

# BUILDER



THE MAGAZINE OF THE CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION



**Economics:**

## **A Brighter Outlook**

**How to Choose a Pickup Truck**

**Tackling the Shortage of  
Development Land**

**Market Report: Alberta —  
Still Going Strong**

**Selecting The Right  
Accounting Software**

**Tool Talk: Apps & Applications**

**Window Installation Details  
for Effective Sealing**

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Cross Cuts in Corrugated or Box Pattern Metal Roofing?

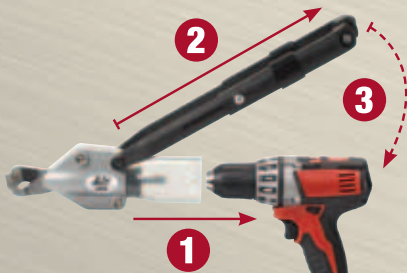
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Before he was a credit to his community, contractor Seymour DesRoches needed credit, period. Over 30 years ago, current Home Owner Ron MacDonald was just a teenager working at Callbecks Home Hardware Building Centre when they offered Seymour credit as he was starting out. Now Seymour DesRoches Construction Ltd. is Callbecks' largest volume account, Ron owns Callbecks Home Hardware Building Centre, and Seymour recommends them to all his subcontractors. Together, they've helped build new homes – including Ron's – as well as condo developments, potato warehouses and more.

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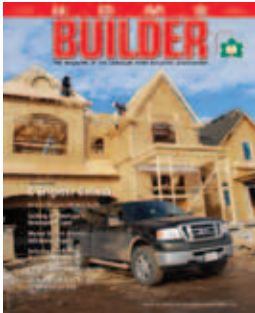
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New home construction in Oakville, Ont.  
Photo by Kelvin Chan.

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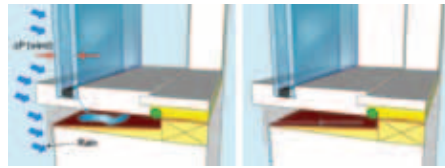
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In the past, pickup trucks were pretty basic, without a ton of options to choose from, and they all looked somewhat similar. Things have definitely changed.

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From Bluetooth to blades, Jon Eakes reviews the latest in tools and technology.

## NEXT ISSUE: March/April Annual Renovation Issue / Kitchens & Baths

Our popular Renovation issue looks at what's hot and cold in building design and renovation, from kitchens and bathrooms to basements, bedrooms and beyond.



27  
YEAR

HOME  
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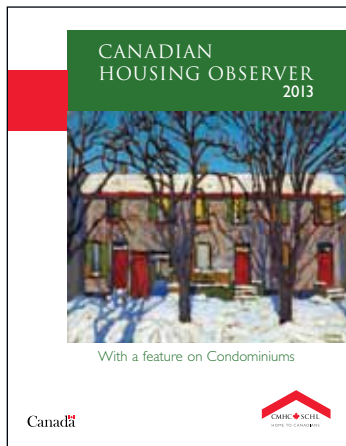
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## Tighter Rental Apartment Markets Positive for Alberta Home Builders

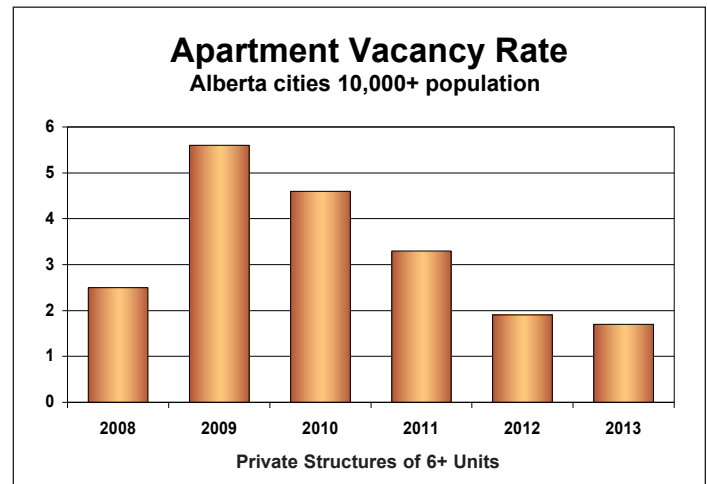
EDMONTON — CMHC's fall 2013 Alberta rental market survey, released December 2013, contained more good news for the province's home building industry, according to **RICHARD GOATCHER**, Economic Analyst, CHBA – Alberta.

"Throughout Alberta, a growing economy, strong job creation and high levels of in-migration are boosting demand for rental housing," noted Goatcher. "Vacancies in the available rental pool are heading downward and this scarcity is sending rents skyward. Calgary and Edmonton, at 1.0 and 1.4 per cent respectively, reported some of the lowest apartment vacancy rates among major cities across the country. In two-bedroom apartments in Alberta's cities, the average rent increased by 6.1 per cent in 2013, compared with a 4.3 per cent gain in October 2012. Higher rents will encourage more tenants to consider homeownership in the coming months. This, in turn, will help to support home prices and bolster consumer sentiment."

## Canadian Housing Observer 2013 Released



OTTAWA — CMHC's Canadian Housing Observer, published yearly since 2003, provides an in-depth review of housing conditions and trends in Canada, and describes the key factors that influence these developments. The report discusses condominiums, housing finance and markets, demographic and socio-economic influences on housing demand, housing affordability and core housing need, and sustainable housing and communities – industrialized housing. It includes national coverage and provincial/territorial and metropolitan detail. The report is complemented by a suite of on-line data resources and tools, which include data down to the local level. Download the 184-page PDF at [www.cmhc.ca](http://www.cmhc.ca).



## A Tale of Four Cities

TORONTO — BMO Economics has released Canadian Housing Update: *Tale of Four Cities*, a special report on the housing market in Canada's four largest cities: Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Montreal. Here are the results of the BMO Housing Market Scorecard Status:

### Calgary: "Sellers" Market

After correcting several years ago, Calgary has regained its title as the strongest major housing market in the country. In the three months to October, home sales ran 23 per cent above year-ago levels—nearly twice the national rate. Despite heady price gains, valuations remain reasonable, with prices about four times median family income and mortgage service costs consuming a manageable 23 per cent of earnings.

### Toronto: "Balanced" Market

In Canada's largest housing market, sales are up 20 per cent year over year in the three months to October, and stand 9 per cent above past decade norms. After plunging last year, new condo sales have firmed, but remain well below the past decade norm.

For the most part, markets are balanced, but sellers rule and bidding wars prevail in some areas where listings are scarce.

### Vancouver: "Balanced" Market

Buyers held the upper hand in 2012, but the pendulum has swung toward balance. At the lowest point, sales were down 33 per cent year over year, but have since pole-vaulted 50 per cent to near-normal levels. New home inventories are only moderately above long-term norms. Affordability is still a challenge, with benchmark prices topping eight-times family income. For young buyers, condos will remain an affordable option, as prices have fallen slightly in the past year and are little changed from six years ago.

### Montreal: "Buyers" Market

While sales are still below past-decade norms, Montreal's housing market has also improved. Sales have risen 2 per cent in the past year, with support from decent affordability and job growth countering midling population gains. An upswing in new listings has kept buyers in the driver's seat, unlike the other major cities. Despite appreciating 155 per cent since 2001, affordability remains healthy. Benchmark prices run at four times family income.

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## NSHBA Launches Black Business Initiative Pilot Program

HALIFAX — There is nothing like the new year to kick off the start of a pilot program—one that will help reduce the skilled trades shortage in Nova Scotia while having a positive impact on the students by providing sustainable employment in their communities.

In the fall of 2013, the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association (NSHBA) met with the Black Business Initiative (BBI) to discuss the opportunity to provide a 12-week training course for some of its participants who were seriously interested in the renovation industry as a career option. It was from this meeting that the concept was developed, proposals were drafted and course outlines drafted.

On January 6, 2014, the NSHBA welcomed four students to its first Renovation Training Course. During the course, with the participation of NSHBA renovator members and NSHBA staff, these students will be given an opportunity to gain valuable information, better understand the theory behind building science, working as a team, communicating effectively and practical hands on application about renovations to help direct them toward their future career in renovations.

"Knowledge is power," said **PAUL PETTIPAS**, NSHBA CEO, to the small group upon their arrival on the first day of the course. "Our goal is to teach you the tools you will need to succeed and become future renovators."

This intense program allows the participants to try their hand at all aspects of renovations and gives them the chance to put what they learn in the classroom into practice. 🏠



## CHBA-NL Launches NIMBY Toolkit

ST. JOHN'S — CHBA-NL participated in a stakeholder forum, "Making Room in the Boom: Housing Affordability in St. John's," hosted by the City of St. John's. The Association used the opportunity to launch its *Building Yes: A Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) Toolkit*.

In addition to a successful launch, incoming CHBA-NL President **STEVE PORTER** provided insights and solutions to housing issues aimed at the municipality. He also put out a call to community and religious organizations to coordinate with builders and developers for the purposes of developing their land and undertaking building projects as partners.

