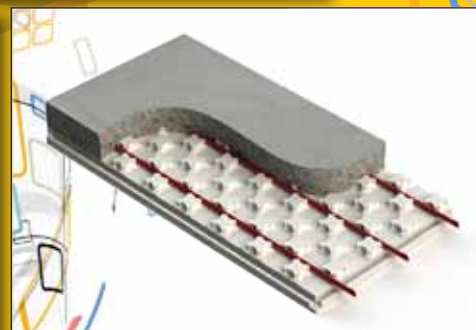


BUILDER



THE MAGAZINE OF THE CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION



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COVER



A selection of new products from our 14th Annual New Products Showcase and TOOL TALK.

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Annual Renovation Issue/ Jobsite Tools

Coinciding with the CHBA National Reno Month campaign, our popular Renovation issue looks at what's hot and what's not in building design and renovation, from kitchens and bathrooms to basements, bedrooms and beyond, plus an expanded hand and power tool section.

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Canadian Housing Trends at a Glance

OTTAWA — In 2015, housing starts activity is expected to slow in oil-producing regions, particularly Alberta, as a result of weakening economic conditions due to the decline in world oil prices. However, these declines are expected to be partly offset by increasing starts activity in other regions, particularly Ontario, where the economy stands to benefit from falling oil prices, lower interest rates, and a lower Canada/U.S. exchange rate. Key factors and their effects on the Canadian housing market include:

Mortgage rates: Mortgage rates will remain low by historical standards and supportive of housing demand.

Employment: Based on the consensus among prominent Canadian forecasters, we expect that employment will register growth in the range of 0.3 to 1.3% in 2015 and 0.5 to 1.9% in 2016.

Income: Income is expected to increase modestly as economic conditions in Canada improve. As a result, income growth will remain supportive of housing demand over the forecast horizon.

Net migration: Canada's economy is expected to continue to attract a high level of immigrants. As a result, the level of net migration will remain above its historical average and help support Canada's housing market.

Demographics: By the end of the forecast horizon, the growth rate of the Canadian population aged 25-34 is projected to begin a longer-term decline, according to Statistics Canada's projections. This, along with general population aging, will impact the type and tenure of housing demand.

Resale market: Overall market conditions remain relatively balanced and house prices, while showing modest overvaluation, are generally in line with underlying demographic and economic factors at a national level. Reflecting the risks to the outlook, the average MLS price growth is expected to range from -4.7% to 4.1% in 2015, widening to a range of -7.0% to 6.7% in 2016.

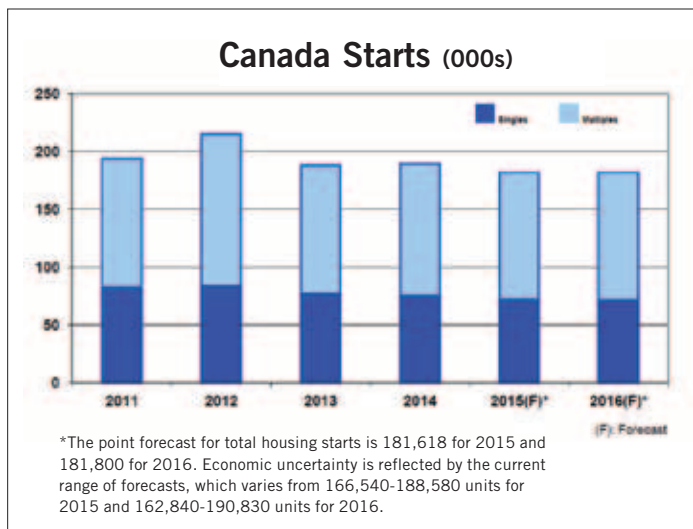
Stock of completed and unabsorbed units: The stock of completed and unabsorbed housing units to population is above the historical average, but has been declining since May 2013.

Energy Use Rises When Customers Switch to Automatic Bill Pay



People who enroll in automatic bill-payment programs increased their monthly electricity consumption between 4 and 6 per cent on average, according to research by **STEVEN SEXTON**, assistant professor of public policy and economics at Duke University. Automatic charges offer convenience, but they may be leading people to pay less attention to the cost of electricity than they would if they had to open the bill and mail in a check the old-fashioned way, suggests Sexton. The increased consumption runs counter to efforts to encourage customers to conserve energy. Sexton evaluated monthly bills from customers of South Carolina public utility Santee Cooper over a 16-year period. He reports that residential customers with energy-efficient homes used 9.4 per cent more electricity after switching to automatic payments. Extrapolating the results to the entire U.S. residential customer base, he concludes that consumers may be wasting a total of \$1.82 billion annually on this excessive electricity use.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, Yuliya Chernoval



Source: CMHC Housing Market Outlook – Canada Edition – Second Quarter 2015

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CHBA – Alberta Visits Silicon Valley



Alberta members got a crash course in how Silicon Valley home builders are responding to a red-hot real estate market during the 2015 San Jose Housing Tour. Two dozen CHBA – Alberta members heard from long-time local and MLS Listings Vice-chairman **DAVE WALSH** about one of the hottest regional real estate markets on the planet before setting out to tour more than 40 new homes over two days.

Throughout the Santa Clara Valley south of San Francisco, homes routinely attract feverish buyer interest and quick sales due to major investments in the area by companies such as Apple, Google and Facebook. That combined with shortages of new homes to send prices up faster than shares of those high-tech giants. Stair-intensive layouts were everywhere. Meeting the goal of higher density by “building up, not out” means hauling groceries up a lot of steps or paying a hefty premium for a private elevator. One common townhome layout featured a main-floor garage, half-bath and small bedroom or office. Then it was up a long flight of stairs to the kitchen and living area, followed by another steep climb to reach the bedrooms.

Buyers are seeking some features that totally fit with the Silicon Valley lifestyle: Wi-Fi boosters throughout the home to support the heavy traffic from multiple devices; bedside USB chargers so phones and tablets are ready to go first thing in the morning; and wiring for an electric car in the garage.

Representatives from 13 companies joined the tour, finding plenty of ideas to bring home while making new connections within the industry.

Email laara.braz@chbaalberta.ca if you are interested in joining the 2016 tour. 🏠

Sign Up to Receive CHBA BC's Weekly e-Newsletter

The Canadian Home Builders' Association of BC (CHBA BC) offers a *Provincial Update*, a weekly e-newsletter resource for members.

The e-newsletter includes association announcements, industry updates and periodic calls for input from members on specific regulatory issues or consultation requests from the Provincial Government and various agencies. *Provincial Update* also includes comprehensive weekly news briefs with links to interesting articles relevant to the residential construction industry in B.C. Newsletter issues are delivered to e-mail inboxes every Thursday.

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By Peter Norman

Look to Stronger Starts and Renovation Activity Next Year

Total Canada-wide housing starts averaged some 181,800 units seasonally adjusted at annual rates (SAAR) in the first five months of the year, according to CMHC, about on par with the same period in 2014. Considering the very harsh winter conditions this year, and the correspondingly low February data (152,000 units SAAR), the pace of new home building so far in 2015 has been remarkably good.

Key factors are weighing in on current housing starts and the forecast for starts through the end of 2015 and into 2016. This includes the negative impact of conditions in the energy sector (lower oil prices has led to a curtailment of capital investment in the sector with a corresponding loss of jobs in some areas), positive impacts in some exporting regions from the softer loonie and the general pick up in the pace of employment growth from a low about a year ago. In addition to this, the Altus home buying intentions index remains at very high levels.

All in all, our most recent forecast calls for just a modest decline in housing starts for the year as a whole as the “dust settles” on some of the regional economic factors, and stronger housing starts of about 191,000 in 2016.

Renovation Sector Excelling All on Its Own

From time to time I like to talk about the renovation sector in this column. While renovation activity doesn't always get the attention that new home building does from a policy perspective, it is an exceedingly important component of the residential construction industry.

This year, total spending on residential renovations will likely reach \$70 billion, making it one of the largest (after engineering investment) components of construction investment in Canada, and substantially higher than new home building. A significant amount of renovation investment is composed of DIY spending by homeowners, but even more is spent through contractors, many of whom are CHBA members. The majority of CHBA members are in some way involved in the renovation sectors. Results from this year's Pulse Survey show that while about 15 per cent of members are pure renovators, an additional 4 per cent of members derive some substantial portion of their revenues from renovation work in addition to new home building.

Renovation demand is broad based. And the residential renovation industry has grown in tandem with broad economic growth in recent years, rather than as a result of short-term stimulus or incentives.

We see growth in the industry as healthy and stable going forward into 2016 and beyond for several reasons:

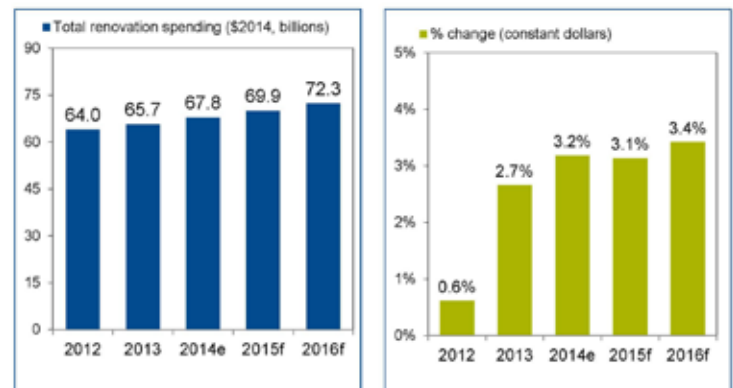
- There has been balanced growth between repairs and maintenance and capital improvements. This suggests that recent growth is not simply related to short term factors boosting discretionary spending;
- Recent growth has not been due to government stimulus. While some tax incentives are in place or expected, such as the Federal Government's Accessibility Grant and some similar provincial programs, these are generally smaller in scope and targeted, and therefore likely not been driving recent growth;
- Low and steady interest rates will continue to be mildly stimulative to the renovation sector. We do not expect a substantial change in interest rates over the next few years;
- Despite the low rates, however, there hasn't been a surge in financed renovations. Results from Altus Group's FIRM Survey indicate that about one out of every four dollars spent on residential renovations is borrowed, a proportion that has been very stable in recent years; and
- Renovation intentions are holding up. The intention of Canadian households to undertake renovations this year is up modestly, according to data from Altus Group's FIRM Survey.

