's clearly no fad. The popularity of white-painted cabinetry jumped from 47 per cent in 2011 to 67 per cent this year.

Use of light, medium, natural and glazed finishes has remained more or less consistent over the past year.

*Courtesy Dewitt Designer Kitchens. Designer Elina Katsioulas-Beall. Photo by Suki Medencevic.*

**Trending Transitionals**

The popularity of transitional style—a seamless blend of traditional and contemporary—has expanded its lead in the kitchen, with usage growing from 59 to 69 per cent. Likewise, transitional styles in the bathroom are still positioned at number one, currently used by 61 per cent of NKBA-member designers. Traditional styles sit in second place in both rooms; contemporary designs secured a close third in the most recent poll.

*Courtesy Luxury Spa Bath by John Sylvestre. Photo by Karen Melvin Photography.*

**Satin Nickel in the Kitchen**

When it comes to faucet finishes in kitchens, satin nickel has been on the top since

2011, its usage increasing from 42 per cent in 2010 to 60 per cent this year. Bronze or oil-rubbed bronze finishes are also being specified more often, growing from 41 to 50 per cent in

the past year. The increased popularity of these three finishes most likely comes at the expense of polished nickel and polished chrome.

**Glass Backsplash**

The preference for glass splashes has grown dramatically over the past three years: from 42 per cent in 2010 to 64 per cent this year. At the same time, while natural stone tile showed consistent growth during 2011 and 2012, usage dropped from 60 to 55 per cent in the latest survey. Ceramic or porcelain tiles held top position for the third consecutive year.

**Ceramic/Porcelain Flooring**

Ceramic or porcelain tile flooring has been in slight decline over the past two years, but it remains the most popular of all materials in bathrooms, specified by 83 per cent of the survey participants.

**Undermount Sink**

While the latest NKBA Survey indicates that undermount sinks have dropped from 94 per cent to 87 per cent, they continue to be the most specified type of bathroom sink, not just in the latest poll, but over the past three years. Integrated sink/tops have seen modest growth. 🏠

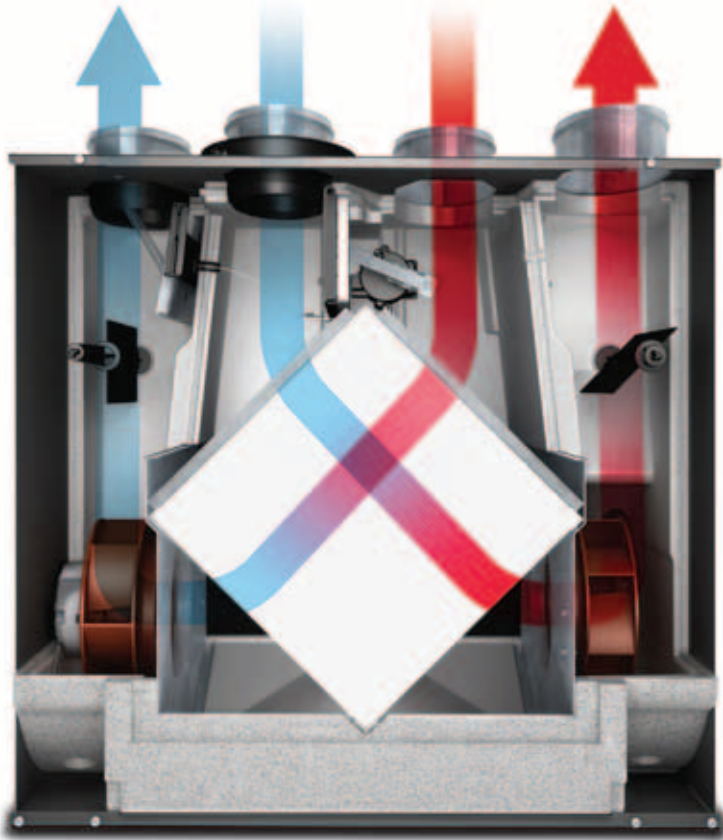


Trending Transitionals



# ERV UNDERSTANDING

BY JON EAKES



VENMAR - ERV EKO 1.5

## *The underutilized tool in ventilation strategies*

Both the HRV (Heat Recovery Ventilator) and the ERV (Energy Recovery Ventilator) were developed together in the early 1980s with the promise that the HRV would dehumidify the tightly sealed house. The ERV promised to do the same job while returning 50 per cent of the moisture back to where it came from, thus not drying out a house too much.

Unfortunately, because ERVs actually retained moisture in their exchange cores, they quickly self-destructed with Canada's freezing temperatures. ERVs literally disappeared from Canada, but became the ventilation mainstay in the hot humid air conditioning climate of Florida. They worked just the opposite down there, keeping outdoor moisture outdoors, thus keeping humidity levels in the air-conditioned house lower, easier to cool, and more comfortable. And they never froze.

