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13th Annual Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey

The 13th Annual Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey is published in collaboration with the Demographia group in Illinois and the Frontier Centre for Public Policy in Winnipeg.

Authors Wendell Cox and Hugh Pavletich explain that many “best city” surveys do not include housing affordability in their calculations. This oversight is particularly relevant to the middle class, for which fluctuations in housing prices are significant.

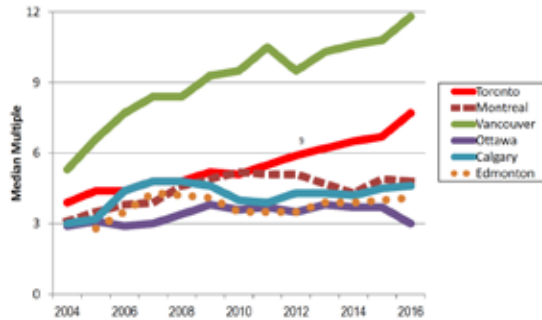
The survey employs third-quarter data from 2016 to establish the affordability of middle-income housing in the large urban centres of nine countries: Australia, Canada, China, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, the United States and the United Kingdom. To compare

Ontario Building Trades Welcome Fair Wage Review

TORONTO — Ontario’s Fair Wage policy has effectively been frozen since 1995. If updated, it would require contractors bidding on government-procured work to pay their workers a wage based on identifiable, best-documented prevailing rates specific to each discipline of the construction sector, across various regional areas of the province.

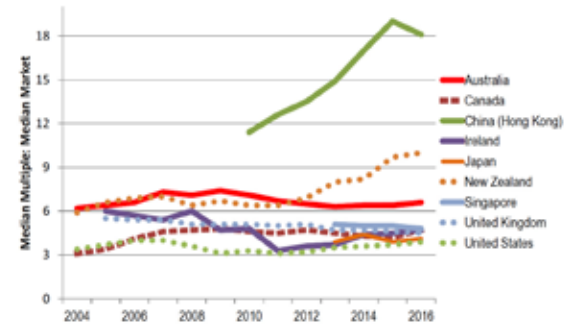
“If sufficiently updated, the Fair Wage policy has the potential to shrink the underground economy in construction by legally requiring contractors bidding on government work to pay their employees a fair wage,” said Patrick Dillon, Business Manager of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council. “This would level the playing field for legitimate contractors, which would in-turn shrink the underground economy, boost skills training and productivity, as well as improve health and safety.”

Middle-Income Housing Affordability
CANADA: MAJOR HOUSING MARKETS: 2004-2016



DEMOGRAPHIA INTERNATIONAL HOUSING AFFORDABILITY SURVEY: 2017

Housing Affordability: 2004-2016
MAJOR MARKETS (OVER 1,000,000 POPULATION)



“affordability” the study employs the “Median Multiple,” which divides the median housing prices by the median household income.

The results demonstrate that major Canadian markets (population over one million) may be experiencing a housing bubble, with Vancouver’s housing prices rising by a full year’s household income in just one year. However, several minor urban centres in the Maritimes have housing prices ranked as affordable. Moncton was the most-affordable urban market in Canada, with a Median Multiple of 2.1, well below the affordability threshold. Fredericton followed closely behind at 2.2, then Saint John at 2.4 and Charlottetown at 2.6. At the opposite end of the spectrum are Toronto (7.7) and Vancouver (11.8). Download the complete report here: www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf.

B.C. Budget 2017: Tax Savings for First-Time Home Buyers

VANCOUVER — The provincial budget includes new tax savings for both first-time home buyers and small businesses. These changes are welcomed by the Canadian Home Builders’ Association of British Columbia (CHBA BC).

Effective for registrations made on or after February 22, 2017, the threshold for the first-time home buyers program for the property transfer tax (PTT) will increase to \$500,000 from \$475,000. The partial exemption threshold has also increased to \$525,000. This will now save first-time home buyers up to \$8,000 in taxes, which is an increase of \$500.

CHBA BC recommended an increase to the first-time home buyers’ program in its 2017-18 pre-budget submission to better reflect rising home prices. In 2014, the threshold for the exemption increased to \$475,000 from \$425,000.

“CHBA BC has advocated for changes to the out-dated property transfer tax structure for many years, and this reduction in tax is positive for first-time home buyers in all areas of the province,” said CHBA BC CEO Neil Moody. “It may seem like a small increase, but it represents that the program is keeping pace with rising home prices. It provides a larger threshold for first-time home buyers to purchase within and receive the tax savings.”



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Manitoba HBA: Everyone Loves a Parade



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The Manitoba Home Builders' Association (MHBA) is pleased to be presenting the Spring Parade of Homes commencing Saturday, March 4 and concluding on Sunday, March 26. This annual rite of spring features over 130 show homes in Winnipeg and surrounding communities such as Steinbach (65 km), Niverville (45 km) and Brandon (200 km). During this three-week period, over 35,000 people will visit these show homes masterfully created by 34 MHBA member builders in 39 unique neighbourhoods.

The Parade of Homes continues to be the premier event on the MHBA calendar. Originally, it was developed as a Fall Parade during the last two weeks of September and the first week of October. However, the Fall Parade was so successful that a Spring Parade was added 15 years ago.

The Parades of Homes provide the best exposure, focus, awareness and selling opportunities for new home builders in Manitoba. Not only are visits to show homes more frequent than any other time of the year, hits on the MHBA website, which leads to hits on builder websites, skyrocket during these two three-week periods. The Spring Parade of Homes kicks off the buying period each new year.

The MHBA publishes 90,000 copies of a 146-page magazine that is distributed throughout demographically targeted neighbourhoods—available in the show homes and through feature sponsor locations. Television, radio, billboards, social media, street signage, newspaper



COURTESY ARTISTA HOMES

and all other available media are used to promote the Parade.

Even the largest builder could not create this much media exposure and awareness for their product. Where else could the smallest builder with one show home be featured alongside larger builders with a dozen show homes?

During the Parade, all show homes must be open and fully staffed from 3:00–8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 12:00–6:00 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. It is not uncommon on a sunny Sunday afternoon to have visitors lined up outside the door waiting to get inside.

Realizing that not everyone is in the market for a new home, the Parade is a successful tool for renovators and suppliers too. Consumers visit Parade homes to get ideas to renovate their homes, and to buy appliances and furniture that they have seen in professionally designed Parade show homes.

The Spring Parade of Homes opened on March 4. Once again, MHBA builders have been eagerly greeting thousands of potential new home buyers.

Submitted by Mike Moore, President, Manitoba Home Builders' Association.

Reza Nasseri Appointed to the Order of Canada

EDMONTON—CHBA - Alberta Hall of Fame inductee, **REZA NASSERI** of **Landmark Group**, was recently appointed to the Order of Canada. Reza is recognized for his innovative leadership in the construction industry and for his sustained commitment to charitable and community initiatives. He is redefining leadership in the corporate world.



Reza is an Alberta-based home builder who has made significant and lasting contributions to charitable and community initiatives, with a particular focus on post secondary education, health care, the arts and programs and support for immigrants. He arrived in Edmonton on a cold day in December 1964 with a grand total of \$75 in his pocket.

The Landmark Group was showcased in the July/August 2015 issue of *Home BUILDER*. Congratulations Reza Nasseri!

Association to Association

Does your regional or provincial Home Builders' Association have news or information to share? A recent survey or poll? A new program or fundraising initiative? If you have a newsworthy item that would interest other Association members across the country, e-mail editor@work4.ca for consideration. Please put "Association to Association" in the Subject line.



By Peter Norman

For all the talk about hot and cold housing markets, the amount of new units authorized for construction, nationally, has been very stable recently.

Don't Be Surprised by a Strong 2017

2017 is off to a great start with January housing starts rising to some 207,400 units seasonally adjusted annual rates (SAAR), but opinions still differ about the forecast ahead. It's a great time for home builders to contemplate the potential for the year ahead, and I say don't be surprised by a very strong 2017. 2016 turned out to be a mediocre year for renovators but in the end a pretty good year for new home construction, at least in some parts of the country.

Looking forward, an improving economy across more parts of Canada and still strong consumer sector will generally be good for the housing sector in Canada, although housing policy headwinds may continue to add some uncertainty, especially regionally.

Canada-wide total housing starts came in at an estimated 197,916 units in 2016 according to CMHC, up 1.2% from 2015, and are also off to a strong start in 2017 rising to 207,400 units SAAR. For all the talk about hot and cold housing markets, the amount of new units authorized for construction, nationally, has been very stable recently. Over the past five years starts have averaged 196,800 units (very close to the 2016 total). 2016's performance was boosted in particular by strength in B.C., Ontario and Quebec (up 35, 7 and 3% respectively). By contrast, declines in energy regions such as Alberta (down 34%) and Atlantic Canada (down 7%) created the offset. This contrasting activity regionally combined for a very decent year in terms of new home construction. Starts just shy of 200,000 units, while consistent with my forecast a year ago, are well above the average consensus among forecasters, which entered 2016 with expectations of about 185,000 units.