The CHBA-NL received excellent media coverage as a result. CHBA-NL CEO **VICTORIA BELBIN** provided a television interview on CBC's *Here and Now* to explain the purpose of the NIMBY Toolkit and their objectives for future use. Meanwhile, Steve Porter garnered significant attention, in *The Telegram* and online, based on his well-reasoned position with regards to government-imposed charges and their increasing impacts on housing affordability.

For a downloadable PDF: [chbanl.ca/nimby.html](http://chbanl.ca/nimby.html). 🏠



By Peter Norman

## A Brighter Outlook

If 2013 seemed to you like a slower year, you are not alone. Total economic growth worldwide slowed to just 2.9 per cent—its lowest point since the 2009 recession—and Canada's economic performance certainly showed the ill effects of this poor environment. GDP growth in Canada turned in another weak performance with an estimated 1.7 per cent for the year. And there were only 103,000 net new jobs created in the year, capped off with a sharp downturn in December. Job creation in 2013 was the slowest since the recession of 2009.

The good news is that 2014 is shaping up to be a much brighter picture. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects economic growth worldwide, and especially among countries most important to Canada from a trading perspective, to pick up substantially in 2014. Here in Canada we expect that this means stronger trade performance, boosting both GDP and employment.

In terms of new housing construction, some 187,100 housing units were started in Canada. Housing starts in 2013 were down 13 per cent from a buoyant 2012 and turned in the lowest performance since 2009 and the second lowest year in the last 12 years. Despite this, there were a number of positives that came out of new housing construction in 2013. The majority of the slowdown from 2012 was among the apartment segment, which is likely just reflecting a rebalancing of inventories of investor units, rather than reflecting any significant decline in housing demand. Also the pattern through the year suggests that new construction may be gaining momentum. The second half of 2013 was significantly stronger than the first half.

The gain in momentum in the second half for new housing construction mirrored activity in resale markets, where the number of MLS transactions rose about 8 per cent through the year as some of the headwinds from late 2012 early 2013, such as the lingering effects on first time buyers from changes to mortgage insurance rules, dissipated as the year wore on.

### Better Economy in 2014

Going forward into 2014 there are reasons to be optimistic about the housing market. We're expecting GDP growth to accelerate modestly in Canada and become somewhat more balanced regionally, as trade and manufacturing, particularly in central Canada begin to pick up with the growing U.S. economy. On the employment front, even though 2013 ended off on a sour note the job growth we did have was predominantly full time. Stronger job growth is expected in 2014, which

will continue to fuel housing demand.

Migration trends also will be a bright point for 2014. In the first three quarters of 2012 the number of net new international migrants to Canada surged 6 per cent over 2011 (see chart). Strong inflows to Canada are positive leading indicators for housing activity, as our research shows that new immigrants create housing demand immediately through the rental market and exhibit accelerated home-buying behavior over the first nine years in Canada. Strong activity in 2011 and 2012 will be boosting housing demand in the years ahead. Regionally, recent trends have continued to see both internal and international migration flows favour the west, Alberta in particular, but 2014 will likely see some rebalancing back toward central and eastern Canada.

The outlook for mortgage interest rates will be a very important factor in the housing market for 2014. Effective rates for 5-year fixed mortgages, after discount, ended off the year at about 4.1 per cent up about half a percent from 2012. While a sluggish recovery in the U.S. and a relatively strong loonie were both factors keeping interest rates down in Canada, recent turn around in both these factors spells some risk of further rises in interest rates as we proceed through 2014. Our expectations are that further modest gains in mortgage rates that are expected—say another half percentage point in 2014—will not have a dampening effect on housing market demand, but will rather mostly show up as flatter new and existing home prices through the year.

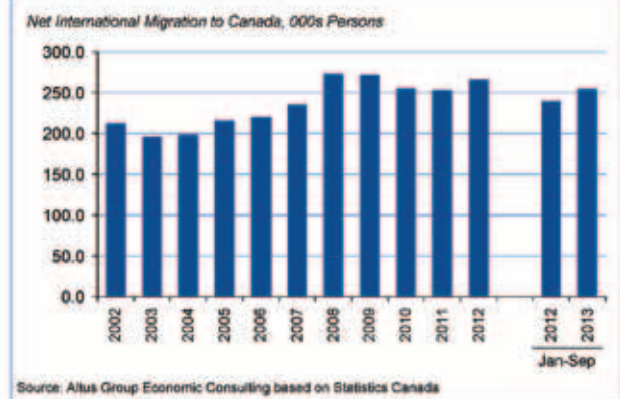
### Stronger Single-Family Starts

New single-family construction in particular is expected to perform very well in 2014. We are expecting that single-family starts will rise some 5 per cent to about 116,000 units in 2014, their second highest showing since before the recession. By contrast, apartment starts will continue to moderate in 2014 bringing overall housing starts mostly in line with 2013. ■

Recent trends have continued to see both internal and international migration flows favour the west, Alberta in particular, but 2014 will likely see some rebalancing back toward central and eastern Canada.

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.

### Migration on the Upswing





By Bo Mocherniak

The best place to start looking for accounting software is by clearly defining your needs.

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.

## Selecting the Right Accounting Software for Your Company

If it weren't for accounting software, the personal computer may never have taken off. Back in the 1970's, computers were mainly used by hobby enthusiasts. Everything changed with the introduction of the first "killer app"—a piece of software so useful that people wanted to go out and buy the new technology. When the accounting software program VisiCalc was loaded onto the Apple II in 1979, people finally had a good reason to invest in a personal computer, and it was the beginning of a revolution in how we use technology at home and at work.

Today, accounting software can provide back-office basics *and* be a tool to help you grow your business. By providing detailed reports, the software can allow you to be more efficient and make better business decisions.

### Define your Needs

The best place to start looking for accounting software is by clearly defining your needs so that you can select the right program to best meet those needs. This assessment may indicate that an off-the-shelf program may be just fine, or it may show that you'd be better off with something a bit more sophisticated. Your needs might be complex enough to warrant a custom-designed program or require the help of value-added reseller (VAR) to assist you in the decision-making, installation and training. For construction firms with multiple large projects, more complex software will provide not only accounting functions, but can be an effective tool to track and report on various Key Performance Indicators, project budgeting, project costing and others, leading to better business decisions.

Depending on the size of your company, you may want to start with a simple program that can do all the basics—things like invoicing, payroll, cash-flow management, and cheque printing. For a small business owner, ready-made programs like QuickBooks or Simply Accounting may be enough. Programs like this are relatively straight-forward, but remember that you will still need to invest in training and ongoing support to get the most from them. At a minimum, you should be able to use your accounting software to perform bank reconciliations and prepare financial statements (balance sheet and income statements) that can be reviewed on monthly basis. Other programs may allow you to create Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, work in progress and project costing reports for more accurate cash-flow management.

Larger companies should really be thinking beyond implementing an accounting program to the smooth integration of accounting software with project management software. This makes things like cost tracking, billing, forecasting, and efficiently managing multiple projects much easier. Sophisticated software will be able to let you know where you are as the project progresses, and allows you to measure the final profitability. It will also give you the ability to do things like "milestone billing" on projects, thus improving cash flow. Project management and job tracking functionality can be further supplemented with software that can provide cost estimating functionality and tracks cost-to-budget variances.

### Evaluating Software Solutions

As you evaluate potential software solutions, here are some other questions you should ask. Does the program give you everything you need? Are you being sold more than you need? How easy will it be to implement and to use? (Even off-the-shelf programs will require an investment in training so you can make the most of them.) Beyond training, what is the cost of ongoing software support? Is it scalable—that is, can it grow with your business? How easy will it be to integrate with legacy systems you're already using? How good is the software in protecting your sensitive financial data? What are the technical requirements for on-site data storage? In fact, many companies are turning to cloud-based programs, which reduce the need for on-site data

storage and can allow multiple users to access it from multiple locations, including a job site.

If you already have staff managing your accounting function, the right accounting program can streamline and simplify their efforts, not to mention the downstream benefit of using detailed financial and business reports for more accurate planning and decision-making. For small companies that outsource the accounting function to a bookkeeper or accountant, investment in accounting software may reduce these fees. However, remember that you need to balance the fee savings with the fact that you will need to take on the task of accurate and timely data entry—one thing that hasn't changed since the days of VisiCalc.

As you do your cost-benefit analysis, keep in mind that you'll probably still need to rely on your accountant to help prepare end of year tax filings and help with more complex accounting and tax matters.



VisiCalc screenshot from 1979 : the first "killer app."