In the meantime up in Canada we sealed houses so the indoor relative humidity went

up, and we ventilated the houses with HRVs so the relative humidity went down, sometimes so far down that we needed to put humidifiers back into operation. We built bigger houses with fewer people and they got too dry, while smaller houses with large families got too wet.

Obviously we needed more air control options. In 1995, 15 years after its initial development, this technology came back to Canada when **Venmar** concluded some serious research into creating an ERV that could stand up to freeze/thaw conditions and they brought out their Duo Thermal Wheel ERV, followed a

few years later by their EKO Cross Flow ERVs.

Although it has been 18 years since the ERV has come back to freezing Canada, few contractors understand them enough to know when they might actually be the preferred ventilation strategy.

### **Many ERVs Won't Work in Canada**

Although today there are more than 40 companies making ERVs, you must be very careful to check the Home Ventilating Institute (HVI) listings to identify the few models that are rated to last for 10 years at temperatures down to -25C. For several years Venmar had the only unit capable of doing that, although now there are a few more on the market.

### **Understanding the Technology**

During the Canadian winter an HRV recuperates heat from the outgoing stale air and transfers it to the incoming fresh air, bringing their two temperatures close to the same levels, even though the outgoing air is moist and the incoming air is dry. An ERV does some of the same temperature transfer, but also brings over warm moisture into the fresh air stream.

### **We have discovered that the ideal ventilation for any given house was far more variable than previously thought.**

Leaving more humidity in the house is only part of the story. There is energy stored in that moisture. Very little energy is required to bring this moisture up to room temperature compared to cold vapour coming off a humidifier that just soaks up energy from the space heating system. An ERV recuperates a great deal of "embodied energy" or what is called enthalpy or latent heat, and that is where a good part of its energy recovery comes from. Wet or dry air at the same temperature is much like a cast iron fry pan and a sheet of aluminum foil, both at the same temperature. The massive fry pan has enough energy stored in it to cook your skin; the aluminum foil will be cooled instantly when you touch it because there is little mass to store energy.

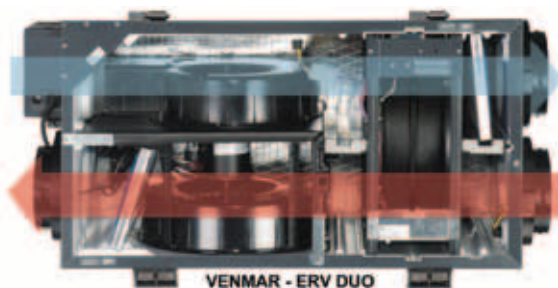
The ERV comes in two basic types: Thermal Wheels that rotate slowly through the two air flow streams, like the DUO; and Cross Flow cores like the EKO, that look like those used in

▶ 26

25 ▶ a traditional HRV. They both transfer about 80 per cent of the air temperature, while the more massive thermal wheel will recuperate 75-80 per cent of the latent energy in the moisture and the cross flow design 65-70 per cent.

The shift in core technology is most noticeable when comparing the smooth channels of a cross flow HRV to the rough fibrous channels of the cross flow ERV. You can see my red tool box on the other side of the HRV core, and barely make out a flashlight beam peeking through the ERV core.

The Venmar EKO 1.5 ERV is an interesting unit to illustrate the technology. One unique feature of this unit is that Venmar has built it so that the ERV core could be exchanged for an HRV core in the same installed machine—both being cross flow exchangers. That could be



good indicator of indoor pollutants and was used to establish our norms for ventilation rates. But sometimes those official ventilation rates caused problems of their own—from drying out the house to introducing pollution from outside the house that was worse than what was initially inside—and the occupants simply turned the units off. With time, experience and better sealed houses, we have discovered that the ideal ventilation for any given house was far more variable than previously thought.

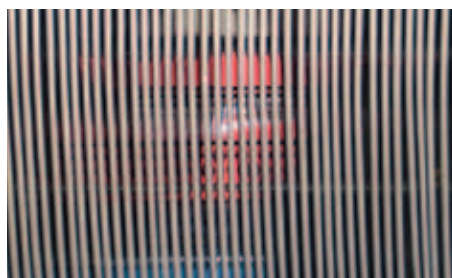
Some even question our established ventilation calculation formulas. A recent study published by BuildGreenAdvisor.com, *Ventilation Rates and Human Health*, asked the question: “Have researchers found any connection between residential ventilation rates and occupant health?” The answer was there were not very many studies on the subject and some of them said there was no relationship between the two. Joseph Lstiburek, with his typical frankness, put forward that with a lack of scientific basis for ventilation rates we would be far better off starting by controlling

pollution sources. Many cases were also cited where outdoor air was worse than indoor air and any ventilation only polluted the house. I only mention those thoughtful reflections to point out how much each house needs to be studied on its own.