By contrast, renovation activity appeared to take a bit of a break in 2016. Based on preliminary data from the first three quarters of 2016, investment in residential renovation projects stalled—only matching year-before levels. This follows a period of several years since the recession where investment was advancing at an average annual real rate of 1.6%.

More Consistent Performance in 2017

Expect better economic conditions—and less regional variation—to bring more consistency to the housing sector for the remainder of 2017. The consensus economic forecast for 2017 has higher oil prices and thus a bottoming out and reversal of the recent drag from energy-sector capital investment, an improvement in business investment, stronger government investment—especially boosted from federal infrastructure spending—a still-strong consumer sector, and a continuation of the up-tick in growth through net exports that emerged at the end of 2016. The net exports expectations may well be the least certain, because questions continue as to the possible effects of changing trade policies under

Peter Norman is VP & Chief Economist at Altus Group and leads a national team of economic advisors providing policy analysis, feasibility assessment and economic intelligence to the home building and real estate industry. He can be reached at peter.norman@altusgroup.com.



the Trump administration.

From an interest rate perspective in Canada, there has been considerable discussion about higher rates related to a potential rise in rates in the U.S., but Canadian rates are more likely to stay stable and there is a possibility of seeing lower long-term rates by the end of 2017 from where they are now.

How Canadian housing starts respond to all of this will certainly be a regional story again in 2017. Land and housing prices have been elevated for the past few years in Vancouver and Toronto in response to sharp supply shortages of new housing. The surge in new home sales and starts in 2016 in Vancouver has already started to bring more balance to prices, but this process has not yet begun in Toronto where there is an especially high need for new single-family homes. Demand remains strong in both Ontario and B.C. As a result, I expect to see housing starts remain elevated.

By contrast, demand has been pretty weak across the Prairie provinces over the past few years as a local recession has weakened housing demand and reduced migration. There does, however, remain resilient consumer and investment confidence in Alberta in particular. As a result, expect some recovery in housing starts as the economy bottoms out and improves, as it is expected to do in 2017. A boost from rebuilding efforts in Ft. McMurray will also be a factor. Modestly stronger housing starts, in response to improved migration trends, are also expected in Atlantic Canada.

On net we expect housing starts will at least hold up to the numbers seen in 2016 nationally, as weaker regions improve and stronger regions stay relatively buoyant.

In terms of renovation activity, 2017 should see a modest boost in investment activity, as still-low interest rates, improved home equity, and the effects of an aging population all point to higher demand for renovation projects.



By Bo Mocherniak

A Peek Into the Future

What can real estate builders and developers expect in 2017?

Because it often takes several years for a shovel to hit the ground, real estate developers have to anticipate future market demand with the launch of every project. Typically, a project's feasibility is modeled using a set of assumptions around pricing, financing costs, both hard and soft construction costs, and market absorption. Even small changes in consumer demand can have a significant impact on the home buying market, which translates into a new set of assumptions and expectations for developers.

These feasibility assessments have become increasingly challenging in light of recent government intervention impacting foreign buyers. Depending on the severity of the market forces, many developers in Ontario are wondering if it's time to consider re-evaluating certain projects, beginning with those that may have been



A number of lenders are also starting to tighten up on loans to developers.

marginal to start. While it may not be time to pull the chute quite yet, it should be noted that the future is far from certain.

A Changing Market

It has been argued that over the past few years, foreign purchasing behaviours have been a significant contributor to the overheated markets in Vancouver and Toronto.

This includes many foreign buyers taking advantage of tax loopholes by claiming homes as their primary residences while they continue to live overseas. This misrepresentation allowed them to be exempt from the capital gains tax when it came time to sell. To stop this, the Canada Revenue Agency now requires all homeowners to report the sale of a primary residence. In addition to this measure, the British Columbia government introduced a 15% foreign buyer tax for real estate in the Vancouver area in July of this year, which could potentially be introduced in other markets as well.

Recent indicators from the Vancouver area show that the 15% buyers' tax implemented in July, which became

effective August 2, 2016, has had an almost immediate effect on the consumer market. "Buyer fatigue has been a huge factor, especially in the detached house market. Now, we're not having those crazy multiple offers," Dan Morrison, president of the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, told *The Globe and Mail* in October of 2016.

Reports from the B.C. government show the number of foreign buyers in the Vancouver area housing market dropped in the first month of the tax, although it is assumed that this was due to a rush to close transactions before August 2. However, the downturn in Vancouver may have more of a long-term impact. Cameron Muir, chief economist at the B.C. Real Estate Association, forecasts the average price of a home in B.C. will drop 6.4% 2017 as a result of the move.

Toronto Mayor John Tory is asking the Ontario government to begin monitoring property purchases by foreign buyers, although the government has not yet committed to the idea of gathering more housing data. It is entirely possible that if government intervention is implemented in Toronto, the market will experience a cooling effect similar to that in Vancouver.

Shifting Economics

Economic trends will also have an impact on developers. With the United States recently hiking interest rates, this is already having an impact in Canada as several banks have increased their residential mortgage rates. Although it is not generally anticipated that Canadian banks will materially raise rates in the near future, these increases in the United States will likely affect development activity.

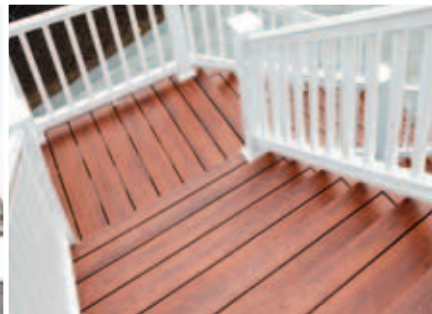
A number of lenders are also starting to tighten up on loans to developers. In fact, some institutions have hit their limit on allocating funds to real estate projects. Some lenders will only lend to existing clients and are limiting the amount that they are giving. Developers may have to look for alternative lending sources in the future.

There have been many reports in the news about the large debt levels that Canadians are taking on. For now, it seems only the lending institutions are becoming concerned about borrowing capacity, but if homeowners start worrying, this could have a significant ripple effect within the industry.

Facing the Future

Should developers be concerned about the appetite for Canadian real estate? Most certainly they should as there are lessons to be learned and there are signs that the tides may be shifting, and momentum is a powerful thing. That said, no one knows for certain what the future may bring. ■

With over 30 years experience with audits, acquisitions, divestitures and valuations, Bo Mocherniak, CPA, 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.



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By Peter Andersen

Will Canada Be Trumped?

Now, more than ever, it's time to build a financial house of bricks

When the wolf finally showed up, everyone was surprised. No one was prepared. There had been too many false warnings. It is an old story, but it is worth remembering. We are now getting close to seeing it play out again.

The current decade has been very friendly to Canada's home builders. Interest rates have stayed close to historic lows for a long time. Until recently homeowners have not been seriously threatened by job loss. Home buyers have been willing to pay increasingly higher prices. According to the Bank of Canada, house prices are now running at almost six times average household income. In the GTA, the price of new ground-oriented homes is now over \$1 million. The basic problem has been a critical land shortage in key markets. This problem not going away.

Housing Market

The housing market warnings that we have been hearing for a long time are now sounding more believable. Canada could be facing both an interest rate shock and rising unemployment before the end of 2017. This could be a game changer for home builders. Such a double-barrelled hit would be something new, which could pull out the rug for home sales.

At the beginning of a new year, comprehensive risk management calculations are always a good idea. They are never a fun thing to do, but this year they are more important than ever. The probability of a bad outcome in the coming year is now much higher than in previous years, and it increases the further out we go toward the end of 2017 and into 2018.

One of the problems with putting things into perspective is the fact that many builders and trades are so busy right now dealing with the backlogs of work in progress. Elevated pre-sales mean a very busy spring construction season. It could feel like the wolf will never arrive. However, for those of you who remember the dark days for home builders in the 1990s, the message "cash is king" will be familiar. In a worst-case scenario, which should always be part of your risk management process, Today's pre-sales could turn into tomorrow's walkaways.

Interest Rates

An interest rate spike sometime in the next 12 months could be a tipping point for increasingly vulnerable Canadian housing markets. The upward pressure on interest rates will come from the United States. Higher U.S. government bond yields will spill over into Canada—they always do. Government bond yields determine what

happens to mortgage rates. It does not matter what the Bank of Canada does. It cannot stop the spillover of higher bond yields into Canada.

It was not that long ago that the yield on the benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury note was at its low for the year (1.36% on July 8, 2016). In February 2017, the rate was 2.33% and could go much higher. Market psychology has done a U-turn.

Red Flags

In the Trump years, strong fiscal stimulus will be applied to a U.S. economy that is already near full employment. The focus now is on an increased probability of both strong U.S. economic growth and accelerating U.S. inflation.