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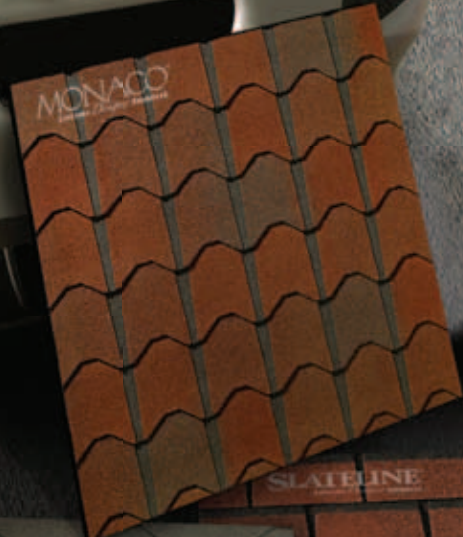
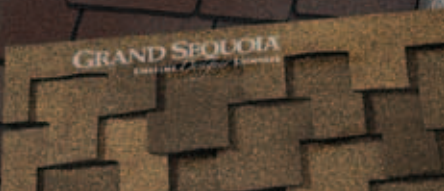
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By Tim Bailey

## Closing the Loop on Customer Feedback

Customer experience management has evolved dramatically. Once a revolutionary beta test explored by a few progressive brands, it is now a core part of every successful business. This evolution has charted a course from basic customer satisfaction, through to customer loyalty and delight, and now onward into the realm of customer emotional engagement. With metrics and feedback being abundantly collected and analyzed, closing the customer feedback loop is more important than ever.

Customer feedback should not be thought of as the conclusion of a specific point in the customer journey, but rather the opportunity to start new insightful conversations. Customer loyalty is more fickle than ever before, making it increasingly vital to understand customers intimately. Businesses focused on learning and growing are tapping into a wealth of information by closing the loop through meaningful customer conversations.

### The Treasured Resource

It is a combination of rational, emotional and even subconscious factors that lead customers to purchase, recommend and repurchase. Every customer interaction should be viewed as a treasured resource and opportunity to understand those factors in more detail. Customer feedback surveys and customer reviews help to determine what factors are exceeding customer expectations and what might be falling short, however, this is only one step. After measuring and identifying, comes the learning and improving and the best way to learn more about customers is to engage in conversations with them.

Many customers are surprised and delighted when contacted about the feedback they have provided. This is often due to the inherent consumer perception that, although feedback is routinely requested, action on that feedback is seldom taken. When a business owner, senior manager or frontline employee reaches out to a customer to discuss feedback provided, the potential to convert an unhappy customer to an advocate increases significantly. Similarly, closing the loop with advocate customers helps to further solidify them as loyal and raving fans.

### Solidifying Relationships

Business is changing rapidly and companies need to find and employ every competitive edge to succeed. What better way to drive growth than by amassing an army of advocate customers? Today's consumers are looking to do more than just purchase a product or service. Purchasing decisions now frequently stem from a desire to "connect" with a company or brand. That connection

or relationship is filled with intricacies and if a company can better understand patterns of customer behavior, than customer relationships can be better managed. This is vital since these relationships are proven to drive revenue and profits.

According to a report by Bain & Co., "At companies where strong customer feedback systems take hold, business-unit leaders and frontline employees start to own customer loyalty the same way they own their targets for revenue, profits, and market share."

### Altruistic Intentions

Most customers that provide feedback do so with altruistic intentions. They are hoping to help a company improve in order to help future customers. Letting customers know that their feedback is valued is a good start. Letting customers know "how" their feedback is having an impact on improving company processes or products fosters immeasurable relationship value.

Closing the loop on customer feedback should be a routine practice in every business. It is a culture-building activity that requires active involvement of both leadership and frontline employees. Following-up with customers should be done in a timely manner—ideally 24 to 48 hours after feedback is received from a customer. If customer feedback requests are sent at multiple touch-points in the customer journey, then each touch-point needs to be monitored. In companies where customer feedback is abundant, it may not be practical to follow-up with each customer following each touch-point. Using representative samples for follow-up can be an effective solution, while still ensuring that any urgent feedback items are not overlooked. Many leading companies utilize customer feedback programs that provide automated alerts for issues that require urgent action.

### Closing the Loop Closes the Gap

A study conducted by Bain & Co. found that "80 percent of companies are confident that they are delivering a 'superior experience' to their customers. But when customers were asked what they thought, only eight percent agreed." This delivery gap indicates that some deep and dedicated investigation is needed to better understand what customers truly value.

Closing the loop on customer feedback is a valuable exercise in customer-centered learning that will provide a better understanding of customer needs. This understanding should then become the foundation for continual improvement and the fuel to keep customers as the focal point across the entire organization. ■



Following-up with customers should be done in a timely manner—ideally 24 to 48 hours after feedback is received.

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](mailto:tim.bailey@avidratings.ca).

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## Window Installation Details for Effective Sealing



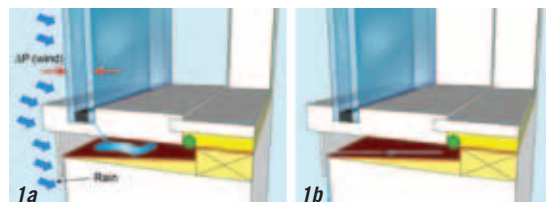
By M.A. Lacasse



By M.M. Armstrong

The effects of inadvertent water entry at windows are well known: water can damage interior finishes and in the case of wood-frame construction, may lead to wood rot or the formation of mould in the wall assembly.

Rainwater may enter because of deficiencies in the window components, either inherent or after the window has “aged.” When water is blown to the window (Figure 1a), the risk of entry at any deficiency increases. Water entering a defective window or along the perimeter interface between the window and the cladding may find its way into the wall assembly and eventually cause damage. Water reaching the sill must be drained (Figure 1b) because if left stagnant it may lead to the formation of mould.



Wind blowing on the exterior of a building brings rainwater to the windows and to the wall-window interface; it also gives rise to pressure differences across the assembly. The magnitude of the pressure difference is a function of the wind speed and interior pressure conditions; higher wind speeds yield greater pressure differences.

Openings along the wall-window interface (e.g., gaps in the sealant behind the window flange, gaps in the seal between the glazing and the window sash, or defects in the window frame) may permit the passage of air and water. If water is present at an opening through which air may pass, and there is a pressure difference, water will be driven through it.

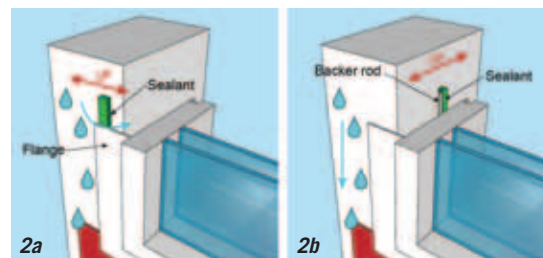
Pressure equalization is the key to preventing water entry and promoting effective drainage. Ideally the pressure in the wall-window interface (the gap between the window frame and rough opening) and the rough sill must be equal to the pressure at the exterior of the wall (caused by wind). This will eliminate driving pressures that force water to enter across the window installation, and also eliminate any pressure that may impede drainage from the sill area. To achieve pressure equalization, both the exterior and interior airtightness details must be considered.

### Managing Rainwater Entry

On the basis of the results derived from NRC laboratory testing and observations of water entry at the window perimeter, recommendations can be made to mitigate the effects of a defective or poorly installed window.

When a jointing product is applied to the back of the window flange (Figure 2a), the largest pressure drop in the assembly can occur across the bead of caulking (the plane of airtightness). Any imperfections in this seal may,

in the presence of water, allow water to enter through these imperfections (cladding not shown). Moving the plane of airtightness away from the location of potential wetting (Figure 2b) reduces the pressure difference across the flange and diminishes the risk of water entry behind it or through defects in the window frame. This can be accomplished by installing a backer rod and spray polyurethane foam (SPF) or sealant between the window frame and rough opening.



Apart from locating the plane of airtightness at the back of the sill, it is important to ensure that flanged windows have a gap behind the flange at the sill such that pressure can equalize between the sill cavity and the exterior. This also allows any water that has reached the sill area to easily drain out, since there is little or no pressure to counter water drainage from the sill. The gap between the bottom window flange and the sill can be created using cap nails. Locating the plane of airtightness toward the interior of the window and creating a space behind the bottom window flange allows any water that gets into the opening behind the flange to drain to the base of the window and out of the assembly at the sill.

Research also highlights the importance of a continuous interior air barrier in reducing the driving force for water entry. A continuous air barrier can be readily achieved with a jointing product and backer rod or by installing a backer rod and SPF.

### Implications

While a new functional window installation that is well sealed behind the flange was shown to initially prevent water from entering, it was shown to be inadequate for mitigating inadvertent water entry through defects that develop over time.

Relocating the plane of airtightness away from the window flange and toward the interior results in a robust window installation that will effectively manage water throughout its lifetime. When combined with other important window-interface elements—including a sloped sill, back dam, sill flashing membranes wrapping up the jambs and over the sheathing membrane at the sill, and insulation to the interior side of the sill (leaving the drainage path unobstructed)—the window installation details described here are adequate for managing even the most significant rainfall events occurring in North America.

Dr. M. A. Lacasse is a Senior Research Officer in the Building Envelope and Material group at NRC Construction. Ms. M.M. Armstrong is a Research Council Officer with the same group.