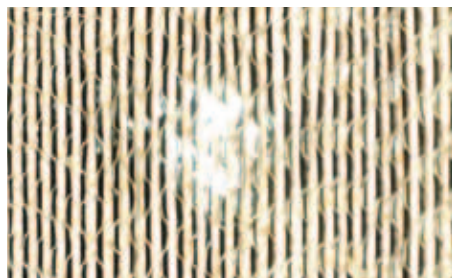
No builder can provide a specific ventilation rate to a house; he can only provide a planned ventilation potential and then, if it works well for that house, the occupants may actually use it.

A healthy air quality strategy is far more than just choosing the model of air exchanger. It is minimizing the need for ventilation by reducing pollution sources, providing point of pollution extraction, maximizing air circulation throughout the house and then taking into account the building’s outdoor environment and the lifestyles of the occupants. Using automated control systems, some measuring outdoor temperatures, others measuring pollution levels, but all offering easily variable ventilation speeds, help these machines to adapt to daily reality and user demands.

Now that cold weather technology has been proven for the ERV, you really do have one more tool to design ventilation strategies that specifically suit your individual customer. Just make sure that you install an ERV that is HVI certified for 10 years down to -25C and not a Florida import.



Cross flow HRV core



Cross flow ERV core

particularly useful if the occupational loads on the house were to change, such as from a quiet retired couple to a growing family and much more moisture. Or if an indoor hot tub were added to the house and now dehumidification were necessary. Or you just didn’t know which unit to choose in the first place. Or to the extreme of using the HRV core in the winter and then the ERV core for the air conditioning season, effectively choosing both machines.

## How Much Ventilation Should We Have?

For a long time it has been assumed that CO<sub>2</sub>, generated by human breathing, was a

## Put Your Best New Product Forward!

It’s that’s time again: *Home BUILDER Magazine* is asking for submissions for your company’s best new product, to be showcased in July 2013 in our Annual New Products issue.

**What we’re looking for:** New, innovative products, tools, materials and technologies of interest to professional builders and renovators. Products must have been released for purchase AFTER July 2012, but can include upcoming releases for 2013. Products must be widely available in Canada.

**What we’re not looking for:** A new colour is not considered a new product. We’re also not interested in anything that targets the DIY market. Our readers are professionals and we ask that you respect that.

**How to submit:** Submissions should be 200 words or less, single-spaced in Word document format, using Times New Roman 12-point font. Please: no logos, embedded images or fancy fonts. Since we reserve the right to edit and format your submission to our specifications, PDF documents will absolutely not be considered. Do not submit images unless requested. All submissions will be acknowledged as “Received.” Submissions that do not follow the submission criteria will be returned.

**When to submit:** Submissions deadline is June 10. Late submissions will not be considered. The decision on what products will be included will be made AFTER June 10 once all submissions are in. Emailing for an update will not put your product ahead of the rest.

**Notification process:** Successful applicants will be asked for *one* hi-resolution image to support the document. Note that preference will be given to members of CHBA or a provincial/regional HBA. While we are grateful for all submissions, due to space constraints and the high number of expected submissions, not all products can be selected.

**Where to submit:** Send your submission via email to Judy Penz Sheluk at editor@work4.ca. Please copy HomeBuilder@work4.ca.





**Deep Shergill**  
President, CHBA

Our industry  
needs  
new young  
workers.

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## Federal Budget: Lots to Work With!

Somewhat to my surprise, it was a pleasure to read the Federal Budget this spring. Yes, it was a bit of a slog at 433 pages—but as I turned those pages, I found myself nodding in agreement time and time again.

Infrastructure investment, more skilled trades, support for manufacturers, reduced regulatory burden ... these are initiatives that the Canadian Home Builders' Association has called for, and welcomes wholeheartedly! As well, there is a new emphasis on the connections between programs, and the need for consultation to make sure they are practical, efficient—and “transformational”.

And this Budget is also fiscally prudent.

I can tell you that this is a great time for me and your other Board members to be attending federal meetings. We've already got the government's agreement on a number of goals, and now can concentrate on making sure these get implemented, in practical and effective ways. Here are some of the top features:

### Long-term Infrastructure Plans and Funding

This is very welcome. Federal leadership and funding are vital to allow provinces, territories and municipalities to plan and deliver infrastructure efficiently and responsibly. It has been a key element of CHBA policy for years.

The Budget builds on earlier programs with a new 10-year plan and investments that focus on projects promoting productivity and economic growth. Its total of \$70 billion in federal investment includes:

- over \$47 billion of new funding over 10 years in support of infrastructure projects, starting in 2014–15:
  - \$21.8 billion for municipalities under the Gas Tax Fund, with new 2%-per-year indexing, more flexibility, and expanded categories
  - \$10.4 billion under the incremental GST Rebate for Municipalities for local priorities in investment, maintenance and/or operating
  - \$14 billion for a new Building Canada Fund to replace the one ending in 2014 and support major economic projects of national, regional and local significance
  - \$1.25 billion for the renewal of the P3 Canada Fund
- \$6 billion from current programs that continue into 2014
- \$7 billion for First Nations projects
- over \$10 billion for federal public infrastructure

The government will encourage provinces and municipalities to use life-cycle cost assessments and robust capital asset management plans. There will be a review in 2018–19, to see how well objectives are being met.