The employment situation has always been a key indicator for the housing outlook. It is another problem for Canada's home builders. Job gains are still weighted toward lower income part-time work. Employers do not have enough confidence to make longer-term commitments to an expanded workforce. For the 12 months ending in January 2017, more than two thirds of the increase in employment was in part-time work. This is a red flag for Canada's housing industry.

Dampened Investment

There is no doubt that Canada's economy is struggling. However, uncertainty over NAFTA and possible U.S. trade action will add to the build-up of unhealthy pre-conditions and will dampen investment and hiring plans in 2017. The "Blue Wall" states (Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Wisconsin) were of critical importance in Mr. Trump's victory. His supporters there will expect payback through some form of action against Canada.

This issue will take time to develop. However, the uncertainty itself will have a direct effect on Canadian business confidence, on the willingness to expand capacity and on hiring decisions. Mr. Trump's position on trade increases the probability of job losses in Toronto, Vancouver, and across Canada.

First-time Buyers

The housing outlook in 2017 and beyond for entry-level buyers is particularly challenging. In today's replaceable and global job market, viable careers and income security are hard to find. This is particularly applicable to the millennial generation. Traditional work does not offer the benefits and incentives that it did in earlier decades. The result is a decrease in earning potential coupled with the burden of college debt. With rising interest rates coming on top of tighter rules and higher effective rates for insured mortgages, many will decide to stay in their parents' basements.



Peter Andersen specializes in economic conditions and the economic outlook. He has a Ph.D. in economics from Harvard University and provides strategic economic advice to clients through boardroom meetings, video conferencing, email commentary, conference calls and the monthly Andersen Economic Report. He is active as a keynote speaker at industry conferences in both the United States and Canada. He may be reached at prandersen@aol.com.



By Glenn McGillivray

Severe Weather and New Home Construction

Small, inexpensive changes can prevent significant damage

Each year, natural disasters in Canada result in hundreds of millions—often billions—of dollars in loss and disruption. And while the risk of death or injury due to natural hazards is low and falling, property damage continues to increase.

Indeed, when considering all the loss events over \$25 million (which is how insurers define a catastrophe), Canadian insurers paid out a staggering \$14.7 billion in property claims from 2009 to 2016. This doesn't include events that fall under the \$25 million threshold or other day-to-day weather-related losses that pile up each year.

Recent events around the world provide unequivocal evidence that much direct disaster damage to homes and other structures occurs when current knowledge about resilient design and construction practices were not used. The evidence shows that newer structures are more resilient than older structures,

and countries with modern building codes have a lower risk of fatalities and property damage than those without modern codes.

Canada is fortunate to have sound, modern, evidence-based building codes—some of the best in the world. What's more, Canadian homebuilders are also some of the best in the world. Canadian homes consistently rank high both in customer satisfaction and

in their ability to withstand some of the worst that nature can throw at them. But homes still get damaged from extreme weather and one of the more acute causes is extreme wind.

The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR) affiliated investigators at Western University are world leaders in severe wind research, and conduct their work at several of the world's leading wind research facilities including the Boundary Layer Wind Tunnel, the Insurance Research Lab for Better Homes (IRLBH) and the WindEEE Dome. High quality wind engineering research provides a strong science foundation to guide best practices for the design of new homes and other structures.

Damage Reduction Measures

In recent years, ICLR researchers have identified a few simple, inexpensive measures that can reduce damage to homes from severe wind, including improved roof-to-wall connections and better hold-down capacity of plywood roof sheathing.

Regarding improved roof-to-wall connections, the

simple addition of hurricane straps or clips to bolster toenailed connections between joists and walls will prevent roofs from being pulled upward and thrown in a severe wind event. For less than \$200 for an average house, total or partial roof loss can be prevented, which will then prevent walls from collapsing and pieces of building from entering the wind stream and killing or injuring people, and causing damage to other structures from debris impact.

On the issue of improving the hold-down capacity of plywood roof decking, the solution is two-fold.

The first measure pertains to fastener type. Where most if not all provincial codes require a minimum two-inch nail to anchor plywood sheathing to roof joists, ICLR-affiliated researchers have found that a 2.5-inch nail will double the hold-down capacity. This would require no practice change as the larger nail can fit in a standard gun.

The second measure pertains to fastener pattern. Where most building codes in Canada require a 12x6 nail pattern for roof decking (i.e., nails spaced every six inches where two sheets share a joist and every 12 inches on the interior of the sheet), changing to a 6x6 pattern (nails spaced six inches apart for the entire sheet) also doubles the hold-down capacity of the sheathing. This amounts to an extra 12 nails per sheet, again, translating to negligible cost (ICLR was successful in getting this change in the last iteration of the Ontario Building Code).

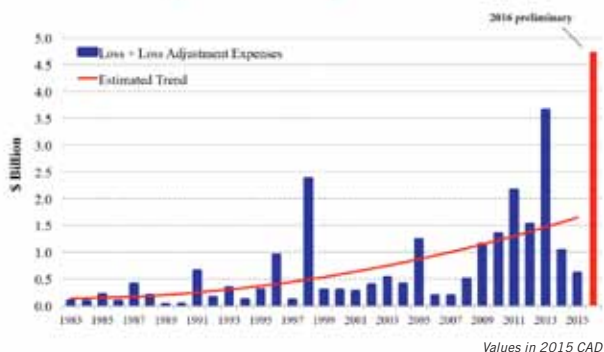
Lab work by ICLR-affiliated researchers has been invaluable in finding weaknesses in new home construction, particularly in the area of roof-to-wall connections and uplift capacity of plywood roof sheathing. ICLR field work, including forensic, immediate post-event analysis of tornadoes, has confirmed lab findings.

ICLR-affiliated researchers have found—and shared with government, the building industry, insurers and others—that small, low-cost measures can protect homes from the most common tornado, hurricane, microburst and flat-line wind damage. ICLR is currently working to move these findings into building codes and would be pleased to work with the home building industry to have them (as well as other resiliency features) incorporated into all new homes in Canada.

Weather-related damage to homes is becoming more commonplace in Canada. And while some maintain that wholesale changes to building codes are needed to address this, ICLR research indicates that much of the damage can be prevented by making small tweaks and filling gaps in current codes, at very little effort and expense.

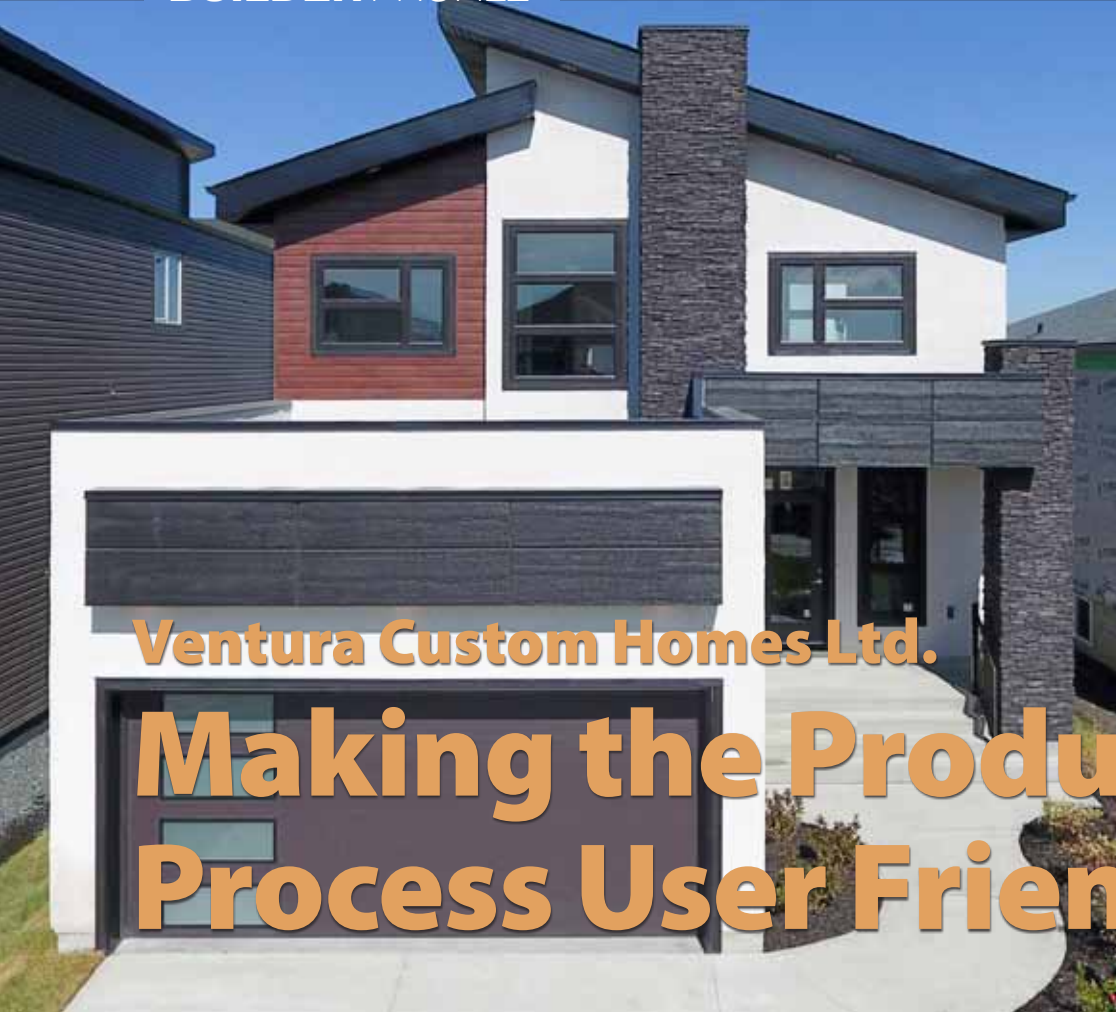
As has often been said, the devil truly is in the details. ■