*This article has been excerpted from Construction Technology Update #80, with permission from the National Research Council of Canada.*

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# Alberta

## Still going strong

By Jim Rivait, CEO, CHBA — Alberta

Alberta's economic engine continues to gain speed, fueled by energy sector investments that are cranking out new jobs and drawing thousands of people to the province to fill them. Population pressures are pushing home prices higher and vacancy rates lower. No surprise then that most economists expect residential construction will accelerate in 2014 when GDP growth will lead the nation.

Here are snapshots of what's happening in Alberta this year, along with initiatives that are high on the agenda for CHBA – Alberta.

### Economy Booms

RBC Economics describes the province as “an economy in the midst of a boom”—with better times still ahead. GDP is expected to rise to 3.9 per cent in 2014 and be tops in Canada through 2015. Housing starts in 2013 neared 35,000 units, up about 5 per cent and the best total since 2007. CMHC is predicting a moderate uptick in starts for 2014 as builders benefit from surging employment (78,000 new jobs through the first 10 months of 2013) and population growth rates not seen since 1982. The strength of the market is also evident in strong gains posted by real estate boards in Edmonton and Calgary and rock bottom apartment vacancy rates. Even the devastating floods that roared through Alberta last June did not erode the province's solid economic foundations. Damages are pegged at \$6 billion and the impact on the residential sector was highlighted by recent

news that flood damages chopped more than \$400 million from the assessed value of some 2,000 homes in Calgary.

### New Warranty Rules

Top of mind for many Alberta builders and renovators on February 1 will be the launch of mandatory new home warranty coverage under the province's New Home Buyer Protection Act. Information sessions organized by CHBA – Alberta in six cities attracted almost 800 people eager to get a head start on preparation for the new program. Alberta builders are proud to have introduced the first voluntary home warranty back in 1974 and support the move to extend this important consumer protection so it covers all buyers. Also high on the legislative agenda for CHBA – Alberta are reviews of the Condominium Property Act and Municipal Government Act. The condo legislation changes are likely to be introduced this spring.

### Tracking the Codes

CHBA – Alberta is anticipating a busy year dealing with building codes. Alberta Municipal Affairs will adopt the 2010 National Building Code, the National Energy Code for Buildings and the Part 9 changes for energy efficiency into the Alberta Codes this year. CHBA – Alberta is working to facilitate a smooth introduction. In the fall, task groups at the National Codes Centre dealing with the rise and run of stairs, spatial separation of houses, low-cost accessibility items, water conservation and sprinklers will report recommendations. Looking further ahead, the CHBA – Alberta Provincial Technical Committee has begun discussing a position regarding accessibility and visitability for residential single-family homes. This will define how we assess code proposals at the national level on this emerging issue.

### Safety First

In 2014 CHBA Edmonton and Calgary are poised to implement the first phase of the CHBA – Alberta Safety Initiative by bringing

most of their large builder members on board with COR or SECOR. This year CHBA – Alberta will also work with Central Alberta, Grande Prairie and Medicine Hat locals on the Safety Initiative. Lethbridge is leading other areas of the province in regard to COR and SECOR. Also in the year ahead the Alberta housing industry will see the impact of ticketing and administrative penalties on workers, employers and prime contractors. CHBA – Alberta will also monitor the OH&S Residential Initiative. The initiative has three parts: spot inspections, identification of high-risk employers with the new scorecard approach, and utilizing the OH&S data base to identify contractors or prime contractors with ongoing compliance issues.

### The Big Events

We're leading another winter housing tour to help our members learn about the latest housing innovations—and to take a brief break from snow. After previous tours to California and Texas, we're headed to Arizona to tour communities and model homes in the Phoenix area March 6-8. The highlight of our calendar is the annual conference each September. BUILD 2014 will again be held at the fabulous Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge September 18-21. 🏠



*Alberta Floods: Even the devastating floods that roared through Alberta last June did not erode the province's solid economic foundations. Shown: The Downtown East Village neighbourhood of Calgary during the 2013 Alberta floods (June 21, 2013).*



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# The Lethbridge College Home Project

## Working together to build a community

In early 2013, CHBA – Lethbridge Region and Lethbridge College announced the beginning of College Home Project, a volunteer-driven initiative where CHBA builder members, partnering with trades and suppliers, will build 10 homes over five years. The objective: raising \$750,000 toward the Trades and Technology renewal and Innovation Project (TTRIP) at Lethbridge College. All proceeds above costs will be donated.

The inaugural year of the College Home Project saw **Galko Homes Master Builder** and **Ashcroft Master Builder** take on the challenge. Many other participants helped make the dream a reality; September 2013 saw the completion of year one with two stunning homes showcased in the Parade of Homes.

The second year of this unique partnership sees **Avonlea Homes Master Builder** and **Stranville Living Ltd.** proudly stepping up to lead the project for 2014. “The momentum is continuing to be extremely strong and we can hardly wait to see what architectural genius comes from the builders this year,” said **ANITA HARTMAN**, President of the CHBA – Lethbridge Region. “This program is ensuring sustainability in the housing industry and has set a very high precedent for community involvement and gifting.”

As an added incentive for new home shoppers, Lethbridge College is furthering the commitment to promote accessible post-secondary education by donating a \$2,500 tuition credit to the home buyer for each of the 10 homes.

“The College Home Initiative has set a precedent across the country with the collaborative partnership between Lethbridge College and the Canadian Home Builders Association

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK



*Avonlea Homes Master Builder: The College Home finishes and materials will be similar to this Dakota model in the community of Blackwolf.*

Lethbridge and its members,” said Lethbridge College President and CEO Dr. **PAULA BURNS**. “This initiative further exemplifies our community’s commitment to building the College’s TTRIP in order to meet the needs of skilled workers within Southern Alberta.”

### Avonlea Homes Master Builder

Developing and building communities in Lethbridge for 18 years, Avonlea Homes Master Builder has been contributing to the community through several projects such as the STARS Lottery Home, Cancer Society, YWCA and Steps for Life, among others.

“There are many reasons why we wanted to be involved in the TTRIP project,” said **JENNIFER MCCARTHY**, Head of Design & Production, Avonlea Homes. “We are in need of a better Trades and Technologies wing at our local

College so we can educate and train the people that we are putting to work in our own city. We will be able to expand the learning into departments that we have not had the capacity for in the past, keeping our people living local, training local, and ultimately working local.

“These will be some of the first steps to avoid another labour shortage in the future and ensure that we are building the best quality of homes in our city. It all starts with the trades and their craftsmanship. These are the men and women that are building homes and lives for our community and it starts with learning to do it right, from the start.”

### Stranville Living Ltd.

Stranville Living (formerly Coulee Creek Condominiums) is a locally owned home builder that has been building living spaces



**Stranville Living College Home rendering; the kitchen will be similar to their AYR home plan shown here. The home will be located in Garry Station West Lethbridge.**

for seven years. They believe in developing exceptional relationships with customers, employees and industry partners, and firmly believe a family's home is its sanctuary.

"On behalf of Stranville Living Ltd. and our industry partners, we are excited to announce our participation in this year's College Home Program," said **DOUG PILSNER**, General Man-

ager. "The greatest resource in every industry is the RIGHT people. They are our most valuable asset and the reality is each year talent, knowledge, and experience leaves our industry. Participation in the College Home Program is about more than being corporately responsible. We are honoured to be involved in an initiative that aims to replenish and educate our greatest resource... the right people." 🏠

*A complete list of participants, as well as photographs of the 2013 homes, can be found at [www.paradeofhomeslethbridge.com/college-homes](http://www.paradeofhomeslethbridge.com/college-homes).*

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# Tackling the Shortage of Development Land

## It Pays to Repurpose

BY PAUL RAYMENT

Today it is a run-down semi-detached home on a 7,800-square-foot residential infill site in a mature residential neighbourhood near Dundas and Ossington. Soon, it will be receiving a \$2.3-million facelift that includes three additional residential units and a much bigger return on investment for the developer.

Scenarios like this are playing out in communities across the Greater Toronto Area and other major urban centres across Canada, as a shortage of development land forces investors and builders to turn to infill projects. But identifying opportunities isn't as simple as decades ago, when you could build or renovate a single-family home and expect to turn a decent profit. Now it's necessary to find ways to increase your coverage and that means replacing your builder's hardhat with a developer's mindset.

A builder excels at "bricks and mortar." A



*In this project on the Danforth in Toronto, the builder is renovating a main floor commercial unit with two floors of residential units above.*

developer envisions the end market, looking for creative ways to increase the land value, such as severing an existing residential lot to pave the way for more development, repurposing an institutional building or, in some cases, building up.

Recognizing opportunity, however, can be a challenge. You don't necessarily want to be first, but you do want to get in ahead of the rest when it comes to identifying profitable infill projects. Being first is the litmus test that says, "Is this going to work or not?" If you follow shortly behind the leader, when a neighbourhood is still on the cusp of major change, you may pay slightly more for the land, but will still earn a substantial return down the road.

Recent improvements along Ossington Avenue and the Liberty Village area of Toronto, for example, are making Beaconsfield Village a desirable area. One developer recently purchased three adjoining residential homes for just over \$1.5 million, two of which hold a merged title. The intent is to re-sever the properties into four separate lots, renovate the existing semi-detached home and construct three freehold townhomes earning him a potential 100 percent plus return on investment.