CHBA has argued strongly in favour of this approach. As major stakeholders and funders of local infrastructure, we will be closely involved in these developments.

### New Support for Jobs and Training Apprenticeship

The federal government is changing its own procurement approach to support the use of apprentices in federal construction and maintenance contracts. It is also going to ensure similar measures for federally subsidized housing projects, and encourage them in provincial and municipal infrastructure projects that receive federal funding.

The Budget includes \$4 million over three years to “work with provinces and territories to harmonize requirements for apprentices, and look at practical tests as a method of assessment in targeted skilled trades.” This should encourage mobility and cut down the drop-out rate.

Our industry needs new young workers. The CHBA is working hard to make sure these practical, effective changes get implemented.

### Proposed Job Grant

The new Canada Job Grant is designed to create a direct connection between skills training, employers and labour market demand. Businesses with training plans would apply for the grants, benefits would go to the trainees. Training could include community colleges, career colleges, trade union training centres, etc.

Details are to be negotiated with the provinces, in consultation with employer associations, educational institutions and labour organizations. As proposed, the federal government would provide up to \$5,000 per person, which would have to be matched by both the province and the employer, for a total of \$15,000 per person.

This requires a “transformation” of the \$500 million per year Labour Market Agreements and renegotiation of existing Labour Market Development Agreements with provinces.

CHBA has put forward a strong case for more transparency in those Agreements, to make sure investments are working properly. We are a long-time supporter of matching training to job market needs. As a major employer group, we have a keen interest in these consultations.

### Foreign Workers

There have been some eye-popping stories of misuse of Canada's temporary foreign worker provisions. So it didn't come as a surprise that the Budget included measures to tighten them up. But the Budget also acknowledged that there are industries like ours who rely on these workers because Canadians genuinely cannot fill the jobs. And it offered to help build up the Canadian workforce over time.

We are a long-time supporter of matching training to job market needs.

## 27 ▶ Immigration

The government also promised to do the following this year:

- re-open the Federal Skilled Worker Program with an updated points system recognizing things like language proficiency and youth
- create a new “Expression of Interest” system so employers can select skilled immigrants from a pool of applicants
- support improvements to the foreign credential recognition processes

## Fighting the Underground Economy

The Budget also commits Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to transforming its income tax compliance systems, using advanced data analysis to identify non-compliance and teams of specialists to pursue tax evaders. The CHBA welcomes this opportunity to work with the Agency to get at the underground cash economy. The only real value of the Contract Payment Reporting System is to identify locations to target. Let’s use it.

## Support for Manufacturing Industries

The new home building and renovation industries will certainly benefit from a stronger manufacturing sector. Welcome initiatives include:

- a two-year extension to the accelerated capital cost allowance for new investment in manufacturing machinery and equipment, estimated to provide \$1.4 billion tax relief
- targeted support for key industries and regions
- investment in new research and development

## Renewed Affordable Housing Initiative

The Budget includes \$1.25 billion over five years (\$253 million per year) to renew bilateral Affordable Housing Initiative programs, where the provinces provide matching funds. The money can be used for targeted investments to increase accessibility and affordability of housing for those in need. This includes shelter allowances, which the CHBA very much supports.

As mentioned above, the program will support use of apprentices; The CHBA recommends it also require Energy Star certification to lower ongoing operational costs.

## Other Highlights

- Commitment to reduce taxes and red tape
  - increasing the lifetime capital gains exemption to \$800,000, indexed to inflation
  - providing electronic services, adopting a standard federal/provincial/municipal business number, and one-window approach for information collection
- Support for key departments and agencies
  - continued investment in the National Research Council (NRC) and its new strategic focus to help grow innovative businesses in Canada (\$121

million over two years)

- \$20 million pilot program to help small and medium-sized enterprises bring innovations to market through the Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC-IRAP)
- affirmation of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and its important role in mortgage insurance and covered bonds

I’m looking forward to good, worthwhile joint efforts with the federal government towards these laudable goals.



## Canada Post Update

At all three levels, CHBA continues in its strong opposition to the new Canada Post community mailbox “fee.” Latest developments on this tax grab by Canada Post include a Canada Post representative having to retract statements made in Alberta that the fee was approved by Minister Denis Lebel. Now Canada Post claims that the Minister was simply “advised” of the new fee.

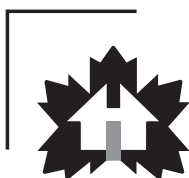
CHBA President Deep Shergill has written to Minister Lebel questioning the authority of Canada Post to charge new home buyers millions of dollars each year, without any apparent government approval or oversight. He has requested another meeting with the Minister to pursue this issue further.