We expect the value of renovation spending to increase about 3.1 and 3.4 per cent this year and next in real (inflation adjusted) terms. Spending is forecast to expand in all regions, with the strongest growth in B.C. and Ontario. ■

This year, total spending on residential renovations will likely reach \$70 billion.

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.

Growth in Renovation Spending to Continue



Sources: Altus Group Economic Consulting based on Statistics Canada data



By Bo Mocherniak

Investing in our youth is not the only answer to the skills shortage.

With over 30 years experience with audits, 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.

Noah and the Skilled Labour Shortage

I wasn't a big fan of Darren Aronofsky's cinematic interpretation of the story of Noah, which hit theatres last year. When Noah, played by Russell Crowe, had to build a boat the size of an airplane hangar, he couldn't do it alone. How did the director solve the problem for Noah? Spoiler alert: A team of giant rock monsters rose out of the earth, of course. While this construction crew was laughable, the scene did remind me that labour shortages are as old as the Bible.

According to The Conference Board of Canada, Canada faces a shortage of an estimated one million workers by 2020. This daunting fact has many in the construction industry asking: How can we possibly address the problem in time—and where will the industry find workers?

Like many complex issues, there isn't one single answer to these questions. To fill the looming gap, the industry will need to undertake a number of measures to attract new workers:

- ▶ **Attract and train the next generation.** The development of new school programs such as Acorn—which was recently announced by The CWB Group, Canada's national welding certification body—is laudable because they offer end-to-end training and a curriculum that starts in high school. By creating more programs like this, construction associations can help ensure vocational training programs are properly promoted in high schools, and positioned as viable and exciting career options for students.
- ▶ **Groom a new wave of entrepreneurs.** Skilled labour can be a very effective stepping stone for those with an entrepreneurial bent. In my practice, I see many successful private businesses started by people who built on their skills and experience in the trades. This can be an appealing selling point for young people who are disheartened by the shortage or monotony of the entry-level jobs out there—or more established individuals who simply want to escape the rat race and become their own boss.
- ▶ **Recruit more established job seekers.** Investing in our youth is not the only answer to the skills shortage. The industry shouldn't overlook workers who may have been in the workforce for five or ten years and are now looking for a new career path. It also must boost its efforts in recruiting more women to join the skilled trades—possibly one of the greatest untapped labour markets out there.
- ▶ **Lobby the government for further skills training.** In April 2015, the Ontario government announced an additional \$55

million to support apprenticeship, as well as another \$19 million for equipment upgrades and lab time in colleges and other training programs. This kind of investment will pay dividends in improving the strength and competitiveness of the economy—and we need as much of it as we can get.

- ▶ **Improve mobility.** Since apprenticeship programs are provincially regulated and administered, we need to preserve and increase inter-provincial harmonization of apprenticeship training. Programs like the Red Seal Program (which allows certified journeypersons in 55 trades to obtain national endorsement through the completion of a Red Seal exam), bilateral provincial agreements and credential recognition are all important steps. Programs like the 2009 Inter-Provincial Labour Mobility Initiative under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) are also a good start.
- ▶ **Address financial barriers.** In looking at regional skills shortages, financial barriers must be removed to further ensure the inter-provincial mobility of workers. This should include the re-introduction of federal programs and incentives like mobility tax credits—credits that go beyond just moving expenses and instead address all the hidden financial costs of mobility.
- ▶ **Improve immigration policies.** Streamlined or fast-tracked entry for skilled workers and improved recognition of foreign credentials are a start, but governments need to be more proactive in both attracting and bringing in new workers and matching their skills to regional and industry demands. In 2013, the government improved the federal Skilled Worker Program by adding industrial, electrical and construction trades to the list—but there's room to take this program even further.

While all these suggestions will help, at the end of the day, your business's survival will depend on your ability to attract and retain employees. Employees are out there—there just may not be enough of them. By investing in your people and culture, offering opportunities for training and development, creating a positive work environment, and offering competitive benefits and incentives, you can make sure skilled tradespeople are choosing to work for your company instead of the competition.

Otherwise, you might just look out across the jobsite and see a team of rock monsters unemployed since that ark job dried up. ■





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By Tim Bailey

Recent studies find that as much as 80% of the population will consult online reviews prior to a purchase.

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.

The Gold Standard for a Five-Star Reputation

The website Yelp.com now hosts over 71 million reviews and has 135 million visitors monthly. Much like TripAdvisor and Amazon, Yelp is proving that today's consumers whole-heartedly embrace online reviews and ratings. More importantly, these online reviews are impacting the success of companies. According to a study conducted by Michael Luca, an assistant professor at Harvard Business School, in the restaurant industry, "a one-star increase in a Yelp rating leads to a five to nine percent increase in revenue." The difference between a one-star and five-star online reputation can now be the difference between failure and success in attracting customers in this transparent and wired-world.

The Attraction to Reviews

Online ratings and reviews are a critical resource for consumers. Recent studies find that as much as 80 per cent of the population will consult online reviews prior to a purchase.

The human species has always sought "security in numbers" and the importance of customer reviews is not surprising. There is enormous power in group dynamics. Groups provide reassurance, security and trust for individuals, whether that group be a tribe, organization or community.

The online world is similar. Today's connected economy allows consumers to consult with "like groups" before making a purchase. A car shopper can read reviews from customers that already own that make and model. This allows a car shopper to use information from customers that already own the vehicle when deciding on a "best-suited" purchase. The collective opinion of a group has tremendous influence on individuals and the connected world has simply made groups more easily accessible.

Earning the Fifth Star

The world of online reviews is not "all negative" as many believe. In the case of Yelp, 39% of reviews are five-star compared to only 13% that are one-star. The secret lies in understanding what it takes to deliver a five-star experience to today's customers. It is what Disney calls the "Magic," or in the case of The Ritz Carlton, it means providing the "Gold Standard" for each customer. A high-quality product and high-quality service falls into the three-star and four-star world today. Bundling that product and service with an exceptional customer experience advances the meter further. The final ingredient for a

five-star reputation is adding an element of "surprise and delight" for each customer. That is the "wow" element that transforms customers into champions.

The Gold Standard

Hiring, training and empowering employees and managers is critical to a five-star reputation. Front-line employees at The Ritz Carlton are provided with 300 hours of training in their first year and 120 hours of training each year after. "Putting on the Ritz" customer experience is not left to chance, but is rather a discipline that runs deep to the core of the company. The Ritz-Carlton has developed a training manual that describes over 1,000 different scenarios that might go wrong in a guest's experience, along with solutions on how to recover. Employees and managers are taught that anyone who receives a customer complaint "owns" that customer complaint until it is resolved. Front-line employees are empowered to spend up to \$2,000 to address a customer issue without authorization and managers can spend up to \$5,000. These are just a few examples of how the Ritz-Carlton creates such a differentiated customer experience. But even greater than the "service recovery" techniques in place at The Ritz, is the fact that all employees are trained to anticipate the unspoken needs of guests to create moments that are unique, memorable and most importantly, personal. These are the "surprise and delight" moments that have made the brand iconic.

Customer Opinions Trump Marketing

The Ritz-Carlton was founded before the era of online reviews; however the company has long known that its brand reputation comes from past customers. Obsessed customer focus has placed companies like the Ritz-Carlton in a better position for today's world of transparency and online reputation.

"For the first time in business history, aggregate opinions of quality can trump brand, marketing and advertising spend," according to author Bill Tancer. Highly rated brands are commanding a premium in the market.

That is the reason leading companies continue to direct increasing resources towards customer care, as it has become an even more critical component of brand marketing and advertising in this customer-empowered world. Enchanted "word of mouse" customers become online brand champions and home builders that deliver a "five-star experience" will continue to rise above the falling stars of the competition. ■



The Building Science of Septic Drain Fields

Septic drain fields, also called leach fields or weeping beds, are extremely important in treating wastewater. The septic tank offers a level of primary treatment while the drain field and soil beneath provide the final treatment before the water re-enters the ground water system.

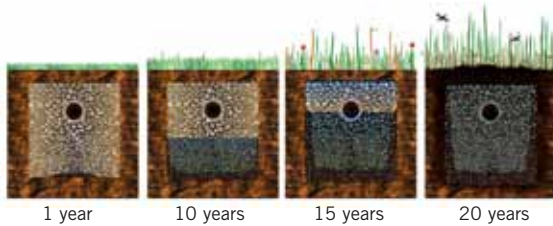
BY GARY SHARP

Traditionally, the fields are most often a number of independent trenches connected by a header pipe, but the principles involved apply to all drain fields.