### Keep Your Eyes & Ears Open

It pays to keep your pulse on the city—or connect with a professional who does. If you



*The Victoria Common project in Kitchener, Ont., a 15-acre site that was originally home to a tannery dating back to the nineteenth century, will consist of 677 condo homes in five buildings along with 228 town homes.*

learn that a new private school is planning to open in a neighbourhood surrounded by wartime bungalows, it might be prudent to purchase there before it opens and demand skyrockets. If an under-populated school is earmarked for sale, consider making an offer. Or perhaps there's brownfield site in a prime location that other builders are ignoring.

One example of the latter is the Victoria Common project in Kitchener, Ont., a 15-acre site that was originally home to a tannery dating back to the nineteenth century. Backed by a \$9 million project loan, the developer purchased the land, remediated the soil to meet residential environmental standards, and is now commencing construction of a major new community right in the downtown core that will consist of 677 condo homes in five buildings

### Tips to Keep on Track

Interested in infill construction? Here are some suggestions to help keep your development project on track, lower your risk and maximize your investment:

- Refrain from building to suit your own taste; envision your end-users and build for them.
- Don't stray too far from the neighbourhood "norm."
- Match your finishes to the socio-economic landscape.
- You can't build your way out of a problem; consult the experts when you need to.
- Ensure your budget is comprehensive and leaves room for a margin of error; this is a business opportunity and should be profitable.
- You can't purchase a "forest" and then try to build a parking lot; be wary of the implications of green initiatives.

along with 228 town homes.

This project is also consistent with recent reports that suggest a growing number of young professionals—or echo boomers—are choosing to live in the downtown core over suburban neighbourhoods. They're looking for smaller, more functional spaces close to public transit, retail and entertainment, creating great potential for developers. In several cases, there's opportunity to build up, adding two or more floors to an existing commercial property in a prime location.

One developer has already completed three infill projects along Danforth Avenue in Toronto, and is in the process of getting permits in place for a fourth. What is now a two-storey mixed use commercial building featuring a second floor office space will transform into a renovated main floor commercial unit with two floors of residential units above, including a refinished basement to house storage lockers for eight new apartments.

There is a growing trend for infill projects as land in major urban centres becomes scarcer; builders are turning their attention to infill

projects in satellite communities. In Whitby, just less than an hour east of Toronto, a builder recently received \$5.3 million total facility to finance a 20 lot residential infill subdivision. The project will consist of homes ranging in size from 1,800 to 2,100 sq. ft. and an average of \$600,000 per home.

So while the cost of land for infill projects often comes at a premium, it can often be offset through intensification, as there continues to be a strong demand for downtown detached or semi-detached homes.

A successful infill project takes more than builder's know-how. It requires the foresight to spot an existing site that is either derelict or has an inferior use, and elevate it to the next level. There's risk involved, but with the right location and solid planning, infill projects can generate profits for discerning developers. 🏠

*Paul Rayment is Vice-President of Foremost Financial Corporation and has been a BILD member since 1996. He has extensive experience in real estate development and project financing across the Greater Toronto Area.*



*This site on Leyton Avenue in Toronto was purchased as two parcels in 2002 for a total consideration of \$338,000. The site was originally zoned as HWY commercial and the borrowers have had it rezoned for high density residential. They now have approval to build six freehold semi-detached homes and eight freehold town homes with a common element driveway. The homes are targeted for first-time home buyers (\$330,000 to \$370,000 price range), as an alternative to high-rise condominiums, with good access to public transit.*

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# The Good Old Days

## The Road to Success

BY JOHN G. SAYERS

A couple of advertisements in the March 20, 1913 issue of *The Automobile* magazine give us an insight to how the revolution in transportation during the past century has led to better and more affordable homes today.

An advertisement by The Portland Cement Company, for example, promoted the use of cement to build the roads of 100 years ago. Without getting into a detailed analysis of why asphalt is now the preferred road surface, let's think about how better roads helped to build better communities. Have you ever been stuck in your car on a snowy road? Just imagine that it was mud, up to your axles. The claim that, "Hard roads are a necessity for motor car traffic" is still true today.

And just imagine that you had to drive through that mud—or sand—every day going to work. Would you want to live 20 kilometers from your workplace? Probably not. In an age when a tall building was six-stories, you remained jammed into a small home, which had been wedged into a downtown area near your place of business.

In 1913, you walked to your work destination, or took a public transit vehicle that fought the universal road conditions, but for a shorter distance. The first concrete road in Ontario—linking Toronto and Hamilton—was not completed until 1915. There were only some 50,000 cars in the entire country in 1913, so there was relatively little motorized vehicle pressure for paved roads.

Then came more cars and the push for better roads. Presto! Homes could be built in the countryside, with room for children to play in the back yard while dad travelled by road to work in no more time than it took to walk the many blocks in the downtown area. And those homes could be built more cheaply because a builder wasn't com-

peting in price for small plots of land in the city; the 60x200 foot lot (or even a half acre or so) for each home cost much less.

And those same roads that propelled Dad to work each day facilitated the transportation of building materials and equipment from one location to several sites within a radius of several kilometers. More efficient equipment and materials produced centrally in quantity were more available and more affordable. So add cost reductions in construction to cost savings in land, and you have the foundation for a revolution in building more affordable and better homes.

But the cost savings don't stop there. A study of the ad for Adams trucks shows just how important those paved roads were. Look at the load that was aboard the truck. Let's assume that it carried the equivalent of five loads of lumber transported by a horse and wagon. That represents not only the cost of

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**"Adams Trucks Deliver the Goods" boasted this 1913 advertisement. Primitive as it may seem today, it's a great improvement over having your lumber transported to the job site in a horse-drawn wagon.**

buying five wagons and five teams of horses instead of the purchase of a single truck, but also the cost of hiring five wagon drivers rather than the solitary truck driver. And don't forget that those horses had to be fed, looked after and housed. More labour and more cost.

So the next time that a load of lumber pulls up to your job site, just think how much less it cost compared to five wagons and five teams of horses! And how much faster it arrived in contrast to the same quantity brought over rutted, muddy roads.

The term "affordable housing" seems to have become a euphemism for building housing to accommodate the underprivileged. In reality, it describes the broader benefit of transportation over the past hundred years. Without it, very few homes would have been "affordable" to the average home buyer. And without it, home building as we know it today would not have become a vibrant contributor to Canada's economy. ■

*John G. Sayers (jasayers@saybuck.com), a retired Chartered Accountant, is in his 8th year on the Board of The Ephemera Society of America, and his 6th year on the Council of the British Ephemera Society. He has been a keen collector for many years. For more information about ephemera, check out [www.ephemera-society.org](http://www.ephemera-society.org)*

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would add immensely to the pleasure of moving in your vicinity, to say nothing of the commercial advantage to your city. Hard roads are a necessity for motor car traffic. They slow cars, stand the wear and tear of rapidly moving wheels which pull the fine particles out of the macadam and scatter it all over the wheels.

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# How To Choose a Pickup Truck

BY DALE WICKELL

Helping you choose the best truck for your needs

In the past, pickup trucks were pretty basic, without a ton of options to choose from, and they all looked somewhat similar. Sure, there were styling variations from one manufacturer to the next but, overall, a truck was a truck.

Things have definitely changed. Today's truck fans have plenty of choices, from basic work trucks designed to haul cargo to option-filled pickups that rival a luxury sedan.

So how do you choose the right pickup truck? Begin by analyzing your wants and needs.

## Do You Have a Favourite Automaker?

If a specific manufacturer is an all-time favorite, and the automaker builds pickups, that's the obvious place to start looking for a truck. References in the Truck By Manufacturer index on About.com ([trucks.about.com/od/makesandmodels/](http://trucks.about.com/od/makesandmodels/)) are arranged by year and by automaker. Here you'll find reviews, facts about features and options for each model year, and specifications—all the details you need for a good overview of what each truck has to offer.

## Do You Need a Small Truck or Full Size Truck?

Compact pickup trucks are smaller in scale than their full-size counterparts. They can usually tow up to about 3,000 pounds, a weight that accommodates many trailers and handles most boat towing tasks. If you have heavier towing needs, move up to a mid-size or full size truck.

Keep in mind that trucks considered "small" in the past have grown in size and towing capability over the last decade.

Mid-size pickups can be closer in size and abilities to either a compact or to a full-size truck. Comparing models on dealer lots is the best way to understand how they actually look when placed side by side.

Compact trucks usually get better gas mileage than their full size counterparts, but check EPA Fuel Economy Ratings ([trucks.about.com/od/fueleconomyratings/](http://trucks.about.com/od/fueleconomyratings/)) to confirm average mileage specs: Be prepared for a lower actual mileage.

Make sure the interior space in a smaller pickup is spacious enough to seat your passengers.

## Engine Choices

Small and compact trucks are typically equipped with either a four-cylinder or six-cylinder engine. Full-size trucks offer additional engine variations.