## Concern over Impact of New Trade Agreements on Residential Construction Industry

As Canada moves forward in its negotiations toward a Canada-European Union Trade Agreement, the CHBA has raised concerns about how this could undermine Canada’s Codes and Standards system. Harmonization with European product standards could undermine the robust Canadian standards system, and potentially create challenges related to quality and costs. The CHBA has requested that the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes determine what impacts a new Canada-E.U. trade agreement might have, and how any adverse effects can be addressed, before problems arise.

## Economic Impact Estimates

An update of estimates of economic impacts of the residential construction industry to reflect activity during 2012 has been released by the CHBA. The figures were prepared by Will Dunning Inc. based on Statistics Canada and CMHC data. The estimates and associated fact sheets by local HBA are available in the Members’ area of [www.chba.ca](http://www.chba.ca).



## Renovation Across Canada: Findings from the 2013 Houzz & Home Survey

Houzz and Edge Research conducted an online survey among registered users of the website in mid-January to mid-February 2013, emailing invitations to take the survey. There were 11,090 Canadian respondents.

**Q: When choosing a professional to work on remodeling or decorating in your home, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 is very important, how important are each of the following?**

Hiring Criteria	% Rating "Very Important"
Good reviews & recommendations	76%
Expert in their field	65%
Personality I can work with	70%
Completed projects like mine	55%
Lowest cost option	8%

Key findings were:

- While the economy remains a factor, most homeowners surveyed have projects planned over the next two years, nearly half have major building and renovation projects planned, and significantly fewer say they are delaying projects because of the economy vs. last year. However only 48 per cent of Canadian homeowners believe now is a good time to buy a home.
- Bathrooms and kitchens remain the top priority projects across Canada, and capture the lion's share of renovation dollars. Over the last five years, Canadian Houzz users spent an average of \$24,912 on kitchen remodels, and \$10,127 on bathroom renovations.
- The motivation behind both renovation and decorating projects is still overwhelmingly to improve the look, feel, flow or layout of the home, but more people this year are also investing to increase home value vs. last year, a positive sign for the housing market.
- A majority of homeowners planning major home renovation or decoration projects in the next two years are also planning to hire professional help. Most expect to do some work themselves, such as sourcing products and materials. In what is likely a sign of this partnership approach, respondents cited "Having a personality I can work with" as one of the most important criteria when hiring a professional to do work on their home.

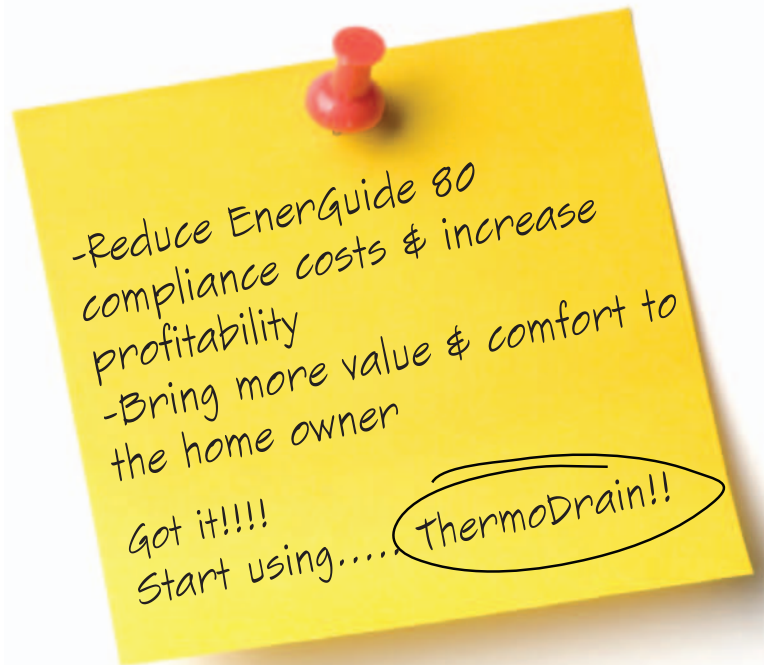
For more information, visit [www.houzz.com](http://www.houzz.com).



## Newfoundland and Labrador Get RenoMark

ST. JOHN'S — The Home Builders' Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (CHBA-NL) has recently signed on to RenoMark. Although CHBA-NL has only just begun promoting the designation to its membership through its monthly membership luncheons, the website, E-newsletter and social media, the uptake is growing as contractors are realizing how important the certification is to enhancing their credibility.