Large Catastrophic Losses



SOURCE: IBC FACTS BOOK, PCS, CATIQ, SWISS RE, MUNICH RE & DELOITTE

Glenn McGillivray is Managing Director of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction. Prior to joining ICLR, he served as Assistant Vice President of Corporate Communications for Swiss Reinsurance Company Canada. Glenn has written more than 200 magazine and journal articles, publications and blog posts. Additionally, he speaks and lectures regularly on subjects related to the area of property and casualty insurance and reinsurance. Glenn can be reached at gmccgillivray@iclr.org.



Ventura Custom Homes Ltd.

Making the Production Process User Friendly

BY ANDREA COX

It all began over 25 years ago with a vision—to create a great customer experience. At the time, company founder and CEO, Cliff Penner, a real estate agent, saw a need in the Winnipeg area for a custom home builder that offered a variety of design choices at an affordable price.

In 1991, the year of the company's inception, **Ventura Custom Homes Ltd.** built a few custom homes. Since then, the company has grown exponentially, adding a multi-family division, **Ventura Developments** and a land development arm, **Ventura Land Company**.

"Our slogan is welcome home to value, so our goal is to give our purchasers the ability



Cliff Penner,
Founder and CEO

to create a home that fits all of their needs in the community that they want at a really great price," said **GLENDA SOBIE**, general manager of Ventura Custom Homes Ltd.

Home Designs

Ventura offers 75 base home plans from bungalow design to two-storey contemporary homes. "What really works is that every customer takes the base plan and changes it," said Sobie. Ventura Custom Homes Ltd. upped its design ante with a comprehensive strategy aimed at expanding its customer base by offering more comprehensive choices.

It's paid off significantly. The strategy has exponentially expanded the company's consumer base, attracting a wide variety of

buyers including new Canadians. In 2016, Ventura built over 250 single and apartment-style multi-family homes both in the city of Winnipeg and the surrounding Capital Region, where it is developing the new communities of Prairie View Lakes, Kingswood South and Riverview Park in LaSalle, Wheatland Park in Dugald and Quarry Ridge Park in Stonewall.

Sobie said that many new home designs in both Winnipeg and the Capital Region have sprouted from the wants of different cultures. "Sometimes new Canadians want a prayer room on the first or second floor and many families are multi-generational, so we build homes with two or three master bedrooms." In the Capital Region, buyers are able to build bigger homes with amenities like three-and-four-car garages to accommodate all of the toys, from snowmobiles to boats.

Processing and Production System

Sobie attributes the company's success to its innovative processing and production system, a system devised by Ventura's founder **CLIFF PENNER**. "We call it the assembly line," said Sobie. Every home has its own distinct

schedule, which is updated on a weekly basis. Each trade is assigned a specific number of days and all of the information is inputted into the supplier schedule.

The supplier's schedule is also updated weekly. "So they know what is coming three months ahead," explains Sobie. The process allows Ventura to build a custom home in six months. "Of course, weather can affect the schedule, but for the most part it works like clock-work." The result leads to happy trades and suppliers and a home built on time. "Because of this we have a lot of repeat business; often we build for the parents and then down the road we build for their children. It's very rewarding."

New Offices and Design Centre

January marks the grand opening of Ventura's new 2,000 square foot design centre located in its new corporate headquarters in Winnipeg. "We've been wanting to do this for a long time, but we just haven't had the space," said Sobie. "Moving to our new office opened up the possibility."

The design centre features three mock-up

show kitchens, and all of the samples and fixture choices for customers to choose from—bathtubs, sinks, faucets, flooring, tile, carpet and paint colours. Plus designers are available to assist customers with their selections. "In the past customers would go to the suppliers to make choices; this streamlines and simplifies everything."

Every home has its own distinct schedule, which is updated on a weekly basis.

Future Plans

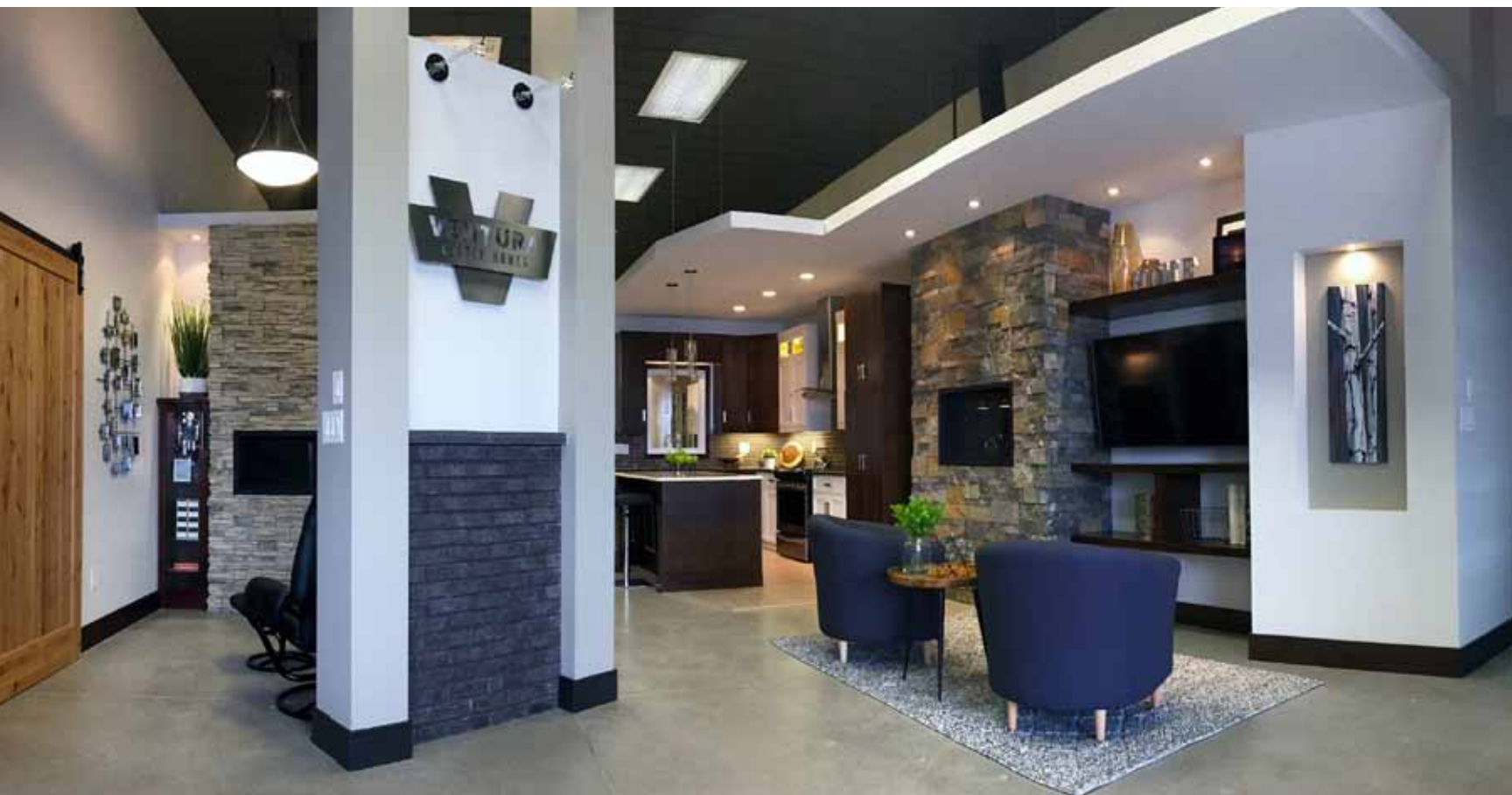
Raw land is at a premium within Winnipeg and as such the company is expanding into inner-city development, both developing apartment-style condominium projects and recreating new homes on inner-city lots—a trend

that is in its infancy in Winnipeg, but one that is sure to expand quickly. Ventura Developments recently completed the sold out project, The Village Junction, a 36-unit, low-rise building in the heart of downtown. Another 40-unit project is underway in the heart of the city.