How Drain Fields Age

Wastewater moves from the septic tank to the field trenches, then flows through the stone until it reaches the soil. There, it is processed by naturally occurring soil bacteria. A biological mat (biomat) of wastewater solids and bacteria forms at the soil/stone interface and this thickens over time, and eventually blocks the movement of water into the soil. Water then ponds in the trench and the biomat begins to form on the sides of the trench.

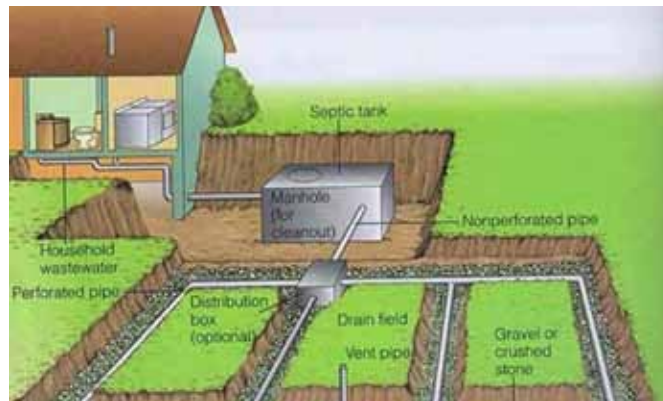
Over time, the buildup of the biomat can seal the trench so that water cannot escape to the soil. When this occurs, wastewater flows out of the ground or on top of the septic tank, or—even worse—backs up into the house. At this point, the septic field has failed. About 90 per cent of field failures are due to biological clogging.



Can Failure Be Stopped or Reversed?

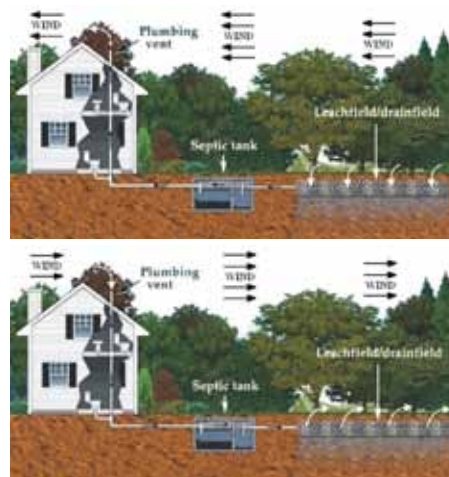
The drain field bacteria are aerobic; they require oxygen and use nutrients in wastewater as food. As bacteria process waste they create more bacteria, require more oxygen, and produce more carbon dioxide. Lack of oxygen in the drain field system is similar to lack of ventilation and fresh air in a room: just as people get sleepy, so do the bacteria.

When the drainage trench is first installed, the oxygen level (in the spaces between the stones) is similar to that in air—about 21 per



Typical trench design drain field

cent. After a few days, and even before any wastewater gets into the trench, the oxygen level drops to 19 per cent because of the naturally occurring soil bacteria breathing. Once wastewater is introduced into the system, the bacteria consume more oxygen and its levels drop to between 0 and 6 per cent.



Passive ventilation of the drain field.

Oxygen gets into the drainage field as a result of the vent stack on the house and its connection to the septic tank. The septic tank has an air space above the water line and the tank is connected to the pipes in the field. In the case of drain fields, we rely on the wind to provide the pressure difference that moves air into the drain field. This

passive ventilation depends completely on wind pressure.

Obviously, it doesn't work very well since the oxygen content in the trench is less than 6 per cent when the oxygen level above ground is 21 per cent. As we know with housing, we can't rely on the wind to provide adequate ventilation for the occupants (or the bacteria!)

Within the drain trenches, bacteria die from lack of oxygen. Biomat is primarily dead bacteria. So we need to get oxygen to the bacteria. One solution is to add mechanical ventilation to force air into the drain field.

With mechanical ventilation, air fills the trench and, because it is under pressure, it creates turbulence and a pressure difference that reduces carbon dioxide buildup at the bottom of the trench by replacing it with oxygen-rich air. The bacteria respond to this by returning to the work of processing the wastewater and, as an added benefit, they consume the biomat.

Research has shown that the bacteria respond to this "oxygen rich" environment by increasing their numbers by up to 135 times over non-ventilated trenches. Also, different species of bacteria show up that are even better at processing wastewater. The result is better treatment of the wastewater and less chance of a drain field failure.

For generations we have been building septic systems that building science shows will fail, yet we are surprised when they do. There is no reason for a drain field to fail if ventilation is provided. The research supports this, and experience demonstrates that even "failed" systems can be recovered by adding mechanical ventilation.

One system specifically designed for ventilating drain fields is available from SoilAir. www.soilair.com. Check with your local building official to determine permit requirements for installation.

Gary Sharp is the Director of Renovator Services, CHBA.

Landmark Group of Companies Making Net Zero Affordable

REZA NASSERI, founder and CEO of **Landmark Group of Companies**, is a gifted entrepreneur whose focus on innovation has helped Landmark grow from its Edmonton roots to be a leader in environmentally friendly building technologies, and its recent expansion into Arizona. Building homes was always something Nasserri loved to do; his company progressed from building a few homes a year in the late 1970s, to roughly 600 to 1,000 homes a year today—and he did it by asking himself a simple but potent question: “How can I do it better?”

BY JAN FIORE

Net Zero

Members of the Edmonton and Calgary Region Home Builders’ Associations, Landmark has been building energy efficient homes since 2007, and evolved to offer Net Zero homes in 2012. However, energy efficiency comes at a price, and affordability was a concern for them. In their quest for constant improvement, they decided to set themselves a challenging goal: to make Net Zero homes affordable by the end of 2015. As they progressed through the journey, Landmark realized they were dealing with some complex challenges when applying the Net Zero energy concept to the suburban neighbourhoods they typically build in. As a result, they adjusted their goal to be “Net Zero ready” by the end of 2015, and continue to work towards it.

Solarmax Power Inc. was created in late 2011 to develop solar PV, augmenting methods already being used for energy conservation. Having in-house expertise and the ability to make volume purchases helped them make solar more affordable for customers. Similarly, working directly with manufacturers on other products, and cutting out the middle-



man, delivers a better value for the products they purchase, enabling them to pass on the savings to the consumer. Perhaps the most significant factor in reaching net-zero energy is to really tighten the building envelope. Landmark contracts ACQBUILT, a company that specializes in precision building by robotics, to construct their homes. Houses are built in a 150,000-square-foot facility that uses German

▲ 2013 Net Zero Lottery home in Edmonton, Alberta. Landmark’s second Net Zero home, and their first in the Edmonton Region. Highlights include a 16.35 kW solar PV system, R40 wall insulation, R16 underslab insulation, R80 attic insulation, triple pane windows, cold climate air source heat pumps in lieu of standard natural gas furnaces, an energy recovery ventilator, low flow water fixtures, drainwater heat recovery, and an air source heat pump hot water tank.

◀ Living wall in the 2014 Net Zero Lottery home in the region of Edmonton, Alberta. In addition to the features of the 2013 home, highlights include reclaimed wooden beams from an old farm house in rural Alberta, two living walls and an Urban Cultivator (modern indoor garden). Net Zero features include a 14.72kW solar PV system with inverters providing a secure power supply of up to 1,500 watts of daytime power in the event of a grid outage, and an electric car charging station.

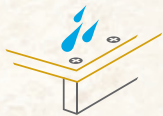
technology to build all of the main components of the house, using engineered lumber: interior and exterior walls, floors, roof, stair cages, some front verandas, windows and doors. Precision building eliminates waste and rework; walls and floors are straight with a tolerance of one millimetre, minimizing gaps and holes. Landmark is seeing excellent air-change readings, blowing industry standards out of the

WEATHER IS BRUTAL. BUILD STRONG.



Introducing AdvanTech® Roof and Wall Sheathing

From the creators of AdvanTech® flooring, #1 in quality for over a decade¹, AdvanTech sheathing contains moisture-resistant resins to protect against the damaging effects of weather during construction and over time. In addition, it is Structural 1 rated to provide excellent shear resistance and added strength to your roofs and walls. Compare AdvanTech sheathing to plywood and you'll see there is no comparison.



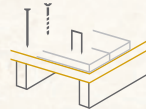
Moisture
Resistance



Industry-Leading
Warranty



Strength
& Stiffness



Fastener
Holding Power



Structural
1 Rated



Installation
Speed & Ease

Receive up to a \$600 Rebate on AdvanTech® Sheathing.
Visit WeatherIsBrutal.com/homebuilder36 to learn more.



Also try ZIP System® sheathing & tape.

1. Based on Builder Magazine's 2012 Brand Use Study which surveyed 6,000 builders. 2. Limitations and restrictions apply. Visit advantechperforms.com for details.
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This product's Environmental Product Declaration (EPD) has been certified by UL Environment. HUB 3278 07/15



▲ Sparrow Landing was Edmonton's first Net Zero townhome community, doubling the number of Net Zero energy homes in Edmonton.

► Technicians install solar panels on a Landmark home in the neighbourhood of Cranston, Calgary.



14 ► water, and advancing their objective of achieving a price point that everyone can afford.