The CHBA-NL is planning an official launch for Summer 2013 by undertaking a multimedia campaign to reach out to consumers throughout the province. To learn more about how the CHBA-NL is promoting this program to members and consumers, visit: [www.chbanl.ca](http://www.chbanl.ca)



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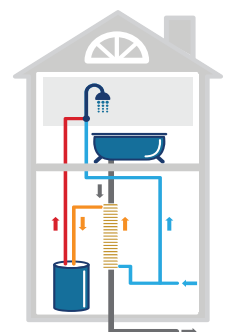
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## Portable, Powerful Universal Dust Extraction

Dust extraction with hammer drills can be essential for you when working overhead and important for occupants when driving anchors in an occupied condo. Up to now we have had some tubes with cumbersome vac hoses but **Milwaukee** has introduced the first universal autonomous dust extractor.

It is universal because it comes with three different-sized collar rings so it replaces the standard side handle on almost any SDS hammer drill. The Milwaukee collars have a



clamping device on the other side of the handle strap that clips quickly on or off of the vacuum attachment, automatically lining up the drill with the collector ring and instantly liberating your drill when you don't need to control the dust. The dust catcher ring is on the end of a telescopic holder that has a push button adjustment for your bit length, working best with 6" SDS bits, and its own quick set depth stop. The vacuum is tiny but powerful, running off of a standard 12v Milwaukee battery. The HEPA filter and collection bucket are right onboard to give you total mobility, no sloppy bag and instant dumping.

The On/Off/Auto control can automatically activate the vac motor when the drill begins to advance and stays on a few seconds after pulling back—clearing out the dust in the collector head. I tried it on red brick just to see if any dust got to the ground at all: perfectly clean. It adds three pounds to your drill but gives you clean work, mobility and instant change over. They call it the M12 HAMMERVAC Dust Extractor—and it works.



## Convenience

Some drills have bit clips, **Porter Cable** has added strong magnets, but here is an odd but very useful little piggyback idea from **Malco Products.com**. The Driver Bit Pouch Strap uses elastic bands to hold the sturdy four-slot carrier on the side of any drill driver—right on-board but up and out of the way—and the bits never fall out.

The Designcord is an extension cord / buss bar with lots of useful features. It is a 52' 12AWG 20 amp extension cable with an auto rewind reel. The four outlets don't move, have dust and water protection caps as well as both overheating and over-current resettable protection. The rewind mechanism has entrance roller guides and reciprocating winding guides for smooth in and out. Available in many renovation centers, you can also find it at **Task-Tools.com**.



## A Difference You Can SEE, not just FEEL

There is something reassuring about looking right through the handle to see the solid high impact steel core of **Irwin Marples** new worksite chisels, continuous from the extra large hammer cap to the hardened steel blade. Marples has decided to expose their durability, while still giving you a comfortable split-proof acetate handle. These new chisels have a very good feel to them, and you can actually see their strength.



## Blade of the Month

My Blade of the Month has to go to **Milwaukee** for thinking small. They have just brought out the two SMALLEST reciprocating saw blades on the market. I guess that just had to happen as in the last few years small mobile cordless reciprocating saws have come on the market from many manufacturers. But whether you are using a large or conveniently small recip saw, these two blades have very good reason for being in your tool box.



The Milwaukee 48-00-1640 DRYWALL blade is specifically designed to just barely cut through 5/8" drywall—leaving all the wires and pipes totally safe on the other side! Take a look at that weird top/bottom tooth design. It won't cut anything but drywall, but it cuts in both directions and turns 90 degrees dead on in the corner. Its short length makes plunging easy as well.



The Milwaukee 48-00-1630 DUCTWORK blade is made for sheet metal ductwork including circles or other shapes. Generally a recip saw would be out of the question for ductwork, but this blade's very fine teeth don't let the sheet metal vibrate and its short length won't whip on the other side. There is a certain width to the blade, so if you try to make too tight a curve it will cut well but bend in the outer portion of the curve a bit—not quite as clean a cut as a nibbler for circles, but a lot cheaper. Here too, the short length leaves it enough strength to plunge easily without a starter hole.



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](http://www.JonEakes.com)



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# The Good Old Days

## Leading-edge Technology & Design: 1876 Version

BY JOHN G. SAYERS

Ephemera, by the strictest dictionary definition, is “something that is transitory and without lasting significance,” but as someone who has collected ephemera for many years, I beg to differ. For the beauty of ephemera is that, while it was never meant to last, those pieces that have lasted allow us to look back, and therefore better assess where we are today.

As soon as I saw this *Scientific American*, dated June 17, 1876, I was captivated. It was the U.S. Centennial year, and a feature article within profiled what was referred to as the Centennial Exposition. Of most significant importance in 2013 was a small advertisement under the title of Foreign Patents and The Centennial.

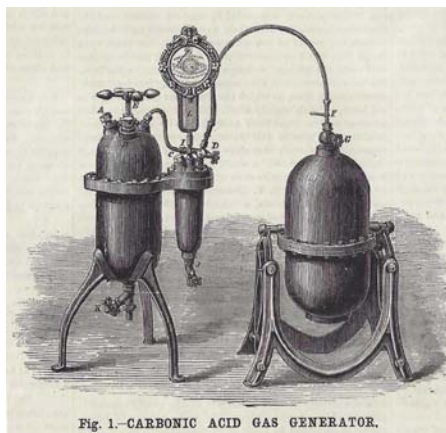
The ad noted: “There is no doubt that our Centennial Exposition will attract to our shores multitudes of representative people from all parts of the world. An unusual opportunity will be offered for selling to these people such foreign patents as have been secured on good American inventions in the respective countries from which these visitors come.”