Building Codes and Growth Fee

Sobie notes that the path to success has been fraught with a few challenges, namely changes to building codes and the implementation of Mayor Brian Bowman's Growth Fees. The proposed fees target new-build, single-family homes within the city of Winnipeg, adding a \$5.09 tax per square foot. In other cities, growth fees are implemented at the development stage, not at the building stage. If the proposed fee goes forward, Sobie said that the ramifications will be huge.

"It will add close to \$7,000 to the cost of a 1,500 square foot home. It will definitely affect house prices, causing the market to slow down. We are very nervous," said Sobie, noting that builders and developers are banding together to legally oppose the fee. The proposed growth tax is set to take effect on May 1, 2017. 🏠



Newly opened design centre in Winnipeg.



Manitoba

In the Midst of Change



By Michael Moore,
President, Manitoba
Home Builders'
Association

The Manitoba housing market is in a state of flux right now. All signs pointed toward a strong 2017 that would continue to build upon a solid year in 2016. However, there have been a number of roadblocks thrown in our way that could have a profound impact on this happening.

Shifting Markets

Historically Manitoba was a single-family detached (SFD) province, but about five years ago things changed. Land prices were escalating rapidly, primarily due to government taxation at all levels. The market shifted from a heavily weighted SFD portfolio to a more balanced 50:50 split between multi-family and SFD. The multi-family market plateaued in 2015 to never-before-seen highs.

However, in 2015 that balance shifted dramatically. Last year, the multi-family segment made up an astonishing 68% of the market. Although industry experts had previously been indicating the shortage of condominiums, townhomes, row houses and apartments, they now cried surplus—so much so that for the past year-and-a-half, the CMHC has declared Winnipeg's market at risk because of this one solitary factor.

A Return of Balance

This past year, starts have returned closer to balanced. The multi-family starts have dropped considerably to more traditional levels, whereas the SFD start numbers keep increasing gradually.

The market seemed to be stabilizing and

all forecasts had both SFD and multi-family increasing gradually over the foreseeable future. Things then changed dramatically.

Of course, recent federal changes to the mortgage rules have had a significant impact on potential buyers. Our estimates are that seven to ten per cent of new home buyers, who previously would have qualified for their mortgage, now do not.

The City of Winnipeg comprises about 70% of Manitoba's population, and therefore the new home market.

New Government

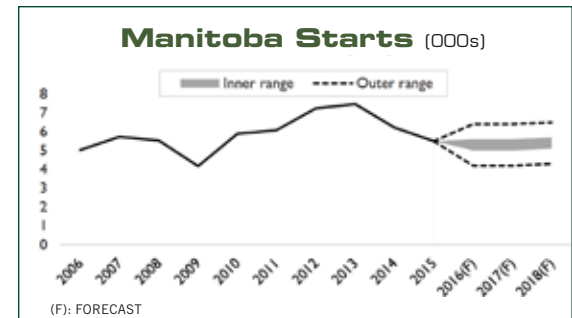
In October of 2014, the municipal election resulted in a change of leadership with a new mayor and a shift in Council—50% of the councilors were now new electorates. With no track record and many senior administrators departing, Council turned to city hall staff for guidance.

Their recommendation, which Council accepted, was to tax (at an average of \$9,000 per home) what they perceived to be the impact that new growth had on the rest of the city, no matter where that may be located. They commissioned a study to validate their assumptions. The industry has challenged the city's right to impose this fee and a court application was filed in January of 2017.

Meanwhile, the new home construction industry is forecast to come to a standstill. Even the city's own budget projections show that new home starts will be drastically reduced and that the net impact of this new fee will result in a reduction of income for the city.

Given that the tax is to come into effect on May 1, 2017 and the legal challenge will likely not be resolved before then, new homes sales within the City of Winnipeg will quickly come to a close. However, the capital region just outside Winnipeg is projected to experience tremendous growth in the immediate future. Land is being opened up and lot draws resulting in new sales are beaming with optimism.

The Progressive Conservatives returned to provincial government power this past April, after a 17-year absence. The first order of



(F): FORECAST
SOURCE: CMHC

business will be getting their financial house in order, as they have inherited a massive deficit. Unless there is an immediate return on investment, there will be no financial rebates or discounts. However, opportunity does exist to revisit previous legislation that has caused the industry angst.

Renovation

The renovation industry remains strong and vibrant. Both Winnipeg and Manitoba remain the renovation capitals of Canada. With an already nation-leading 58% of all Winnipeggers indicating that a renovation project was planned for this year, renovation permit applications have increased an astonishing 90% over the first ten months of 2016. The Manitoba Home Builders' Association would like to think that our constant messaging of "Get It in Writing" is paying off and consumers are listening.

Resale

The resale market continues to move at a positive pace. Transaction numbers have reached all-time highs with prices gradually increasing at moderate and manageable rates. Obviously, there is tremendous fear that if the new home market in Winnipeg grinds to a halt, the resale market may return to the days of being a sellers' market with bidding wars driving up the prices of homes.

The Future

The Manitoba Home Builders' Association and Urban Development Institute are confident that their legal challenge of the City of Winnipeg's right to implement the Impact Fee or Growth Tax will be successful and then the Winnipeg and Manitoba housing markets will return to their planned steady growth. 🏠



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PHOTO: KELVIN CHAN

Innovations for Brick Performance

BY JON EAKES

There is a lot more to brick veneer than the brick

Brick veneer on a residential building serves a lot of functions, but individual trades often unknowingly sabotage some of those functions or the durability of the brick. This happens in new construction, as well as during renovations or maintenance.

Hard Shell Protection

Brick and stone are the most durable of wall coverings, withstanding both nature and kids. Everybody gets that part right except that painters using non-permeable coatings over brick can set the stage for freeze/thaw to destroy the brick itself. Efforts to block insects or rodents from passing through weep holes can be poorly executed and sabotage things such as drainage and pressure equalization.

Drainage

A brick veneer is built with an airspace between it and the wall, and most professionals know this is a drainage plane. But some trades fail to provide flashing and drainage capacity at the bottom or over windows and doors to make this work, while too large a quantity of mortar droppings can block the best of planned drainage routes.

Drying

There is a poorly understood reality that this same air space helps to dry out any moisture in the cavity either through air movement or simply by keeping water in the non-organic brick and off the sheathing until it migrates back outward.

Wind Pressure Equalization

Few people realize that the weep holes and the air space serve to equalize the wind pressure on the backside of the brick/mortar face, eliminating the driving force that can push water through the veneer. Many solutions to other objectives negate this valuable aspect of the rain screen principles.



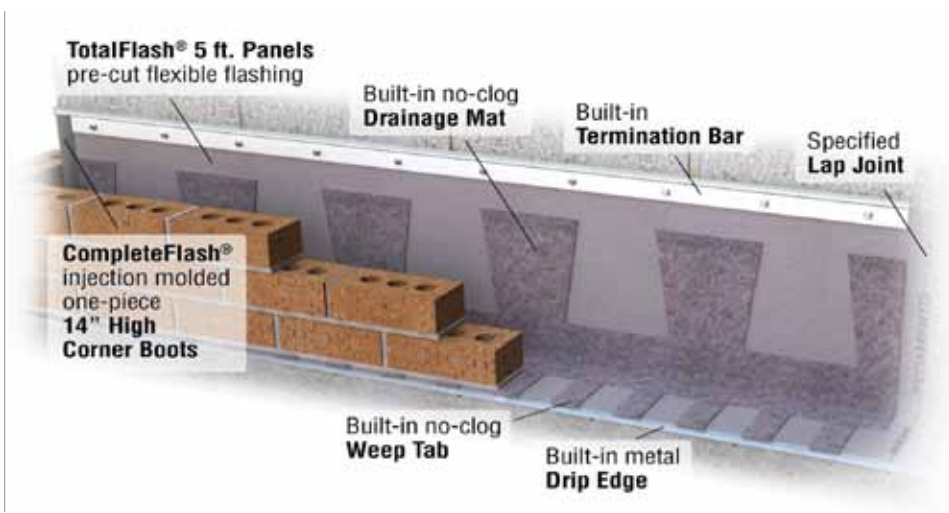
It may seem surprising, but because of the very small volume of air in the space between the brick and the sheathing, wind blowing into weep holes can pressurize that space to equal the force of the wind in a fraction of a second. That means that the wind pushes almost equally on both sides of the brick veneer, even with wind gusts—and water is not pushed through, not even through a crack in the mortar. This pressure equalization actually stops most of the water from moving into the assembly, making even a minimal drainage capacity adequate. But it doesn't always work perfectly.