## Drivetrain Options

Most of the trucks on today's market are available with either a manual or automatic transmission and in your choice of either a 2WD or 4WD configuration. You'll find that many trucks offer limited-slip or locking

differentials and electronic traction control. Safety options and driving helpers, such as hill descent, are becoming increasingly popular on new pickup trucks, with many showing up as standard equipment.

## What Are Your Seating Needs?

Trucks are available in several cab styles, so it should be easy to find a model that suits your seating needs.

A standard cab pickup truck has one bench or two bucket seats in the front—no second row seating and varying amounts of storage behind the front seats.

An extended cab truck has jump seats or a bench seat behind the front seats. Be sure to sit in the back while someone else drives the vehicle so that you have a feel for how it feels to ride in the back, because most extended cab seats are utilitarian, and not intended for comfort during a long ride.

Extended cabs provide extra space to carry groceries or other packages behind the first row—out of the weather and locked up for security.

A crew cab truck has full second row seating, with 4-doors that swing open towards the front. Crew cabs are more popular now that many drivers use pickup trucks as their primary vehicle. Toyota's Tundra CrewMax has a deep second row—enough space for rear seats to recline. Other manufacturers have followed the trend, creating very comfortable rear seating for their trucks.

## Truck Cab Configuration

Automakers use different terms to describe their cab styles. A typical truck cargo box has fairly straight exterior sides, with arched areas just inside the bed to accommodate the rear wheels under the bed. There's room to tuck shorter cargo in the spaces in front of and behind each arch.

Stepside truck boxes have flared fenders, with the flares providing space for the rear

▶ 26



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## Apps and Applications

# The latest in tools and technology

Some months it's hard to find new products to share with you on Tool Talk. Not this month, where I cover everything from Bluetooth to nailers and string markers. Enjoy!



### Bluetooth Has Arrived in Tools

Bosch makes a variety of versatile and accurate measuring tools, such as the GLM series that compete well with features on other brand laser distance measuring instruments. But what Bosch has jumped ahead with is a Bluetooth connection to their smart phone or tablet app (both Android and Apple, thank you, Bosch).

So just what does this app do? It dynamically links the distance measurer with a calculator, a graphics program and a remote control panel in a smart phone or tablet via a Bluetooth connection. This allows users to sketch or overlay measurement on jobsite photos taken with your smart phone or simply stored in the smart phone, calculate measurements or assume control of the tool's measuring functions from the smart device—great for one man operations trying to be in two places at the same time. For further processing, measurements

and photos can be transferred from the smart devices to computers via USB or even e-mailed directly from the site to whoever needs the information. If the guy in the office thinks you've missed a measurement, get it before you leave the site. The USB connection is also used to charge the GLM. Now finally there's one phone app that I think is really useful. [www.bosch-professional.com](http://www.bosch-professional.com).

### DeWalt Brings "Gas-Free" Cordless to Framing

It has taken a while for battery-operated cordless tools to really enter into the heavy duty field traditionally held by pneumatic or gas nailers. Early entries into the field were very heavy and ran out of battery power quickly. The Brushless motors and new generation Li-ion battery packs have brought up the power and brought down the weight. With DeWalt's new Compact Framing Nailer (DCN690M1), 4AH 20V Max batteries are driving 90mm ring shank nails in temperatures from -15 to 50°C, all day on a single charge—and it is only 1 1/2 pounds heavier than the gas-powered Paslode framing nailer.

The marketing competition is heating up with Paslode, whose gas powered nailer was

the original "cordless" and "hose-less" nailer. DeWalt has introduced the marketing pitch of "Gas-Free Cordless" and, to counter rumors of problems with the gas nailers, Paslode has introduced their no questions asked "keep it working" promise. So as tools get closer to comparable performance, a good comparison of guarantees may be in order. DeWalt's claim to no more expensive gas cartridges should be tempered with a close look the cost of battery replacement, although I have seen no studies that have put numbers to that yet. [www.dewalt.com](http://www.dewalt.com), [www.paslode.com](http://www.paslode.com).

### Hitachi Has Been Losing Weight Too

We haven't seen much new from Hitachi recently, so for those of you married to the brand, you will certainly be interested in their new NV90AG 3-1/2"



pneumatic Coil Framing Nailer. It drives nails ranging from 1-3/4" to 3-1/2". With pneumatic power we expect and get the force necessary for all

driving applications and, with their new all-aluminum body but steel head plate for durability where it is needed, it is down to 7.7 pounds, just half a pound heavier than Paslode. The magazine is tilted for easy charging and perfect balancing in the hand when working overhead for extended periods of time. [www.hitachipowertools.ca](http://www.hitachipowertools.ca).



**New Gas-Free Cordless Framing Nailer**  
Three-year limited warranty, one-year free service contract and 90-day money-back guarantee.



**CORDLESS**  
**FREE 2 YEAR SERVICE PROMISE**  
Regular price of \$1,000. Now \$799.99. In stock at most dealers. No questions. No hassles. NO COST!



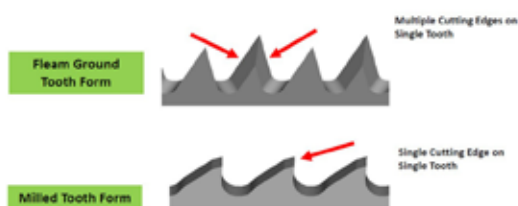
## 25 ▶ Smaller and Larger Than You Ever Imagined

DeWalt has a new line of string markers that cover the range like never before. The DWHT47237L is a pocket size (half the regular size) 30ft. string line, with a geared winding like you have seen in larger marking lines. Actually this one tiny device will probably handle most of your string line needs and is far easier to carry around. Its small size even makes it easy to have a couple of different chalk colours in your pouch at the same time.

Then they have regular reels with helical gears that are less prone to line jams and breaks and at the other extreme there is the DWHT47252 that has a 150ft line and can hold a full pound of chalk. Now all I need to figure out is how to “snap” a 150-foot long string. [www.dewalt.com](http://www.dewalt.com).

## Blade of the Month

### Fleam Ground Tooth Form vs. Milled Tooth Form



We’ve highlighted recip saw blades that got more cuts faster on very difficult materials, like cast iron piping. This month we look at a new 6” recip blade that is designed for very fast, very smooth cuts in ordinary nail-free wood and plastic pipes; it is not a tough demolition blade, but more of a fast finishing blade.

Lenox calls the 6W6R their “Extra Sharp” blade with a Fleam Ground tooth. The Fleam ground tooth looks like what we often call a Japanese tooth—with the difference that true Japanese saws have three grind bevels on



every tooth, the Fleam has two—and ordinary “milled” teeth have one grinding surface. So that razor edge on each side cuts smoothly and clears dust quickly, the speed coming from a cutting action with both directions of the stroke.

Usually a recip blade draws the shoe tight to the material minimizing vibrations, but because the Fleam blade cuts in both directions you have to secure your material firmly and push in hard to avoid excessive vibrations. But if everything is solid, it does cut faster with less power required. It even allows the smaller

low-powered cordless recip one-hand saws to do what they simply can’t do with a regular blade. I’m glad I didn’t throw that little machine away—it just needed to wait for the right blade to be invented. [www.lenoxtools.com](http://www.lenoxtools.com).



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)

## TRUCK REPORT

### 24 ▶

wheels. Stepsides have straight edges along all interior bed sides, but you lose the spaces in line with the wheel arches in a standard box.

### Do You Need a Long Truck Bed?

Pickup trucks are available in a variety of bed lengths, ranging from about 5 ft. to 8 ft. long. You’ll need a long bed truck to haul building supplies or other cargo of significant length. If you haul heavy and bulky items you can get by with a shorter bed, but you’ll need a truck that will handle the weight. Gross Vehicle Weight Rating, also known as GVWR, is another important factor to consider when you buy a truck.

### Will You Use the Truck to Tow?

Do you need a truck to tow a trailer, and if you do, how much weight do you pull? Be sure

to check the towing capacity of the truck you are considering to make sure it meets your needs. In general, look for a vehicle with good hp and torque and with a suitable suspension. Special towing packages are available on most trucks.

### How Much Can You Spend on a Pickup Truck?

Like cars, there’s a huge variety in pickup truck prices, with full size base models and some compacts starting at less than \$20,000. Luxury and performance trucks typically cost considerably more.

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FORD F150



**Deep Shergill**  
President, CHBA

CHBA is also continuing to highlight the growing affordability challenge faced by first-time home buyers.

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Michael Gough, CAE,

National Office, Ottawa, ON

## Building On Our Momentum in 2014

As we begin another year, I want to wish every CHBA member a happy, safe and profitable 2014.

This will also be a watershed year for your Association. Over the last eight months, CHBA has gone through a major transformation, one that builds on our traditional strengths, with the goal of becoming even more effective, efficient and focused on the issues that matter to you in your business.

We have made impressive progress—and there is much more to come!

As you know from my recent messages and our newly-introduced e-newsletters, under the direction of our CEO Kevin Lee, CHBA has “ramped-up” its government relations activities considerably, and is working in close collaboration with provincial and local HBAs to make sure we operate as a cohesive association through all three levels, and that our industry’s voice is heard in Ottawa. The Canada Post win below is case in point of the value of our unified strengthened voice.