So “good old American ingenuity” is long-established, and persists within the cultural mores of this country and our neighbours to the south to this day. But what type of ingenuity?

### The Carbonic Acid Gas Generator

A Carbonic Acid Gas Generator, illustrated, looks like a Rube Goldberg invention—seven years before Goldberg was born. The article notes that scientific work on carbonic acid dates back to the beginning of the 17th century.

The article further reports that an “indus-



trial application of carbonic acid is in the manufacture of aerated bread. In ordinary bread, the yeast produces a fermentation by which carbonic acid is evolved, which gives to bread its spongy character. The same thing is accomplished without yeast by forcing carbonic acid gas under pressure into the dough.” Hello! This sounds like some of the processes being criticized in today’s food processing industry.

### A Modern Villa Residence

In addition to the carbonic acid gas generator, *Scientific American* carried an article



on Improved County Homes. A Modern Villa Residence, illustrated here, “has a nearly symmetrical front. Individuality is given to the detail by using panels and bands, covered in cut shingles in place of clapboards, on rough boarding. The roof is also covered in shingles; and both those of the roof and bands are painted in deeper tints than the main woodwork. The finish of the interior is to be in white ash and butternut. The estimated cost of the house is about \$8,000.”

This writer’s reaction is that \$8,000 is more than double what my parents paid for their first house many, many decades later. I doubt whether this house would be affordable by many people of that era. White ash? Butternut? So that’s what happened to our forests.

The principles of leading-edge technology over 130 years ago presage the issues of today. We need to continue to innovate, to protect the intellectual properties of our designs and inventions, and to be mindful of our environment and natural resources. A reminder from 137 years ago: just one thing ephemera can teach us. 🏠

*John G. Sayers is in his 7th year on the Board of The Ephemera Society of America, and his 5th year on the Council of the British Ephemera Society. He can be reached at [jasayers@saybuck.com](mailto:jasayers@saybuck.com).*

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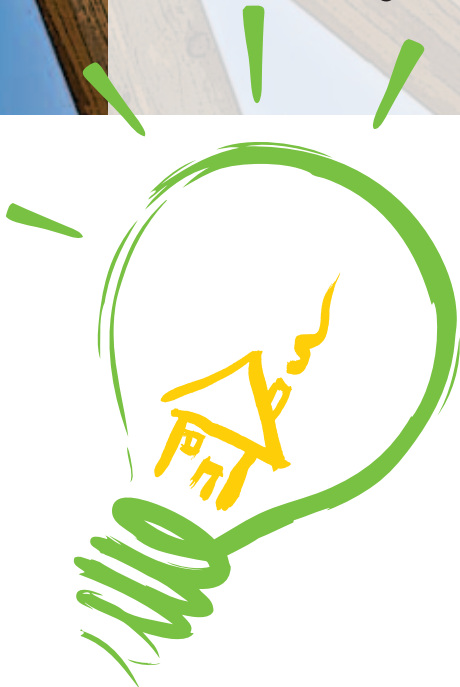
Home BUILDER Magazine delivers results like no other magazine in the residential construction industry:

- 🏠 More than 100,000 readers eagerly read every issue in search for advice and contacts.
- 🏠 100% of renovators and contractors found new information or products.
- 🏠 86% of all builders found new information or products.
- 🏠 Renovators, contractors and builders all refer to web links, find new suppliers and purchase products as a direct result of Home BUILDER; more than 80% took two or more such actions.

*Home BUILDER Magazine: Readers, Referrals, Results*



For more information on Readership Survey, please contact the publisher of Home Builder Magazine.



## Next Issue: July/August **New Products Showcase**

The 12th Annual Product Showcase shines a spotlight on the latest in building materials, new products, technology and tools.

See page 26 for editorial submissions details.



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**CALENDAR**

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**May 22-26**  
CSC Conference 2013  
Construction Specifications Canada  
Calgary, AB  
www.csc-dcc.ca/Conferences

**May 30**  
CHBA Technical Research Committee  
Ottawa, ON  
www.chba.ca

**May 30-June 1**  
Fenestration Canada Annual Meeting 2013 (formerly CWDMA)  
St. John's, NF  
www.fenestrationcanada.ca

**June 4-6**  
CaGBC National Conference and Expo  
Canada Green Building Council  
Vancouver, BC  
www.cagbc.org

**Construction Looking Forward**

OTTAWA — A recently released forecast of labour supply and demand says construction will need to recruit more than 250,000 workers, including the traditional number of new entrants to the workforce, to meet building needs from now until 2021.