Landmark Cares Program

Landmark is known for its “giving back” philosophy, which originated with its founder and CEO. A strong advocate for giving back to the community, Reza enabled Landmark to make significant and lasting contributions

March 2015 with Aerium, a townhome project in Scottsdale and Aerium Encore, a sister project in Old Scottsdale. These will soon be followed by another coming down the pipeline, Center 8, in Phoenix. Arizona is a natural progression for Landmark, since it's a popular destination for people from Alberta, who often have second homes in the region. Having an established brand in the neighbourhood gives Albertans the option of purchasing from a familiar and trusted vendor. 🏠

Houses are built in a 150,000-square-foot facility that uses German technology to build all of the main components of the house.

to charitable and community initiatives. The company's community support program titled Landmark Cares was established in 1996. To date, Landmark Cares has contributed over \$11.5 million to local and international organizations, with a particular focus on health and well being, environment, affordable housing and homelessness, arts and culture, education and community development.

Future Plans

Landmark has recently expanded into Arizona, breaking ground on their first project in



Panels built in the ACQBUILT manufacturing facility are assembled on site by a crew and the assistance of a crane.



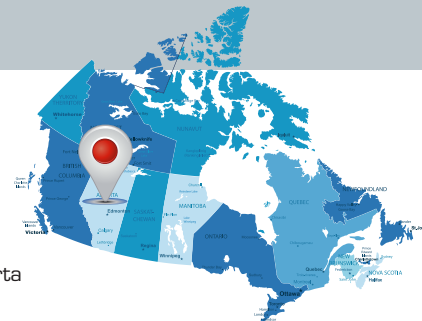
A wall panel has sheathing secured in place with computer numerically controlled (CNC) machines.



ACQBUILT employees install sprayfoam insulation, giving the home excellent thermal performance and a rock tight seal.



ACQBUILT employees ensure windows are installed with precision and accuracy.



By Jim Rivait, CEO CHBA – Alberta

Alberta

Positive Trends and a New Government

A recent national newspaper headline reported: “Jobless benefits surge in Alberta as oil shock takes vicious toll.”

That conjures up images of growing lines at soup kitchens and boarded-up homes after the province’s oil-fueled economy runs out of gas—an impression that is reinforced by frequent declarations that Alberta is headed for a recession. The reality is less dramatic and far more positive than many economic forecasters had expected at the start of the year.

The Conference Board of Canada was one of the first out the gate with the prediction that GDP would shrink 1.5% in 2015. While the Board still expects GDP will fall this year, it retreated substantially in the spring when it pegged growth at -0.7%.

Economists have been surprised by the strength of the job market despite layoffs in the energy sector. The province’s 5.8% unemployment rate is a full point below the national average and only Saskatchewan and Manitoba boast lower levels.

Over the past 12 months, oil prices slid from \$100-plus a barrel to the low \$40s and then climbed back into the high \$50s. During that time, Alberta’s economy created 38,000 new jobs—an increase of 1.7%. This helps explain why the housing market is also proving more resilient than expected.

CMHC forecasts that housing starts in Alberta will decrease this year by almost 14% from 2014 levels to 35,000 units. That’s a significant decline but it follows four consecutive years of strong gains—including a 20% spike in multi-family starts.

Total housing starts this year should exceed the five-year average of 32,500 total units started between 2010 and 2014.

An RBC Economics report saw positive trends in the province’s housing markets in early June. “Home sales picked up this spring from the depths they reached during the winter months. Perhaps more importantly, new listings

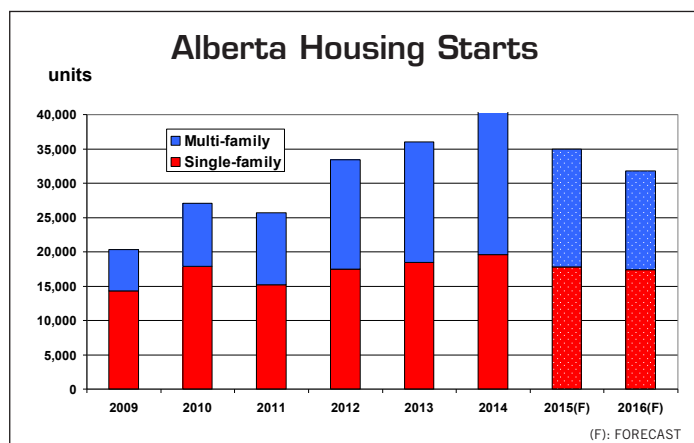
reversed much of the uncertainty-driven surge recorded late last year, thereby suggesting that confidence in the housing market is returning,” RBC said.

TD Economics also pointed to Alberta’s success in riding out the oil price downturn after May housing starts data was released. “The major surprise in the details is the strength in housing starts in oil-producing provinces,

Economists have been surprised by the strength of the job market despite layoffs in the energy sector.

as Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador (+63.8%) all posted gains. This comes as May employment data continued to show very modest impacts of lower oil prices on the labour markets of these provinces.”

While economic uncertainty remains a factor, the province is doing far better than media reports suggest.



SOURCE: CMHC

A New Government

Albertans are used to getting a new Premier—we had four Conservative Party leaders in the position in as many years—but this spring brought the first change in the governing party in 44 years.

The transition period is expected to take several months. The Alberta NDP under Premier **RACHEL NOTLEY** began a short session of the Legislature in mid-June intended primarily to provide the government with spending authority until a budget is introduced at a full session this fall.

Premier Notley has gone out of her way to assure industry that she wants to work together on building Alberta’s economy. The NDP was the only party during the election campaign whose platform specifically raised the issue of housing affordability.

The party promised to reverse planned increases in mortgage and land registration fees by almost \$1,000 on a typical home, and cited the impact on affordability for home buyers.

The government has also promised an energy efficiency strategy that could provide renovation jobs and lower the environmental impact of older homes.

We are waiting to see how election promises will be rolled out, including higher corporate income taxes, raising the minimum wage to \$15 by 2018, a review of energy royalties and support for affordable housing programs.

This is a particularly critical time for our industry because of ongoing reviews of the Municipal Government Act, a promise to grant Calgary and Edmonton new powers through City Charters, and finalization of regulations for the new Condominium Property Act.

While the governing party has changed, CHBA – Alberta’s goal remains the same: work in partnership with the provincial government to provide Albertans with the homes they need at prices they can afford.

14th Annual New Products Showcase



From attics and foundations to floors and doors, this year's batch of entries is one of our most innovative yet.

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK

Drywall Screwgun Model DCF620D2

New to its 20V MAX line of power tools, DEWALT announces the launch of the DCF620 20V MAX brushless lithium-ion drywall screwgun with Extreme Runtime (XR), designed for drywall carpenters looking to cut their power cords. The new drywall screwgun is ideal for both residential and commercial drywall hanging applications—driving screws into both wood and steel studs. A Collated Screw Auto-Feed Magazine Attachment

(DCF6201) will also be available for users looking to drive collated strips of screws. Collated screw systems allow users to work faster, while minimizing dropped/wasted screws.
www.dewalt.com



Strong-Drive SDWH Timber-Hex HDG Screw

The new Simpson Strong-Tie Strong-Drive SDWH Timber Hex-HDG screw requires no pre-drilling and replaces 3/4" and 5/8" bolt, washer and nut assemblies, saving installers' time and cost. It is specifically designed to resist severe corrosion levels in heavy-duty marine and coastal applications, such as piers, boardwalks, structural pilings and docks. This .276" diameter hot-dip galvanized screw features a SawTooth point and an oversized .930" diameter oversized inter-

gral washer, which eliminate the need for pre-drilling and a separate washer. Reducing the installation time with a fast, easy driving screw is particularly beneficial to installers who are either on a lift or suspended 15 feet off the ground drilling holes through 12-14" thick piles. The screw's hot-dip galvanized coating meets the requirements of ASTM A153, Class C, making it suitable for heavy-duty marine and coastal applications. Another key benefit is the ability to install it from one side of the pile. The SDWH Timber Hex-HDG screw is available in five lengths, ranging from 4" to 12" and features a 3/8" hex-drive head for secure driving.
www.strongtie.com



Elite+ Front Entry Doors

Westeck Windows and Doors is proud to launch the new Westeck Elite+ exterior door collection. These modern, European doors are decorative, discreet and high quality. Elite+ doors are designed for the discerning customer. They embody modern aesthetics and allow for the ultimate in customization and performance. Doors are available in any powder-coated RAL

colour or your choice of five wood decors. Choose a stainless steel or designer material inlay for further appeal. Designer hardware includes the latest in door lever and handle styles as well as technology including biometric finger-scan entry and built in exterior Led lighting. Industry leading insulation values using quad-pane warm edge sealed units achieve U value ratings as low as 0.13Btu. The design choices are endless with door dimensions up to 45" wide and 98" tall as well as options for matching sidelights or transoms. Westeck Windows and Door's is located near Vancouver BC with two plants and 160 dedicated staff members.
www.westeckwindows.com

AlumiPro Cedar Renditions



New in 2015, Royal Building Products' AlumiPro Cedar Renditions combines the strength and durability of aluminum siding with show-stopping curb appeal exclusive to the Canadian market. Aluminum siding has been a popular cladding material on Canadian homes for decades with little to no innovation in product offerings until now. Based on feedback from customers and homeowners, Cedar Renditions is Royal's answer to the demand for updated, innovative aluminum product development. Perfect for accent siding, main siding and soffit, Cedar Renditions features unprecedented wood grain detail that looks like real cedar wood from any vantage point. Unlike real cedar siding, this product is

virtually maintenance-free without the flammability issues. Additionally, Cedar Renditions is between one third and one half of the cost of real cedar, yielding high design at a lower price point. Easy to install and LEED compliant, Cedar Renditions™ is 100 percent recyclable and made from 99 percent recycled content. It is also moisture proof and backed by an industry leading 25-year prorated limited warranty. Cedar Renditions™ is available in three beautiful shades that resemble real wood: Amberwood, Sycamore and Spanish Moss. Profiles include D4, D4 Designer and V Groove. www.royalbuildingproducts.com