These efforts have set the stage for even greater efforts in the year ahead. Here are some recent highlights:

### A Big Win With Canada Post

On January 10, 2014, CHBA was very pleased to announce that Canada Post had agreed to “defer the implementation date of the community mailbox fee for new developments for a [further] two-year period until January 1, 2016.” This is a significant victory for CHBA’s members, and especially for new home buyers, from coast to coast.

CHBA will continue to oppose any move towards implementation of the proposed fee in the future. In the meantime, developers, builders and new home buyers can rest assured that no fee is coming for at least two years. With the sweeping changes underway at Canada Post, we will see what 2016 will bring: CHBA will of course remain vigilant on this issue.

In late 2012, Canada Post announced its intention to unilaterally impose a \$200 fee per mailbox on new home buyers. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of CHBA at all three levels, and the actions taken by its members, last July Canada Post agreed to suspend its Community Mailbox (CMB) fee until January 1, 2014.

This action acknowledged CHBA’s perspective and allowed for further consultation with CHBA. That initial one-year suspension alone saved our industry and new home buyers tens of millions of dollars in 2013.

Subsequent discussions between CHBA and Canada Post led to a potential reduction of the fee and better terms for its implementation. However, after careful review, CHBA’s Board of Directors concluded unanimously that better terms were not the point; CHBA was steadfastly opposed to any such fee, period, both for our industry and for unsuspecting new home buyers.

Based on that Board decision, we advised Canada

Post of CHBA’s absolute opposition to any such fee. Further discussions and correspondence followed, as we drove home to Canada Post the blatant unfairness of the fee on several levels, and the Association’s ongoing commitment to actively oppose any attempts to implement it. The additional two-year postponement is therefore a welcome development.

While we have been at loggerheads with Canada Post on this issue, and despite a lack of initial consultation when they first tried to implement the fee, we do acknowledge Canada Post’s more recent willingness to consult with CHBA and take corrective action as a result.

I am pleased that those discussions have led Canada Post to extend the fee suspension for two more years. Very importantly, I also want to send kudos to all three levels of our Association for the collective efforts that have led to this positive development.

### A Hard Focus on the Economy and Housing

CHBA’s government relations efforts continue to focus on the economy and housing market conditions. Since my last message, CHBA leaders have met with ministerial officials in the Department of Finance, Canada Revenue Agency, Infrastructure Canada, and with the Governor of the Bank of Canada to put our views forward.

While speculation about further changes to mortgage rules and rising interest rates has abated somewhat, this issue hasn’t gone away. CHBA continues to tell federal decision makers that a close look at market conditions show that a marked slowdown has already occurred in many centers, and that further restrictions to mortgage rules, or seeking to raise interest rates prematurely, are neither justified nor prudent.

We are pleased that the Governor of the Bank of Canada has stated publicly that the Bank does not see a housing bubble and that the Bank is wisely (in our opinion) holding its benchmark rate at 1 per cent as the economy continues its recovery, irrespective of international pressure.

CHBA is also continuing to highlight the growing affordability challenge faced by first-time home buyers, ►



**From left: Bob Finnigan, Ron Olson, Deep Shergill, Stephen S. Poloz—Governor of Bank of Canada, Jane Morgan, Kevin Lee, Bard Golightly.**

▶ as well as the increasing risk posed by government-imposed costs—and the price escalation these cause—on the long-term health and stability of housing markets.

This issue isn't going away anytime soon; it will remain a central concern for our industry, governments and communities across Canada for a long time.

With a generation of potential first-time buyers facing the “double whammy” of recession-induced employment challenges and government imposed cost increases, homeownership is simply out-of-reach for far too many young people and families.

This isn't simply a “housing issue.” It is a growing socio-economic problem that will affect the quality of life and economic strength of our communities. CHBA is ensuring that this issue is front and center with federal decision makers as they consider future policy measures.

**Build Force**

Originally created in 2001 as the Construction Sector Council, BuildForce Canada is a national industry-led organization committed to working with the construction industry on the management of workforce requirements.

CHBA CEO Kevin Lee, and Jack Mantyla, CHBA National Education and Training Coordinator, along with provincial HBA representatives, participated in discussions with BuildForce Canada on their labour market information (LMI) activities for the residential construction industry.

Given the importance of labour market information to support CHBA government relations and advocacy, we are pleased to report that Mantyla was nominated and appointed to serve as Chair of the New Home Building and Renovation LMI Committee.

The CHBA national office will now work to bring federal agencies, which have not participated with this committee for some time, back to the table to bolster data input and analysis. CHBA will also host a face-to-face committee meeting in late February 2014. CHBA's proactive approach to LMI is in direct response to Employment and Social Development Minister Jason Kenney's need for additional hard evidence to help him address the skilled labour challenges confronting the residential construction industry.

In another important initiative, BuildForce is developing a national construction career awareness campaign. CHBA CEO Kevin Lee will sit on the Advisory Committee for this project. The goal is to engage youth, and those who influence them, through social media linked to web-based materials. CHBA's active participation in this initiative ensures our industry will be included in this important campaign to encourage youth to choose a career in the residential construction industry.

**Building Canada Fund**

Last year, CHBA was very pleased with the federal government's 10-year/\$53 billion commitment

to support municipal infrastructure, and has actively engaged Infrastructure Canada officials to ensure this funding goes to core infrastructure development.

Invested wisely, this significant financial pledge should ease the pressure on municipal governments faced with a backlog of aging infrastructure and expansion projects. And it should help reduce municipal reliance on development charges on new construction—“taxes” that are driving up the cost of new homes and locking younger first-time buyers out of the market.

Given the importance of a rapid roll out of these funds, the CHBA joined with a number of other interested associations and organizations to urge the federal government to provide access to the Building Canada Plan funds as expeditiously as possible.

CHBA will continue to monitor the Building Canada Plan to ensure it delivers the promise it holds for supporting our industry and housing affordability.

**2014 Pulse Survey**

In early January, CHBA new home builders, renovators and developers received my request to be part of the 2014 Pulse Survey. This year's survey is online only, which makes participation easier and faster.

I want to reinforce the importance of our members taking part in the Pulse Survey.

Pulse data is unique: this is the only industry-based poll of residential construction business conditions and issues in Canada. At all three levels of your Association, Pulse provides the hard data that helps to back-up our advocacy efforts and media relations activities.

By being part of the Pulse Survey, you play an important role in these advocacy efforts—your knowledge and experience help us get important messages to key decision makers.

If you received my invitation to participate in the Pulse Survey, please accept it. We need to hear from you, because your business insights matter.

**2014 CHBA Conference in SuperNatural Whistler**

Now that 2014 has arrived, I want encourage all CHBA members who have not already registered to be part of the excitement at Whistler this coming April. Your Association has a lot of momentum, with exciting changes in place for the future. Be part of it all in Whistler, April 3 through 5. The National SAM Awards, CHBA Awards, and a long list of impressive speakers and great social events are on our agenda. Come to Whistler and help us celebrate our great Association! For full Conference information, visit [www.chba.ca/conference](http://www.chba.ca/conference), and register today!




Rosemary Sparks, Executive Director BuildForce Canada, and CHBA CEO Kevin Lee.



CHBA President Deep Shergill and CEO Kevin Lee accept the 2013 Building Bridges Award presented to the CHBA by the Nova Scotia Home Builders' Association at their recent Peak Awards in Halifax.

## Renovations Down Under

AUSTRALIA — Whether renovating to refresh a home (52 per cent) or to add value before a sale (25 per cent), research commissioned by Commonwealth Bank, Australia's leading provider of integrated financial services, shows that the average home renovation goes over budget by nearly \$3,000, largely due to unexpected material (48 per cent) and labour costs (47 per cent), and takes almost 58 per cent longer than expected. The longer time required is likely to be particularly inconvenient for the 76 per cent of renovators who lived in their home during the renovations.


Furthermore, two in three (58 per cent)

homeowners needed to make compromises to their renovations because of cash shortfalls. The most common compromises included:

- Progressing with a less grand design (21%);
- Using cheaper or lower quality materials (19%);
- Postponing renovating some areas of the house (18%);
- Using second hand materials (11%);
- Going without renovating areas of the house (11%); and
- Fewer or smaller rooms (9%).

According to the survey of more than 1,000 homeowners who recently renovated, one of

the main reasons renovations are going over budget and time is a lack of financial and contingency planning, with the majority (71%) of renovators going it alone without seeking any financial advice and 37 per cent admitting to not having a contingency plan in place in case renovations go over budget.

When it comes to the financial results of renovations, nearly half (46 per cent) of all renovators believe the re-sale value of their property increased by more than the value of their renovations. On average, homeowners believe the value of their house has increased by an additional \$15,779. 

## University Co-op Students: A cost-effective staffing solution

BY BRENT MOORE

Do you have the resources you need to fulfil your contracts this coming summer? Does the cost of hiring and training additional staff for short-term contracts leave you feeling uneasy? Co-op students may be the solution you are looking for.