A large portion of this need (about 210,000) is to replace retiring workers, according to the Construction Looking Forward, National Summary, 2013-2021, published by the Construction Sector Council.

The full national and regional reports are available online at [www.constructionforecasts.ca/products](http://www.constructionforecasts.ca/products).

**Owens Corning Canada Awarded EnerQuality 2012 “Industry Partner of the Year”**

TORONTO — Owens Corning Canada has received the prestigious EnerQuality award for the 2012 Industry Partner of the Year in recognition of their forward thinking and reputation of delivering cost effective solutions to the builder community year after year.

ANDY GOYDA, market development manager, Insulating Systems Business, Owens Corning Canada, was presented with the award by Andrew Pride, Vice President, Conservation, Ontario Power Authority at the 2012 Awards of Excellence Ceremony held on February 21, 2013, during the Ontario Home Builders’ Association and EnerQuality’s Builder & Renovator Forum in Collingwood.

**CaGBC Announces Affordable Green Housing Program**

OTTAWA — The Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) has announced its new Affordable Green Housing Program, which will provide free green building registration and certification to charitable building projects. Working with charitable housing groups like Habitat for Humanity, these free registrations and certifications will be administered by the CaGBC under the internationally-recognized Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building certification program, which addresses homes as well as a broad range of other building types.

The first project to take advantage of the Affordable Green Housing Program is the Sir Sam Steele project, a group of 32 homes that have been built by Habitat for Humanity Manitoba.

**YOUR OPINION MATTERS**

The following letter was received in response to “Mandatory WSIB Coverage Combats the Underground Economy,” *Industry News*, page 37, March 2013. JPS.

At a time when the Ontario Home Builders’ Association (OBHA) and local HBA’s have been fighting this bill and the ramifications of its exact scope, I find it absolutely appalling that you would publish what I consider to be propaganda.

I have asked a number of times how adding premiums to an already tax burdened industry will curb the underground economy. If the Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS) and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) do not understand the economics of the world, they should at least have the decency to provide us all with the evidence they rely upon on and authenticate its validity.

First and foremost, increasing the cost to provide for these extra taxes will simply further exaggerate the line between legitimate business and those who operate solely in the underground economy, and will force some legitimate businesses to cross that line to survive.

Let’s look at who this legislation effects: the legitimate construction companies that already follow the proper guidelines for which there are clear and accurate paper trails, including notice of project dictated by the Ministry of Labour (MOL), building permits dictated by the Municipal codes, frequent MOL inspections, tax information such as T4’s, subcontractor payment reports and filings T5018’s— the list is endless. We are required as individual workers to carry all necessary certification such as fall arrest, WHIMIS, confined spaces etc. The “illegitimate” business operators merely avoid playing by the rules.

So let us review this once again. Is this legislation designed to curb the underground economy? I think not. Whoever is responsible for publishing this information in this magazine should have first looked deeper into the issue or at the very least sought the opinion of the membership.

Sean Keane

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Altus Group Limited.....	32	877-953-9948	www.altusgroup.com
BELL Mobility.....	23	866-235-5249	www.bell.ca
BlazeMaster, The Lubrizol Corp. ....	7	855-735-1431	www.blazemaster.com
Delta Faucet.....	3	800-567-3300	www.deltafaucet.ca
EcoInnovation Technologies Inc. ....	29	888-881-7693	www.ecoinnovation.ca
GE Appliances - Commercial Sales ....	15	800-361-2500	www.geappliances.ca
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Intertek.....	35	800-967-5352	www.intertek.com
JELD-WEN of Canada.....	35	204-510-4745	www.jeld-wen.ca
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For the first time, the Willmar Sliding Patio Door is available in tripane for better performance and soundproofing. Additional options see Blinds Between Glass for protection against harmful rays and 10 brickmould colour choices. Standard features include dual point lock, white handle, sliding screen and two colour options.

For more information on the new Willmar Collection patio door, contact your local **JELD-WEN** dealer or visit [www.jeld-wen.ca](http://www.jeld-wen.ca).

**New Screws for Log-Home Construction**

The Simpson Strong-Tie® Strong-Drive® SDWS line of screws has been expanded to include longer lengths designed for log-home construction. These .220" and .195" diameter structural fasteners require less torque to install than comparable fasteners. The large .750" diameter head pulls logs down easily, eliminating the need to use extra washers. In addition, the SDWS features a patented 4CUT™ tip that ensures fast starts and eliminates the need for pre-drilling in most applications, and serrated threads that reduce log splitting. The fasteners are available in black and lengths up to 15 inches.



For more product information, contact: **Simpson Strong-Tie**  
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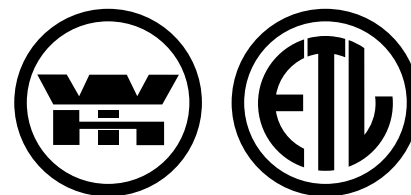


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