SmartCode 10 Touchscreen



Weiser SmartCode 10 Touchscreen pairs cutting-edge technology with unmatched security and sleek design. The SmartCode Touch is a keyless, touchscreen deadbolt and the newest product to offer Weiser's patent-pending SecureScreen technology to consumers. SecureScreen technology helps prevent the problem of "smudge" attacks associated with touchscreen locks. With typical

touchscreen locks, passcodes can potentially be jeopardized by unwanted guests detecting frequently used numbers and characters from the oily residues left by fingers on the touchscreen surface. With SecureScreen a, users are prompted to touch two random numbers in order to display the full screen and enter the programmed access code. This industry-first technology encourages continuous use of the full screen to mask the correct access code. SmartCode Touch installs in minutes with no hardwiring required: a Phillips head screwdriver, four AA batteries and a ruler are all that's needed to install the deadbolt. The deadbolt features a master code that prevents unauthorized users from adding or deleting user codes for extra security. The SmartCode Touch is available for purchase at select retailers. www.weiserlock.com



MemBrain

Introducing CertainTeed MemBrain, the Smart Vapour & Air Barrier Film. Moisture is an issue for every builder and the hidden risk in every home—particularly in climates with extreme seasonal fluctuations. CertainTeed has a revolutionary way to help get it out with MemBrain. It looks similar to typical polyethylene sheeting, but is actually a patented polyamide-based material. What makes MemBrain unique is its ability to adapt its permeability depending on climatic conditions. Available at home centres across Canada. www.certainteed.com

LEGACY Line of Vinyl Membranes



Duradek, the original Walkable Roofing Membrane, responds to market demands for naturally inspired textures and colours for outdoor living space with its new LEGACY line of vinyl membranes: "Inspired by Nature. . .Designed to Withstand It." Legacy Pebble Beach: Duradek has perfected the trend of a natural stone look on low maintenance outdoor walking surfaces with Pebble Beach, which brings a remarkable aggregate pebble appearance to decks in a simple, one-step application while maintaining the reliable, low maintenance waterproof protection you have come to trust from Duradek. Legacy Barnwood and Driftwood: A look similar to aged wood without sacrificing safety, security or waterproofing peace-of-mind. Up close, you can recognize the characteristics of the vinyl membrane with its slip resistant, textured surface; but when laid out on a deck, the colour blends and pattern allow the eye to pick up the traditional appearance of wood grains. Exclusively installed by trained profes-

sionals, Duradek has been the leader in waterproof deck membranes for over 40 years and provides low maintenance, stylish solutions for outdoor living space. www.duradek.com

Cellular PVC Trim

Ply Gem PVC Trim and Mouldings are an accessible, low-maintenance alternative to traditional wood trim, designed to work well with nearly any siding type. Now available across Canada through Mitten Building Products distribution locations, Ply Gem Trim and Mouldings enhance the home around windows, doors, columns, eaves and more. Unlike engineered wood, Ply Gem cellular PVC trim holds paint better, won't crack or rot, especially in damp climates and extreme temperatures, is resistant to insects and does not contain chemicals like treated wood. Available in smooth or an authentic woodgrain finish, Ply Gem Trim and Mouldings offer a wide range of design features and versatility that take a home from simple to stunning. www.plygem.ca



19 ▶ New Reveals

Plastic Components' New Reveals—and PVC trims—for fibre cement board deliver a cleaner job and a better finish. Plastic Components manufactures a variety of rustproof PVC trims for 5/16" and 1/2" cement board systems that protect the board edges and manage moisture infiltration. Matching reveals create aesthetic details. Conforms to ASTM standards. www.plasticcomponents.com



Precast Concrete Foundations

Superior Walls Alberta now offers precast concrete foundations for new construction projects throughout rural and metropolitan areas of Alberta. Located in Claresholm, Alta. Superior Walls Alberta manufactures dependable precast concrete wall foundations for residential and commercial projects. The innovative Xi Walls systems are created in a factory-controlled environment and then installed in one day on the job site by certified crews, so that builders can immediately begin construction.

In 2012, the Canadian Construction Materials Centre (CCMC) declared Superior Walls precast concrete insulated wall panels were evaluated for use in Canada. Xi wall panels feature steel reinforced concrete and 2-1/2-inches of insulation to create a permanent barrier against sidewall water penetration. Unique features include:

- 5,000+ PSI concrete
- Steel-reinforced top bond beams, concrete studs and footer beams
- Horizontal steel rebar inside top and bottom beams
- Vertical steel rebar inside each stud

www.superiorwalls.ca



Wet/Dry Vacs

The new line of RIDGID Professional Industrial Wet/Dry Vacs was built specifically for commercial and industrial users. The line features 12 vacs designed to exceed job-site and user demands.

Along with standard high-performance features such as powerful motors, professional hoses and easy portability, the line features two cutting-edge models: the Motor-on-Bottom (MOB) 1650RV and Smart Pulse RV3410.

The MOB, the first-ever vac to have the motor on the bottom, has 24 percent more power than any other RIDGID vac. The additional power adds no extra noise due to the integrated Scroll Noise reduction system and the drum surrounding the motor. The position of the motor creates a stable, low center of gravity so it won't tip over.

The self-cleaning Smart Pulse Wet/Dry Vac—ideal for fine dust applications—has two filters and an integrated sensor that continuously monitors suction efficiency. When the sensor detects a pressure difference, it automatically begins an alternating, pulsing cycle to push air through the filter, thereby cleaning the filter.

All RIDGID Professional Industrial Wet/Dry Vacs are equipped with features that professionals want, like upgraded, long-life Pro Hoses, Quick LockT fastener-free filters and long power cords. The vacs are backed by the RIDGID Full Lifetime Warranty. www.ridgid.com



The Builder's Choice.

COLOR TRIMS FOR STONE VENEER



Eliminate painting with Plastic Components' colored trims for **stone veneer applications**.—sill screeds, casing beads, drip edges *and more!* The colorant runs throughout – so there's no chipping or loss of color in these UV rated trims.

- 10 ft (3 m) lengths
- Meets ASTM standards and Canadian code requirements



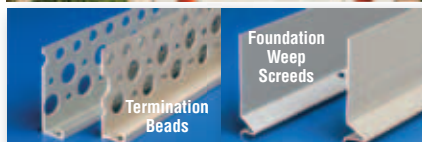
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Panorama Universal Post



Meet the new generation of Topless Glass Railing Systems: the Panorama Universal Post, a 2 1/2" x 2 1/2" post with a new, triple-channel design that enables a single post to function as either an inline, corner or end post.

The multi-function insert component provides the ultimate versatility for custom projects allowing you to adjust your glass height and angles (up to a 60° variance) for a nearly limitless range of options for your outdoor designs.

Features:

- 30° multi angles
- Surface or Fascia mounted
- Optional top rail cap
- Available in 9 standard / 180 custom colours
- Accommodates unique shapes and custom designs like curves and angles
- Option of different glass types or alternate material options for a louver look.
- Gap from deck to glass allows for easy cleaning and snow removal
- Ideal for wind wall applications
- Privacy screen or Fencing options possible

Durarail is manufactured by Excell Railing Systems Ltd. It is sold exclusively through the Duradek network of professional waterproof contactors who have been specializing in decks and rails since 1974. www.excellrailing.com



Heat-Sheet

Installing radiant floor tubing has never been so quick and easy with Heat-Sheet:

- Compact (2' x 4') and easy-to-handle Heat-Sheet panels securely interlock together.
- Tough preformed nodules resist jobsite breakage and form the multi-directional tubing channel grid.
- Tubing easily "walks into place" (in half the time or better)
- Stays in place (without ties, clips or staples in most cases)

www.heat-sheet.com



ColorTouch Programmable High-Resolution Touchscreen Thermostat

The Venstar ColorTouch residential and commercial programmable high-resolution colour touchscreen thermostat features Wi-Fi inside for access anywhere, anytime via Venstar's Skyport Cloud Services and Venstar's free Skyport mobile app. The ColorTouch delivers top-of-the-line programmable HVAC control and features up to four heat and two cool stages; gas, electric or heat pump control; dual fuel capability; setpoint limiting; API for third-party monitor and con-

trol; humidity sensor; simple-as-you-want operation for ease of use; programmable fan; and remote and outdoor sensor readiness.