Hiring a co-op student can help you access current skills and energy while keeping costs reasonable. University co-op students are some of the highest achievers in their academic programs. Participation in the co-op program requires these students to achieve and maintain a minimum academic average, and they typically will need to have completed a comprehensive co-op preparation course.

Co-op students are available for paid, full-time work periods that are integrated into their program of study. Consider bringing their knowledge and fresh skills into your workplace. Co-op students are ready for a challenge, and can make a substantial contribution to your company's objectives. Benefits include:

### Reduced Recruitment and Hiring Costs

- Students are available for work periods of 4, 8, 12 and 16 months, depending on the institution, program and year of study.
- Employers have a cost-effective means of evaluating future employees.
- Co-operative education tax credits are available in Ontario ([www.fin.gov.on.ca](http://www.fin.gov.on.ca)), Quebec ([www.revenuquebec.ca](http://www.revenuquebec.ca)), and Manitoba ([www.gov.mb.ca](http://www.gov.mb.ca)).
- Funding opportunities exist through NSERC's (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada) Industrial Undergraduate

Student Research Award (I-USRA): [www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca).

### Effective Human Resources Management

Meet short-term needs due to vacation schedules, transfers, illness, promotions, training commitments, peak workloads, unexpected contracts, or special projects by hiring co-op students.

### Investing in Our Future

- Share in the training and development of students to help them become leaders and productive members of society.



- Become a 'co-educator' and provide learning opportunities beyond the bounds of the classroom.
- Co-operative Education provides you with the opportunity to directly influence the educational process; to provide valuable feedback on academic program curriculum and content.

### Questions to consider

- Do peak periods or deadline-driven projects stretch your organizational capacity? Co-op students can provide that 'as required' support.
- Is your company expanding? Co-op is a cost-effective way to test-drive future employees and build your talent pool.
- Does productivity suffer as senior staff takes on entry-level tasks? Co-op students are eager to learn and make a real contribution.
- Are permanent staff members experiencing burnout? The enthusiasm and fresh perspective co-op students bring can have a positive impact on the workplace.

Universities offer a range of employer services that may include: job posting, resume collection, interview coordination and scheduling. Interviews can typically be held on-campus, at your location, by telephone, or via Skype. Co-op can definitely be a value-added hiring strategy for companies in the building and construction industry to find motivated and youthful talent.

*Brent Moore is a Co-op Coordinator (Architecture, Industrial Design, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Architectural Conservation and Sustainability Engineering) at Carleton University Co-op and Career Services. He may be reached at [BrentP.Moore@Carleton.ca](mailto:BrentP.Moore@Carleton.ca).*

## Housing for Older Canadians: Housing Options for Today's Seniors

OTTAWA — The number of Canadians aged 55 years or older is growing at a rapid pace. Canadians who are now entering retirement are also, on average, better educated, more active and healthier than almost any other generation of retirees in Canada's history.

To help developers better understand the housing options that are available to older Canadians, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has released an updated version of its in-depth report *Housing For Older Canadians: The Definitive Guide to the Over-55 Market*. This report covers the complete range of seniors' housing in Canada and is available at [www.cmhc.ca](http://www.cmhc.ca).

## Strategies Needed to Address Canada's Skilled Trades Shortage

OTTAWA — According to BuildForce Canada, a national industry-led organization that provides labour market forecasts, Canada's construction sector will continue to put significant pressure on an already tight labour market in Western Canada, Northern Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador over the next decade. In these provinces, challenges created by an aging workforce and skilled trades shortages are real.

"Our forecasts indicate a shortfall of skilled construction trades people over the next decade, as new projects move forward and over 200,000 workers, or close to 25 per cent of the construction

workforce retire," said **ROSEMARY SPARKS**, Executive Director. "This is the time to be aggressive in planning for the future and promoting careers in skilled trades. Industry requires short-term and long-term strategies to ensure a skilled workforce is available to meet demand. Our economy also depends on it."

BuildForce notes that a current shortage of skilled construction trades, including carpenters, plumbers, electricians and welders, threatens project schedules and production delays in Newfoundland and Labrador. Industry will be challenged should help demands for skilled construction trades, given a new wave of construction investment in Albert's oil sands over the medium term; in B.C., major mining and LNG major projects are scheduled to start in the next few years, again challenging industry to meet demands for skilled construction trades. For more information, visit [www.buildforce.ca](http://www.buildforce.ca).

## Built Green Canada Announces Expansion Across Western Canada

EDMONTON — Coinciding with Built Green Canada's 10th anniversary, the organization has announced its expansion into Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The expansion addresses the growing demand for responsible sustainability practices driven by builders, developers, government, and homeowners. Built Green's programs recognize energy efficiency as a fundamental component and move beyond this to include electrical efficiency, water efficiency, indoor air quality, resource use, and overall environmental impact. For more information, visit [www.builtgreencanada.ca](http://www.builtgreencanada.ca).

## The Sky's the Limit

HAMBURG — There may be lots of condo buzz in Canada's major cities, but we haven't reached the heights of Dubai, which currently dominates the market for living above the clouds, boasting seven of the 10 tallest residential buildings. The desire for recognition and prestige, plus the demonstration of economic growth, are the most significant factors leading to the boom in construction, particularly in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), of such gigantic apartment palaces.

Whether Dubai will continue to lead the list of the world's tallest residential buildings in such convincing manner in the future, however, is debatable. World One is projected to be completed in Mumbai, India, in 2015. The tower, planned at 442 metres in height, will take over top spot, a position currently held by Dubai's 414m Princess Tower.

To see the list of the world's 10 tallest residential buildings, visit [Emporis.com](http://Emporis.com), an international provider of building data.



### CALENDAR

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

#### February 4-6

International Builders' Show  
NAHB  
Las Vegas, NV  
[www.buildersshow.com](http://www.buildersshow.com)

#### February 19-20

Buildex Vancouver  
Vancouver, BC  
[www.BUILDEXVancouver.com](http://www.BUILDEXVancouver.com)

#### February 20

Vancouver Real Estate Forum  
Vancouver, BC  
[www.realesateforums.com](http://www.realesateforums.com)

#### February 27-March 2

Calgary Home + Garden Show  
Calgary, AB  
[www.calgaryhgs.com](http://www.calgaryhgs.com)

#### February 26-28

International Roofing Expo  
National Roofing Contractors Association  
Las Vegas, NV  
[www.theroofingexpo.com](http://www.theroofingexpo.com)

#### March 14-23

National Home Show  
Toronto, ON  
[www.nationalhomeshow.com](http://www.nationalhomeshow.com)

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GAF	11	973-872-4300	<a href="http://www.gaf.com">www.gaf.com</a>
GE Appliances - Commercial Sales	23	800-361-2500	<a href="mailto:www.ccommercial@mabe.ca">www.ccommercial@mabe.ca</a>
Grabber Construction Products	21	801-492-3880	<a href="http://www.grabberman.com">www.grabberman.com</a>
Home Hardware Stores Limited	4	519-664-2252	<a href="http://www.homehardware.ca">www.homehardware.ca</a>
LOGIX Insulated Concrete Forms	8	888-415-6449	<a href="http://www.logixicf.com">www.logixicf.com</a>
Malco Products Inc.	2	800-328-3530	<a href="http://www.malcotools.com">www.malcotools.com</a>
NAPOLEON Fireplaces & Grills	15	800-461-5581	<a href="http://www.napoleonfireplaces.com">www.napoleonfireplaces.com</a>
PrimeSource Building Products, Inc.	13	800-676-7777	<a href="http://www.primesourcecbp.com">www.primesourcecbp.com</a>
Shouldice Designer Stone	17	800-265-3174	<a href="http://www.shouldice.ca">www.shouldice.ca</a>
Simpson Strong-Tie Canada	3	800-999-5099	<a href="http://www.strongtie.com">www.strongtie.com</a>
Square, Inc.	32	310-220-9265	<a href="http://www.squareup.com/ca">www.squareup.com/ca</a>



# THRIVING

In a business world where the 'new normal' means no normal at all, only true entrepreneurs will THRIVE.

Today, THRIVING in the home building business means innovation. It means challenging the conventional and building business models and alliances that are driven by change. It means driving something new – and better – to your customer. THRIVING is the domain of the professional entrepreneur, and the focus of the 2014 CHBA National Conference.

The Fairmont Chateau Whistler will host CHBA's 71<sup>st</sup> National Conference from April 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014. This outstanding location provides the ideal Conference setting, offering excellent facilities, amenities and service with full access to all that Whistler Village and the Whistler/Blackcomb resort offers.

Hear Canada's Most Insightful Speakers on  
THRIVING in Today's Business World



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Gold-medal Olympian  
and accomplished  
business woman.



**Mark Bowden**  
Psychologist  
and world-renowned  
communications trainer.



**Terry O'Reilly**  
Noted expert on  
the business, craft, and  
impact of advertising  
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**Dr. Brian Little**  
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psychologist and expert  
in personality dynamics.



**Andrew Coyne**  
Business and  
political journalist  
and commentator.

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