The ideal brick veneer would have each face of the wall isolated from all others so that each face can adjust its air space backpressure to correspond to the wind hitting that face. In

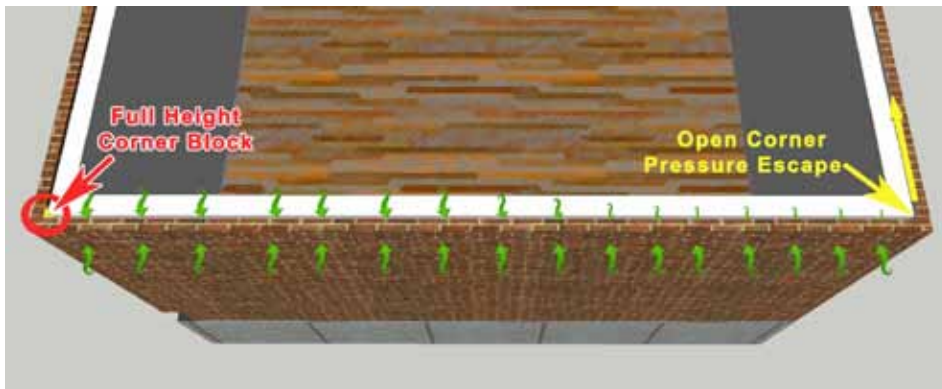
reality, very few builders purposefully block off the corners of the wall from foundation to roof, allowing the wind blowing into the air space to slide around to the downwind side of the house—hence developing little or no back pressure against the wind near that corner. Luckily, it is rather difficult for bricklayers to keep the corners free of mortar, so this principle generally works accidentally. Systematically blocking the corners from bottom to top with mortar or some foam product would improve the rain screen performance of the wall.

Wicking Pads for Drainage

In an effort to block insects and rodents from traveling through open weep holes, under-the-wall weep pads have been developed, such as **TotalFlash** from MortarNet.com. For drainage this is a great idea, but I don't believe that anyone has tested it for wind pressure equalization; water will migrate through but not any significant airflow.



A brick veneer is built with an air space between it and the wall and most professionals know this is a drainage plane.

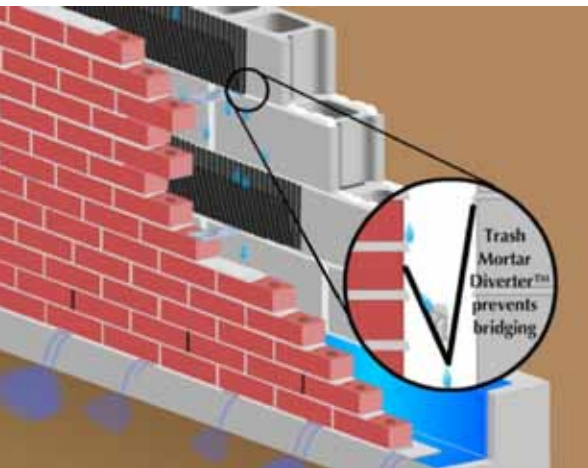
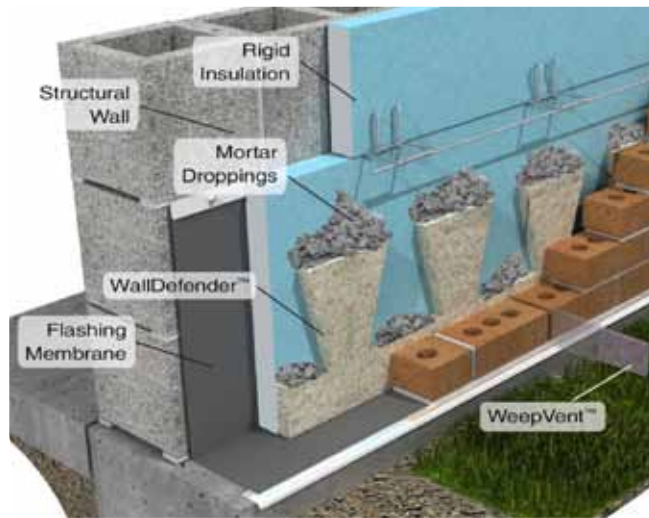


Mortar Dropping Protection for the Weep Holes

Several companies have developed ingenious solutions for keeping mortar droppings suspended above the floor of the cavity to prevent blocking the weep holes. **WallDefender** from MortarNet.com and **MortarBreakDT** from AdvancedBuildingProducts.com are both trapezoidal open mesh inserts that catch the mortar on two separate planes leaving lots of passage for water to the

► 20

19 ▶ bottom. Others propose placing dimpled plastic sheets or very open mesh pads in the bottom to suspend the mortar droppings inches above the weep holes with products such as **MortarMaze** or **MortarBreakII**, both from AdvancedBuilding Products.com.



Masonry Technology Inc., MTIdry.com, makes the case that any time mortar droppings are allowed to bridge from the brick to the sheathing paper, whether in the bottom of the air space or several inches higher up, they tend to keep the sheathing paper saturated for long periods of time.

They propose their **Trash Mortar Diverters**, which are simply corrugated plastic “V”s scattered across the brick ties to catch the mortar before it gets to the bottom, holds it away from the sheathing and allows water to flow on downward. Then they add the same corrugations that they call **CavityWeep** to be mortared in under the brick at frequent intervals providing water drainage at the absolute lowest position of the wall. In addition, they place standard unmortared head joints free from all mortar droppings one row up, which

Few people realize that the weep holes and the air space serve to equalize the wind pressure on the back side of the brick/mortar face, eliminating the driving force that can push water through the veneer.

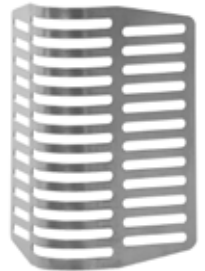
do not function as drainage at all, but as the totally free air inputs for drying and pressure equalizing. This system comes closer to protecting all the functions of the brick veneer rain screen than most.

A tiny one-channel insert called a **Head Joint Weep** from MTI makes easy work of drainage between every brick on a window or door lintel.

Inserts for Unmortared Head Joints

MortarVent.com provides mesh pads called **WeepVent** to fill vertical unmortared head joints. This lets water out and won't let bugs or rodents in, and they say it causes little restriction on airflow. Others provide hollow, corrugated inserts that perfectly fill this space during construction, giving more airflow but not stopping the smaller insects.

RidOfMice.net is providing a very sturdy retrofit stainless steel, spring-like grill that neatly slides into existing unmortared head joints to keep mice out, and this does allow for unrestricted water and air flow. You could add an insect mesh inside, reducing both insects and airflow.



Rid-Of-Mice



Brick veneer siding is a showcase for building science principles of rain screens running up against the realities of rodents, insects and mortar droppings. Innovative products can certainly help make it all work, but must be evaluated for their effects on total system performance. 🏠