The ColorTouch can also be programmed to display a custom picture gallery of up to 100 files to be used as a screensaver, wallpaper or slideshow. The ColorTouch also offers Automated Demand Response (ADR), which enables users to participate in utility-generated load shedding events as well

as the ability to support the handling of specific signals from the utility provider. Venstar's free Skyport mobile app is available for Apple iOS, Android and BlackBerry mobile devices or directly from the Web to instantly access and control multiple thermostats at numerous locations. ColorTouch thermostats are now available online and throughout North America from Venstar's exclusive network of Wholesale HVAC Distributors. www.venstar.com



Attic Hatch



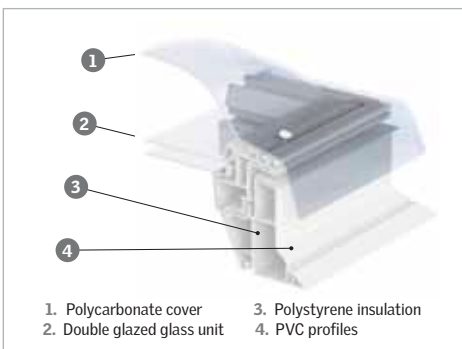
21 ▶ All Weather Windows is excited to announce its latest innovation that will help save builders time and ultimately lead to more energy efficient homes. The new Attic Hatch is an easy-to-install, low maintenance, and readymade innovation. It is made almost entirely of recycled materials, including a thermally broken PVC frame and recycled door cutouts that reduce air flow. Rather than standard-grade weatherstripping, the Attic Hatch uses automotive-grade stripping to form an airtight seal. The optional insulation dam allows for attic access while maintaining insulation. The Attic Hatch meets new building codes and comes in R36 or R60 installation values for build-

ers trying to reach the highest R-rating. In April, the Attic Hatch won Product of The Year at the annual Durham Region Homebuilders Association (DRHBA) awards. The Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association also named the Attic Hatch the Innovation of The Year in February. The Attic Hatch concept was conceived during one of our many conversations with builders looking to streamline construction and provide the very best in energy efficiency—the ideal product for those builders who see every aspect of construction as an opportunity to save energy. www.allweatherwindows.com

CVP Flat Roof Manual Venting Skylight

Opening up a flat roof with a skylight or Sun Tunnel can transform a room and fill it with natural light. VELUX offers a range of options for flat roofs, which are all designed to add a design statement, keep heat loss to a minimum and let in natural light. The impact in terms of daylight and fresh air is transforming. The VELUX CVP is a manual venting flat roof skylight with a control rod that allows for ventilation. The unit has an insulated

built-in curb, double-glazed flat glass and a polycarbonate cover for added energy efficiency. The special structure of the dome deflects the rain and hail, while the combination of an exterior dome, double-glazed low-energy flat glass and insulated curb reduces aircraft and traffic noise along with other disturbances. The PVC exterior frame is maintenance free and installation is easy! www.velux.ca



Wall Beds

Have you noticed that spaces are getting smaller? Clients are looking for more space saving design solutions to maximize the function of their homes. In response to the increased amount of multi-family development and multi-generational homes in the housing market, Superior Cabinets has just launched a new line of Wall Beds.

Superior's wall beds meet the need for a well-appointed space that serves multiple functions, even in a small space. They can be used as a stand-alone solution or can be incorporated into a cabinetry design that will serve multiple purposes. Your space can be designed for use as a home office, den or sitting room that you will use daily, but can be easily converted into a room that will make your guests comfortable. This easy-to-use wall bed folds away when not in use. The piston lift mechanism is easy to open when needed.



It has a folding one-piece support leg with stabilizing bar making it simple to set up. The wall bed frame has beech wood slats for improved bed comfort. The Minimum Depth Requirement for a Superior Cabinets Wall Bed is only 16 1/2" when the bed is closed. www.superiorcabinets.ca

Zip System Stretch Tape

ZIP System stretch tape is a one-piece installation flashing tape that easily stretches to fit sills, curves and corners without having to piece tape segments together. The tape is made of a high-performance composite acrylic and conforms to challenging applications, locking out moisture even over mismatched surfaces. Additionally, ZIP System stretch tape can be pulled up and reapplied for hassle-free installation, providing a tight, energy-efficient seal in no time! www.huberwood.com



Glass shower doors

Basco Manufacturing, a leading manufacturer of custom glass shower doors and enclosures, has launched two dynamic

glass options, Strata and Vessence, within their Infinity, Deluxe and Supreme product families. The newest glass options are available in seven of the RODA by Basco collections.

The two glass options offer new textures that join an extensive collection of finishes for the shower enclosure. Strata offers a subtle obscure view through textured lines that rain down the panel, while Vessence features light aesthetics of texture through varying champagne like bubbles gliding down and around the glass surface. Each glass option is available in 1/4" and 3/8" thickness. www.bascoshowerdoor.com

High-performance flooring

AdvanTech flooring is a high-performance engineered panel designed to replace plywood and commodity oriented strand board (OSB) floor sheathing. Fabricated in highly controlled production facilities utilizing advanced resin technology, AdvanTech flooring delivers the total performance package of strength, fastener holding, moisture resistance and quality. AdvanTech panels help eliminate floor bounce and squeaks by being manufactured to meet ESR-1785 specifications. This report documents the higher design strength of AdvanTech panels, which also feature fastener holding power to keep fasteners securely in place. For moisture resistance, AdvanTech flooring, backed by a 500-day no sand guarantee and lifetime limited warranty, has one of the lowest water absorption rates in the wood structural panel industry.

www.advantechperforms.com



Maxum 9

Maxum 9 is the latest addition to the H-P Products Central Vacuum power unit family. With new innovations that improve performance and dampen motor noise, H-P has made significant improvements that will appeal to a variety of homeowners. Unlike its predecessors, the Maxum 9's 240v motors are arranged in a series configuration that results in greater suction power, better long-term performance and effective dirt-free cleaning, with less noise.

Families with children who suffer from asthma or allergies will appreciate the CleanShield disposable filter bags that eliminate exposure to airborne particles since there is no recirculation of vacuumed dust or allergens. Two to three times a year, homeowners simply remove, seals and replace the bag without releasing accumulated dirt or debris.

The new generation of homeowners that will soon flood the market will look for new homes with built-in technology that makes life easier. Central vacuums with Maxum 9 power bases are easy to install in homes big or small and allow for quick, convenient clean up around the house. Builders who seize opportunities to install central vacuums as a part of their larger home builds, and even light commercial spaces, will appeal to a generation conditioned to technologies that enhance convenience.

www.h-pproducts.com



JUST ANOTHER CASE OF WINDOW ENVY.

Visit allweatherwindows.com/builder to find out why we stand out from the crowd, and don't be surprised if your job site attracts more attention.



OFFICIAL PARTNER



allweatherwindows.com/builder





Jane Morgan
President, CHBA

We have so much in common in our industry, regardless of where we live and work.

Overcoming Geography

This spring, I was privileged to visit a number of local Home Builders' Associations—in Lindsay and Barrie, Ont., as well as Nanaimo, B.C.—during a week-long trip. In all three cities, I was grateful for the warm welcomes and great engagement provided by my fellow Association members. I also took away two very strong impressions from these visits:

- The first is that Canada is a really big country. From my home town of St. John's, Nfld. and Labrador, it's just as far to Dublin, Ireland, as it is to Winnipeg. And Vancouver is the same distance away as Rome, Italy.
- The second is that these incredible distances don't seem to matter all that much. We have so much in common in our industry, regardless of where we live and work. And within our Association, we face many of the same issues and challenges at all three levels. It's why we come together in the Association, and why our Association is more important than ever.

Common Issues and Common Perspectives

The meeting of the Peterborough and Kawartha Home Builders' Association, held in nearby Lindsay, really drove home to me how common our experience is.

During this engaging evening, members were asked to identify the issues they have to deal with in their businesses, and want their local Association to address.

This exercise was revealing. In broad terms, most of the issues that were discussed in Lindsay are of similar concern here in St. John's, and in most communities where CHBA members work:

- Dealing with increasingly complex regulations, whether on development and approvals, health and safety, new home taxes, or building codes.
- Pushing back against the perception that business profit is somehow a "dirty word" and that the high price of new homes is something that we, as builders, have full control over.
- Affordability—and the diminishing capacity of first-time home buyers to gain a foothold in the market due to the many forces pushing up the cost of a new home.



Executive Officers Forum Workshop Focused on Increasing Member Engagement

In broad terms, these are the same concerns I hear about from members in every part of the country. And in every case, members look to their Association—locally, provincially and nationally—to engage with governments and get action.

So while our geography may be a challenge, what we have in common clearly overcomes these vast distances. Today, more than ever before, we are one Association working at three levels to a common purpose.

Association Staff: The Foundation for an Effective Home Builders' Association

In my last message, I focused on the vital role that member volunteers play in making our Association effective at all three levels. As businesspeople, our volunteers bring authentic and direct experience to bear in defining our industry's concerns, and representing these to governments.

Equally important is the work done by our HBA Executive Officers (EOs) and staff at the local, provincial and national levels. Professional staff keep the machinery of our Association functioning, and make it possible for volunteers to be effective in their efforts. Simply put, they look after the business of running a HBA, from organizing dinner meetings to supporting the Board and committees to providing the expertise needed to work with governments on important issues.

As members, we ask for, and expect, a great deal from our Executive Officers. It is equally important that we support them in developing the skills and professional networks that assist them in getting the job done.

In late June, I was pleased to spend some time with a great group of Executive Officers at this year's Executive Officers' Council Professional Development Forum in St. John's—the 26th year for this event.

With ever-increasing emphasis on the power of collaboration between local, provincial and national levels in our work with governments, the role of our EOs has become even more crucial to our collective success.

At the Forum, EOs spent two days focused on some key topics: membership recruitment, engagement and retention, effective use of digital and social media, and how those in government view our industry and Association. All important areas where we can really benefit from having EOs collaborate and share their experience and expertise.

I can report that our EOs are a committed and talented group of professionals. We should all be very grateful our Association has such impressive staff supporting us. I know I am.

CHBA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Kevin Lee
CEO, CHBA

CHBA will shortly be sending every federal candidate nominated by the major parties a housing information package.

“Affordability” Issue Gaining Traction

Just over a year ago, we issued our CHBA call for a “new conversation” about homes, communities and Canadians—one focused on affordability.