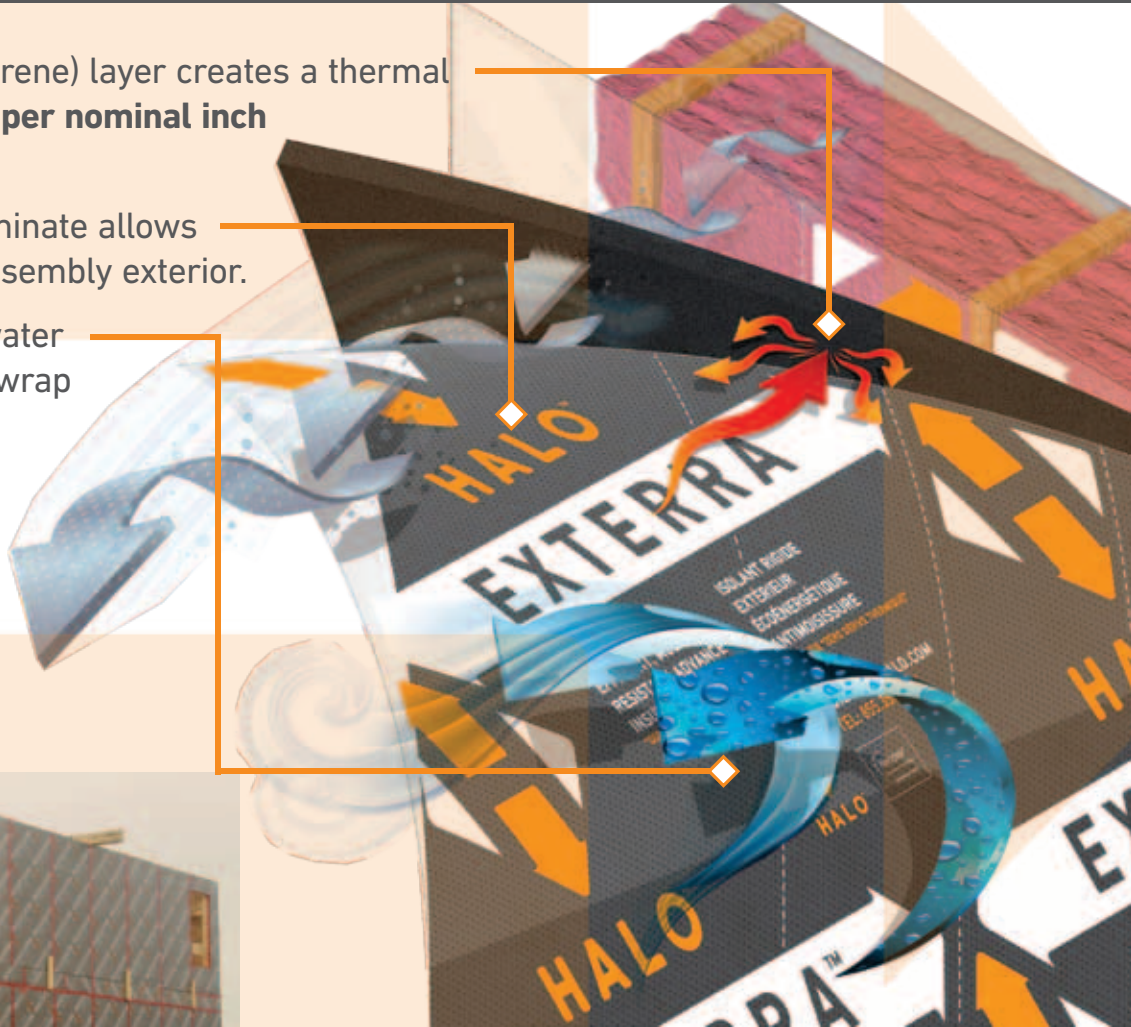


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Tech Integration & Ditch the Tub

The NKBA reveals top 10 trends for kitchens and bathrooms

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK

Since its founding in 1963, the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA) has tracked kitchen and bathroom trends. The 2017 Kitchen & Bath Design Trends survey was fielded online to members during August 2016, representing multiple industry segments from across North America. This study is most valuable in identifying trends among kitchens in the \$20,000-\$49,000+ price range and bathrooms in the \$10,000-\$30,000+ range.



DESIGN: GINA BON PHOTO: SHERIE CERVANTES

Kitchens

“Clean lines with no fussy mouldings or trims,” underscored one survey respondent. “White kitchens are never going away, but I’ve recommended mixed countertop materials, mixed cabinet colours and frequently use lots of light/dark materials for contrast.” Here’s what else is trending:



DESIGN: LESLIE LANIARRE PHOTO: BERNARD ANDRE

Clean lines, built-ins and simple door styles.

Transitional leads the way, with contemporary-styled kitchens overtaking traditional styling as the second most popular design; industrial and mid-century modern is emerging.

White-and-gray-painted cabinets dominate kitchen colour schemes and show no signs of slowing down, especially gray. For overall colour schemes, both blue and black are emerging.

Two-toned coloured kitchens are on the rise; high gloss finishes gaining in popularity.

Metal cabinets, currently a small segment of the cabinet market, appear to be emerging; most frequently specified by younger and male designers. The use of reclaimed woods, as well as using different combinations of materials and metals across surfaces and as accents, is also emerging.

Furniture-look pieces, rollouts and pullouts and under-cabinet lighting (LED) are among the most popular kitchen cabinet features. Use of crown moulding is declining. Rustic and reclaimed woods were frequently mentioned. **Quartz** is the most popular kitchen countertop material, and is trending up. Granite, the second most popular countertop material, is trending down.

Induction cooktops and convection ovens are trending higher, and microwave drawers are outpacing free-standing or built-in microwaves. Steam ovens still represent a small

segment of the market, but are also trending higher.

Use of technology in the kitchen is increasing. About one third of NKBA professionals included wiring and pathways for future tech integration. Also trending upwards: more Internet-connected appliances and docking stations, as well as power strips under cabinets to eliminate outlets in the backsplash.

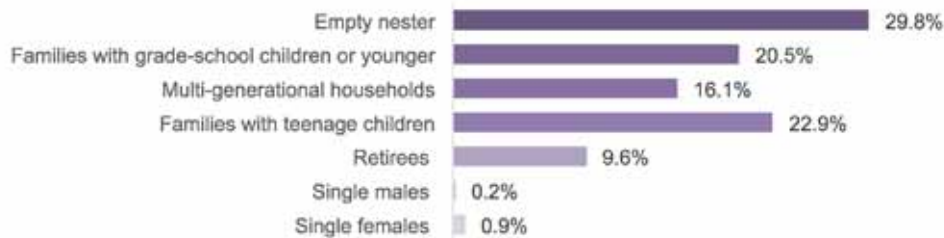
Interior barn and pocket doors in kitchens are trending up.

Accessible and/or universal design features continue to trend up, with designs specified for all ages and abilities.



DESIGN: ROBIN R. FISHER PHOTO: DALE LANG

Typical Client Profile



SOURCE: NKBA

Bathrooms

More than half of NKBA members surveyed said they eliminated a tub or whirlpool in a bathroom remodel over the course of the past year. Yet half also specified a free-standing tub during that same period, and 60% expect to specify more of them in 2017. While tub/shower surrounds are maintained and updated when they already exist in a home, they are not being added to new bathrooms or completely remodelled bathrooms. Here's what else is hot (and not):

Contemporary and transitional-styled bathrooms have overtaken traditional style preferences. Shaker style is gaining on traditional, while mid-century modern is emerging. Asian Fusion is a niche design, but design professionals who recommend it plan to do more of it in bathrooms.

Whites, off/whites and gray are by far the

most popular bathroom colour schemes. Blue is emerging, with younger design professionals leaning more toward violets and purples. Stainless steel is niche and emerging.

Linen storage cabinets and wood vanities are the most commonly-used bathroom storage solutions. Floating vanities and open

About one third of NKBA professionals included wiring and pathways for future tech integration.

shelving are popular, and are increasing in popularity. Toilet topper cabinets are declining in demand.

Ceramic tile flooring is most popular, but high-quality vinyl appears to be emerging.

Undermount bathroom sinks are most



DESIGN: ANDREA LUPO PHOTO: AMY GALEA

desirable, with requests for vessel sinks continuing to wane, as well as pedestal sinks. Trough sinks are emerging.

White fixtures are trending up, while bone/bisque coloured fixtures are trending down. Brushed brass and gold are emerging faucet finishes; designer faucet colours, while still quite niche, are emerging.

The most popular amenities for the bathroom are in the arena of safety and comfort: comfort heights, shower seats, lighting in showers, and no-threshold showers are some examples. Emerging amenities are smart toilets, smart toilet seats, music in the shower, easy maintenance features and radiant floor heating.

Water-saving toilets and faucets are becoming more mainstream.

Distributed video and audio and wiring pathways for future integration are still niche in the bathroom, but emerging.

The addition of power outlets located directly in drawers or vanity cabinets to unobtrusively power blow dryers, curling irons, shavers, electric toothbrushes and more.



DESIGN: LESLIE LAMARRE PHOTO: BERNARD ANDRE

The full 2017 Kitchen & Bath Design Trends Report is available for \$99 to NKBA members (\$499 for non-members) at NKBA.org/Research. An executive summary of the research is available free to NKBA Members. Findings represent the number of respondents who said they specified these colours, materials, product types and designs for their kitchen and bath clients during 2016. It does not represent the market size for these categories. For a report detailing market size by product category, please refer to the NKBA Size of Industry Study, available at NKBA.org/research.



Bob Finnigan
President, CHBA

When it comes to new homes, the federal government's goals must be tied firmly to affordability.

A Dose of Caution By Ottawa Would Be Prudent

As business people, it's important to know what the government's goals are—even when we have justified reservations about the wisdom of such goals.

Clarity in government policy should provide the basis for our discussions with government about the best way to achieve its goals, and what risks need to be understood and avoided along the way. As businesspeople we need to communicate our "on the ground" knowledge so that government can make informed decisions. This is the core purpose and key role of our Association, at all three levels.

Federally, there are two areas where the government has set out clear goals: mitigating mortgage and debt risk, and addressing climate change. How these goals are pursued can either be beneficial to homeowners, the housing industry, and the economy, or very detrimental. CHBA is therefore telling parliamentarians that caution by the federal government is required to ensure smart approaches and to avoid some very significant risks.

Mortgage Insurance and Lending Rules

The federal government, through the Minister of Finance, has been clear that protecting the financial stability of Canada's banking system is a top priority. The Bank of Canada and international economic organizations have been adamant that the rising indebtedness of Canadians is a growing concern and is seen as a threat to broader financial stability in Canada.

Ensuring Canadian banks remain strong and that Canadian families do not take on excessive levels of debt are commendable goals, and ones any businessperson would support.

But, to date, federal actions in these areas have not recognized the full range of factors driving trends in housing markets and affecting Canadians' personal "balance sheets." As a result, there is a real risk that federal actions are targeting symptoms, rather than causes.