We highlighted the growing affordability gap, particularly as this impacts younger people and families looking for their first home.

In the interim, we have worked hard at the federal level to get this conversation started with those on Parliament Hill and within the federal government.

I’m pleased to report that these efforts, through collaboration at all three levels of the Association, are producing results.

Our advocacy efforts, including our day on Parliament Hill, made CHBA the number one federal lobby group in the month of May, with some 61 meetings with Parliamentarians. This, and our narrative on affordability, caught the attention of the national media. In late June, *The Globe and Mail* ran an article specifically on our advocacy efforts and our messages around affordability. This was quickly followed by a request to appear on CBC’s *The Exchange with Amanda Lang*, where we were again able to emphasize the importance of addressing affordability for first-time home buyers as a macro-economic priority for Canada.

As subscribers to CHBA’s daily *Industry Highlights* will know, these are but the latest examples of how we’ve seen the media’s coverage of housing issues shift significantly over the last year to include far more about the real issue around affordability and how rising home prices are affecting both people and communities.

This was exactly what we set out to achieve when we began this work. CHBA has been changing the conversation with government decision-makers to be about how to help your customers, who are their voters, given the affordability challenges they face today. We’ve explained the root causes of upward pressure on house prices, what governments can do about it, and what this means for younger Canadians, families and our communities.

Certainly in our discussions with those on Parliament Hill, affordability is increasingly recognized as the important issue it is. It’s equally great to see the media begin to focus on affordability more often, and in a more

informed way. We’ll be keeping up this important work in the months ahead.

By the way, if you don’t get Industry Highlights by email, and would like to, let us know at communications@chba.ca. This daily quick-hit compendium of housing-related stories—and how CHBA is addressing the issues they cover—is a free service available to all members.

CHBA Summer Candidates 2015 Campaign

Parliament has now risen, and MPs won’t be returning to Ottawa until after the next federal election. It’s shaping up to be an interesting campaign, and our discussion on affordability has been geared toward informing the party platforms that are emerging.

The buildup to the official election call marks a valuable opportunity to get the housing issues that concern Canadians and CHBA members front and centre as federal candidates vie for voter attention and support. In what looks to be shaping up as a hot campaign over the summer and early fall, housing issues need to be part of the discussion in every riding.

CHBA will shortly be sending every federal candidate nominated by the major parties a housing information package. This will include our summary of the economic impacts of our industry at the national, provincial and community levels. They will also get a copy of our housing issues paper *Continuing the Conversation About Homes, Communities and Canadians – Recommendations on the Federal Role*, which focuses on affordability, jobs and innovation, and the underground economy.

We are also maintaining a social media campaign on affordability throughout the campaign from our @CHBANational Twitter account, which will disseminate infographics on affordability and other housing issues, anchored by a dedicated website: www.affordability.ca.

CHBA is looking forward to working with local HBA leaders throughout the campaign period as they engage at the riding level to make sure housing is part of the conversation at All-Candidates meetings and in one-on-one discussions with candidates wanting to represent their community on Parliament Hill.

Our goal is to ensure that when the House reconvenes later this year, every elected MP, regardless of party affiliation, knows that housing issues are everyone’s issues, and that by collaborating with our industry we can begin to address these issues to the benefit of all Canadians.



CHBA’s advocacy efforts and messages around affordability were brought to the forefront on CBC’s *The Exchange with Amanda Lang*.



TOOLTALK ON STEROIDS

Jon Eakes delivers an expanded Tool Talk, in recognition of Home BUILDER's 14th Annual New Products Showcase



PORTABLE & LIGHTWEIGHT

Years ago I complained that cordless miter saws were a bad idea as they just couldn't do the work demanded for very long. With new battery technologies they have become a viable site tool. **DeWalt** has entered the market with a new very portable, lightweight model (31.6 lbs. with its 20V MAX battery) designed for basic renovation work. The 7-1/4" Sliding Miter Saw (DCS361) features a single left bevel that ranges from -3° to 48° left. With a 3-1/2" maximum vertical, 3-5/8" crown nested, and 2x8" horizontal cut capacity, the DCS361 will handle most of the common cuts needed in renovation. They added a cut-line light for more accurate trim work. www.dewalt.com.

CUTS LIKE BUTTER

A brushless motor, a power controller and extended battery power have also brought the small 5-3/8" circular saws strongly onto

the construction site as shown with **Milwaukee's** M12 FUEL 2530-21XC. I didn't believe this one until I cut a stack of three half-inch OSB panels like butter the full four feet, again and again. This small diameter 12-volt tool was working as well as a larger diameter 18-volt saw. It has a 1-5/8" cut capacity at 90°, allowing it to be used for dimensional lumber as well. Its extreme lightweight at 5.35 lbs. allows it to be hung from a belt while climbing around in a structure.

Note that the shoe is on the right hand side of the blade, what we used to call a left-handed saw. Originally designed by Milwaukee for electricians that are often trimming plywood mounting panels down to size, this allowed a right-handed user to walk along the panel rather than stretching out, as you see in this photo. (I am sure that the photographer told the person in this picture to shift hands so he could see the saw, rather than showing off how a



right-handed worker can trim panels more easily with a left-handed saw. (Once again the cameraman takes a great shot that misses the point.) www.milwaukeetool.ca.

UNINTERRUPTED PERFORMANCE

Even **Paslode's** Impulse line of gas-fired tools is looking at improving performance with better batteries. Their new 18GA Brad Nailer is listed as Impulse Lithium Ion, indicating how they can achieve longer uninterrupted performance by going to Lithium Ion batteries—50% more performance and an 8% lighter tool. A new battery standby position also extends that battery power once at work. An 80% charge in

30 minutes certainly helps to keep this tool going. And it is exclusive to Canada. www.paslode.ca.



CORRECTION FOR MARCH ISSUE ...

I am so used to associating Paslode with their gas-driven Impulse nailers that I tend to forget they have a whole line of pneumatic tools at the core of their business. So in March when I introduced their new CS150 Cap Stapler (not yet available in Canada) I wrongly listed it as a hose-less tool when in fact it is in their pneumatic line-up. The next time I get excited about the features of a new tool I need to do all my homework.

TIGHT ACCESS

Milwaukee is reducing space requirements as well, enabling their M18 2776-21CT Right Angle Impact driver to drive steel stud fasteners from inside the confines of a steel 2x4. Thank you, Milwaukee. This compact two-speed tool uses a 1/4" Hex drive and provides 350 in.-lbs. torque in Mode 1 and 675 in.-lbs. in Mode 2.

In an almost identical similar slim design, Milwaukee's 2668-21CT is a 3/8" square drive right-angle two-speed impact wrench giving



very tight access with impact sockets, bringing impact power to machinery previously too encumbered to reach.

CARBON TIPPED

Malco has brought out a new line of Quick Action Carbide Tipped Hole Saws. The heart of this innovation is a hub that slides both further out and closer in on the pilot shank and drill. Push a release button on the hub to change hole saws by sliding the hub right off of the pilot drill and sliding a new saw with hub back



on. The same hub can be run back on the drill shaft towards the drill to act as a plug release. Large carbide teeth give a large enough kerf for easy plug removal.

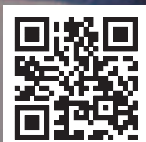
Malco's CT hole saws are designed to cut through such hard materials as fibre cement siding. The extra-long pilot drill stands a full 1" proud for a controlled start, even over uneven siding. With a generous 2-1/4" cup depth, the CT hole saws are available from 1-3/8" to 6-5/16" in diameter. www.MalcoProducts.com.

GETTING WHERE OTHERS DON'T GO

Crescent Tools is changing the game in pipe wrenches. Their CPW12 Self Adjusting narrow pipe wrench gets where others don't go and bites better as well. Rather than making the head of a pipe wrench out of forged steel, they have seven layers of laminated steel that allows for great strength at only 1/2" thick. The teeth are stronger and more aggressive. Then

the real innovation is to get away from the traditional screw drive to adjust the jaw opening. Simply pull the spring-loaded jaw back to full open. Move in on the pipe and flick the jaw forward— it simply grabs at the right size. This 12" long wrench will grab pipe from 5/8" to 1-1/2" in diameter.

When I put a conventional pipe wrench and the Crescent on the same steel pipe, the Crescent won the twisting contest until I got the traditional teeth properly set; then it was a stand-off. The CPW12 was instantly tight and ready to go every time we reset the wrenches. www.crescenttool.com.



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CLEVER COMBINATION

The X6 Pass-Thru Adjustable Wrench Set (CPTAW8) from Crescent was just as impressive as the Pipe wrench. This time they took what looks like a traditional adjustable hex wrench, which we interestingly tend to call generically a “Crescent Wrench.” On the working end you see their traditional square or hex adjustable wrench jaw. If you thread the jaw completely open, the adjustable face is reversible and you now have an adjustable light duty pipe wrench. On the other end of the tool where there is normally just a hanging hole, you now have a pass-thru ratchet. It comes with 10 sockets, which allows the screw to pass through while ratcheting down the nut. I don’t usually like combination tools very much, but this one is solid and useful.



SUPER SLEEPER

Here is one sleeper of a hand tool that I have been wanting to show you for a long time and I just found out it is now easily available on Amazon.ca. The Milwaukee 48-22-4005 Offset Compound Tinner snip makes child’s work of cutting tough material like stucco screening. You need big hands to use this, as the handle opens up quite wide while the jaws move much less. It is that compound cam action between the handles and the jaws that transmits great power to the blades. \$32 on Amazon.



SELF-ADJUSTING HOSE CLAMPS

I don’t often talk about simple hardware, but **Ideal Clamp Products Inc.** just impressed me. They call it their self-adjusting SMARTSEAL stainless steel hose clamps. Basically it is a regular hose clamp, but on the inside there is a strip of stainless steel forming an adjustable ring. This transfers all the pressure of the clamp down to the profile, which is smooth and continuous even under the screw drive mechanism.

With its integrated two-piece design, the clamp assembly and the SmartLiner with channel design, SMARTSEAL provides spring compensation over 360 degrees. That’s right, a self-adjusting clamp that provides a 360-degree seal! The improved clamp roundness eliminates leak paths.

On one model the inner liner is smooth, great for softer hose. On the Wave Seal version, a “W”-shaped trough design on the inner ring creates higher pressure loading compared to conventional worm gear clamps. SMARTSEAL is not your conventional clamp as it “grips” by penetrating deeper into the hose wall over a narrower cross-section (footprint). Comes in all standard clamp sizes.

www.IdealTridon.com

JOBSITE BRIEFCASE

They call these tool bags, but I call them jobsite briefcases. **VetoProPac.com** is a small independent and innovative tool bag company from the US Northeast. They have just stepped away from their primary line of tool bags to launch the LT or Lap Top series. Many people who come onto a work site need their office, and maybe a couple of measurement tools, more than they need power and hand tool storage. Hence the Veto Pro Pac LT series is basically a business bag with site essentials—lots of file folder space and some hand tool and measuring device space. Most importantly it has a protected centre section for that laptop



or tablet. The rest is built rugged, including a sturdy waterproof base for dropping it down in a dirty space, something you would never do with your briefcase.

The Veto Pro Pac XLT recognizes that some trades don’t need a lot of paper space, but do need electronic and measurement tools as well as the laptop or tablet, especially when dealing with wiring controls and calibration tasks. Hence the XLT shifts out document space for small tool space while keeping that computer or tablet highly protected in the middle. Both bags have a sturdy handle and a shoulder strap. www.VetoProPac.com.



TOOL TALK



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

YOUR CHBA

Canadian
Home Builders'
Association



Together, we're making a difference.

With collaboration among all three levels of the Association, your CHBA is getting the job done. Standing up for what matters in your business, and to your customers. In its 2015 budget, the federal government delivered on many things CHBA has been seeking to support your business:

- **Small business taxes will drop from 11% to 9%.**
- **A permanent Public Transit Fund will pump billions into much-needed transit systems to support development and hopefully avoid more development taxes.**
- **A new home accessibility renovation tax credit will direct consumers to CHBA professional renovators, while combating underground “cash” operators.**
- **Federal reinvestment in CHBA's *Get it in Writing!* campaign will help consumers understand why hiring a professional is their smartest move.**

Your company, and 8,500 others, make CHBA a powerful voice that government respects and listens to.

Together, we contribute \$125 billion to the economy and generate over 900,000 jobs across Canada in every community, large and small. We build communities. We create the places Canadians call home.

Our voice matters. And it's members like you that make our collective voice strong.

Your CHBA. Working for you, on Parliament Hill and all across Canada.



Working with government and seeing results.

(Pierre Poilievre, Minister of Employment and Social Development, CHBA CEO Kevin Lee, Kerry Lynne Findlay, Minister of Revenue)



Discussing housing issues with all parties.

(Justin Trudeau and CHBA CEO Kevin Lee)

Online Reviews a Major Influence for 76% of Canadians

TORONTO — A recent national survey by HomeStars found that even though online reviews were influencing purchasing decisions in general, they were not always being consulted when hiring home service professionals. Despite the fact that home improvement can cost thousands of dollars and is also an on-going investment in the largest single asset of most Canadians, a staggering 75 per cent admitted to never checking online reviews before hiring home improvement professionals. Surprisingly, only four per cent of Canadians always use reviews when hiring a contractor.

“For diligent buyers, reviews are an important first step in the purchasing process—especially for larger home improvement projects,” said **NANCY PETERSON**, CEO and founder of HomeStars. “This is why authentic reviews are so important. One wouldn’t book a week at a Caribbean resort without checking reviews and hiring home contractors should be approached the same way.”

People are influenced by online reviews—68 per cent had changed their mind on buying a product or service based on a review they had read. Regarding

trust, two-thirds feel online reviews are either “somewhat” or “very” trustworthy, but there is lingering doubt among the remaining one-third of Canadians about whether reviews are real. While HomeStars’ tips on how to detect a fraudulent review are geared to homeowner, contractors can also use this checklist as a way of monitoring their own reviews:

- Look for details about the work done and their experience with the company. Names, photos and detailed descriptions are indicative of an authentic review.
 - Do an online search of the contractor’s name to learn more about them.
 - Some websites flag reviews that seem suspicious. Check recent reviews for flags or reasons why a review was removed.
 - If several reviews are written too similarly, it may be the same person with different usernames.
 - If the writer has reviewed more than one company, it usually signals an authentic reviewer writing about different jobs done in their home.
- For more information, visit www.homestars.com.



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CHBA Releases Its First Nationwide Market Research Study

TORONTO — Results of an inaugural survey of recent new home buyers across Canada illuminates nationwide trends in current home buyer preferences. Conducted and produced by Avid Ratings Canada in partnership with the CHBA, the first-of-its-kind survey reveals new data in more than 50 in-depth areas of home design, building features, buying preferences and demographics.

More than 12,000 home buyers were surveyed in the nationwide market research study. The detailed report contains comparisons by seven customer segments, including single/couples without children, growing family with children, downsizing family, semi-retiree/retiree seeking a mixed-age community, semi-retiree/retiree seeking an age-restricted

community, investors, and second/vacation home buyers.

The Canadian Home Buyer Preference National Study is broken down into five main sections. Following are some of the highlights from each:

Characteristics of New Home Buyers: Nearly half of today's home buyers (46%) are comprised of Generation X with Generation Y (millennials) following closely at 38%. Based on the data, in today's market single couples with no kids are the largest cohort buying new homes. While 35% of respondents would prefer a single-family detached two-storey home for their next house, the largest item buyers are willing to compromise on to reduce the cost of their next home is the size (22%); none of

the respondents would compromise on quality or energy efficiency.

New Home Search Process: 85% of Canadian home buyers begin their home buying search online, with every age group using it to begin their search. Social media is the second largest trend, with 52% using it as a resource to find their next home. Every age group is relying on the virtualization of model homes and product reviews to find their next home, with 86% of buyers considering virtualization of model homes as an important tool and 89% using online customer reviews to make their home buying decision.

Overall Home Design Preferences: In 2014, walk-in closets and energy-efficiency dominated the "must-have" list for new home buyers. Over two-thirds (68%) of consumers consider walk-in closets as a non-negotiable feature in their next home, with an equal number of buyers highlighting energy-efficient appliances as their most important "must-have."

Mid/High Rise Amenity Preferences: For mid- and high-rise buildings, 24-hour security, WiFi throughout the building, and an in-building health and gym club are the largest sought after components.

Community Amenity Preferences: Health and wellness concerns top the list of community preferences as well, with walking trails, bike paths, parks and recreation being cited as the most sought after amenities. Landscaping rounded out the list with 41% of buyers wanting move-in ready, fully landscaped communities.

The full study and report are available for purchase through the CHBA at www.chba.ca/buyersurvey.aspx.

Ontario's Building Trades Welcome Construction Health & Safety Action Plan

TORONTO — The launch of an Advisory Group to assist the government in developing and implementing a Construction Health and Safety Action Plan is welcome news for Ontario's construction workers. The aim of the Plan is to strengthen workplace injury and illness prevention for construction workers across the province. As part of the Advisory Group, worker and employer representatives will work with the Chief Prevention Officer to provide recommendations to the government on how to best promote and secure workplace health and safety. In 2013, 26% of Ontario workplace deaths were in the construction industry, despite it only accounting for 7% of the workforce.

"The continued number of construction workplace injuries and fatalities is unacceptable," said **PATRICK DILLON**, Business Manager of the Provincial Building Trades. "The best chance for success will have to entail close co-operation between workers, employers and government, but also a systemic shift in the way that health and safety is talked about, perceived, and acted upon. To achieve success, health and safety must be at the forefront of every project—from the procurement and design phase, to workforce preparation and training, to project completion, and at every step in between."

The Provincial Building & Construction Trades Council of Ontario is an organization that represents 150,000 construction workers



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

- August 7-11**
Accessibility Innovation Showcase
TORONTO, ON
www.oce-ontario.org
- August 12-13**
Avid Conference: Building Excellence & Innovation
MADISON, WI
www.avidratings.com
- September 29**
TCA Convention
Tilt-up Concrete
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ
www.tilt-up.org/convention
- October 14-16**
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GAF Materials Corporation	32	973-872-4300	www.gaf.com
Huber Engineered Woods LLC	15	416-400-4562	www.AdvanTechBuildStrong.com
Malco Products Inc.	27	800-328-3530	www.malcotools.com
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Plastic Components, Inc.	21	800-327-7077	www.plasticcomponents.com
Robinson Lighting & Bath Centre	7, 30	604-879-6847	www.robinsonlightingandbath.com
Royal Building SOLUTIONS	3	614-754-3463	www.RoyalBuildingProducts.com
Sage Software, Inc.	4	866-420-7289	www.sagecre.com
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