As we all know, housing markets are not monolithic; there is tremendous variation in conditions from city to city. The GTA and Lower Mainland of B.C. remain buoyant, while most other markets are either "warm" or "cool." Creating national mortgage rules that "fit" such diverse market conditions is tricky, if not impossible. Yet these are the primary "levers" the federal government has. The risk is that mortgage policy developed to address Toronto will make little sense in Calgary or St. John's, and likely do more harm than good.

Underlying this reality are specific factors that drive prices in strong markets, and which the federal government cannot do much about unless it comes up with more innovative solutions that achieve its goals without doing damage elsewhere. A recent headline in the Financial Post captured this well: "Toronto home sales climb to record high in 2016 as supply hits 15-year low and prices soar 20%". The chronic shortage of ground-oriented

homes in the economically robust GTA and in BC's Lower Mainland is a critical factor in both markets—and one that tougher mortgage rules do nothing about.

However, these same rules can have very negative impacts in housing markets where local economic and supply conditions are quite different.

It is time that the federal government hit the "pause" button in terms of additional mortgage-related measures. It will be many months before the impact of the last round of changes can be properly assessed. Additional steps to increase mortgage lenders' capital requirements or introduce lender "risk sharing" provisions before fully understanding the impact of measures taken to date would be reckless.

What is required is increased supply of family-oriented housing along with help for well-qualified first-time buyers hoping to enter the market. CHBA will continue to pursue solutions for those being locked out and strongly advocates that governments at all levels do the same.

Climate Change and Building Codes

As part of its Climate Change policy, the federal government has set a goal that all new homes should achieve Net Zero Ready performance by 2030 to 2032.

However, it has failed to tie this goal to the most critical metric—affordability. For our industry, being able to build better homes for the same cost of less is a long-standing objective. But this can't happen without a well-focused approach involving both our industry and governments—one backed-up with sufficient federal R&D investment to deliver the technology, materials and building practices required.

To date, the federal government has acknowledged the need for our industry to "adjust." This is neither sufficient, nor does it illustrate an adequate understanding of the challenges involved. When it comes to new homes, the federal government's goals must be tied firmly to affordability, or even more young families will be locked out of the benefits of home ownership. We need the government to recognize this as a goal it shares.

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Kevin Lee
CEO, CHBA

As much as \$480 million that they [drywall installers] could not recoup due to existing fixed-price contracts.

Drywall Duties—Your Association in Action

On January 4th, the Canadian International Trade Tribunal issued its report on the downstream impacts of the provisional duties imposed on U.S. drywall coming into Western Canada established last September.

The Tribunal's key finding echoed CHBA's position—that the exorbitantly-high provisional duties were *"contrary to Canada's economic, trade or commercial interests, and specifically that such an imposition has or will substantially reduce competition in those markets, or cause significant harm to consumers of those goods or to businesses who use them."*

The Tribunal recommended that duties be reduced dramatically and that their application be delayed six months to allow existing drywall contracts to be fulfilled. It also recommended that downstream users be partially reimbursed for increased costs to date, and that the duties be essentially waived for the rebuild for Fort McMurray. All of these key Tribunal recommendations to the government lined up with what CHBA told the Tribunal.

As I'm writing this column, we await the federal government's response and the key implementation details. CHBA will remain engaged, but the significance of the success to date cannot be overstated.

A Massive Effort

I think it's important that CHBA members understand what's involved in representing their interests with an issue like drywall tariffs.

Having an effective Association able to deal with something like this is important to every member's business interests, and to those of our consumers.

International trade law is not an area where CHBA finds itself engaged frequently. But when the drywall tariffs were announced last September, it was clear these exorbitant tariffs would have a huge negative impact on our industry, leading to significant job losses, disruption and potential bankruptcies.

CHBA took action as soon as we learned of the potential duties. We immediately engaged with member companies involved in the supply and installation of drywall in Western Canada—those most directly and severely impacted. It became clear that, given most contractors had forward contracts in place that included material costs, sudden tariff-driven price increases would have devastating effects. Further, it was clear that western-based Canadian manufacturers could not meet the demand for drywall if U.S. supply was cut-off, creating a supply problem that threatened the entire country. Even members in Ontario saw immediate price increases and received warnings of potential future drywall shortages.

CHBA raised alarm with the federal government, and was pleased when the Minister of Finance ordered the Tribunal to look into these negative impacts caused by the high tariffs on an extremely accelerated timeline—an

intervention that was unprecedented. Trade journals noted, "this has never been done before"!

In consultation with the provincial HBAs most directly affected, we reached out to members for their direct input on how the tariffs, resulting price increases and supply issues would impact their businesses. Over 500 member firms provided us with detailed information, which formed much of the evidence we put before the Tribunal.

When the Tribunal hearing was announced, CHBA went into high gear to prepare. Expert legal council and government relations trade experts were engaged to bolster our efforts and national office staff worked flat-out to prepare the evidence needed for these hearings. All of this culminated in the two weeks of hearing held in Edmonton during December, with CHBA staff and council engaged and providing evidence and cross-examination at the hearing, supported by a full and engaged team back in Ottawa.

One of the key facts tabled at these hearing was the scale of "stranded costs" the drywall installers faced—as much as \$480 million that they could not recoup due to existing fixed-price contracts. As well, the potential impacts of the tariffs on the rebuilding efforts underway in Fort McMurray were highlighted.

It was this type of detailed evidence, painstakingly compiled by Association staff and members, which allowed the Tribunal to see clearly and empirically how much harm the provisional tariffs could do.

This Is What CHBA Is Here To Do

When the Tribunal issued its report, we were gratified to see that CHBA's position was accepted and reflected in the resulting recommendations.

And on February 27, we were pleased when the Minister of Finance announced that the government would implement changes to the tariff scheme that will, according to the government, deliver the relief called for in the Tribunal's report. We are pleased the government agreed that a trade action intended to protect some Canadian jobs should not result in far more Canadians being put out of work, and home buyers facing uncertainty.

It took a lot of work and investment of members' resources to make this happen. But that is exactly why the Association exists. When we work together, we most certainly do have a strong voice. My thanks to all the HBA staff and members who have contributed to this effort.



What Makes a Cordless Drywall Screw Gun Shine?




An in-depth look at three models

Whenever I pick up and operate a good tool it impresses me, and I can write about all its great features. But when I got my hands on three of the newest cordless drywall screw guns with the opportunity to check the differences detail-by-detail, I discovered that just listing their specs doesn't tell the story at all. First let's look at the actions that you perform and how each of these tools responds. Afterwards, we can see details, right down to the often-ignored reverse button. It doesn't make one tool or the other the winner, but it will allow you to really see the features you want, and hence which brand will satisfy your needs and fit your budget.



Cordless Drywall Screw Guns [action]

For all three tools in all modes, the driver does not spin until forward pressure is applied to the screw. Where "trigger pull" then "forward pressure" is the mode, the sequence can be reversed—forward pressure then trigger pull—which in some cases gives off less noise from the motor.

				
ACTION	DeWalt 20V Max XR DCF620D2	Milwaukee M18 Fuel 2866-20	Festool DWC 18-4500	Comments
Motor off until pulling trigger – then drive starts with forward pressure on screw.	Standard single drive operation.	Standard single drive operation.	No	Apply forward pressure first, then pull trigger, reduces the noise factor.
Motor always on – drives screw with forward pressure on screw.	Trigger Lock ON – no need to hold trigger. Bit turns with forward bit pressure.	Trigger Lock ON – Auto Start OFF. No need to hold trigger. Bit turns with forward bit pressure.	No	Constant noise of motor and gear box.
Tool ON – but motor and bit start turning together only after forward pressure on screw.	No	Auto Start ON – pull Trigger but motor does not turn. Motor and bit start together with forward pressure on the bit. Trigger Lock ON while Auto Start is ON, no need to hold trigger. Motor and bit start together with forward pressure on the bit.	In MANUAL mode – operates like standard single drive operation except that the motor does not turn before the bit driver. Motor and bit start together with forward pressure on the bit.	Much quieter operation for both tools.
Motor turns on without pulling trigger upon forward pressure on screw.	No	No	In AUTO mode – no trigger pull or trigger hold required. Both motor and bit start with forward pressure on bit.	Very quiet operation.

THIS NOTICE HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED BY THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SUPREME COURT, THE SUPERIOR COURT OF JUSTICE FOR ONTARIO AND THE SUPERIOR COURT OF QUEBEC (the "COURTS")

Purchasers of Polyurethane Foam Products* purchased in Canada between January 1, 1999 and January 10, 2012, are part of a class action

***Polyurethane Foam Products means flexible polyurethane foam that is not molded foam or technical foam, and any and all products, including carpet underlay, that contain flexible polyurethane foam that is not molded foam or technical foam, except in the Domfoam/Valle Foam and Woodbridge settlements and settlements with certain individuals where it means all kinds of polyurethane foam and all products which contain any kind of polyurethane foam.**

Polyurethane foam is used in furniture, bedding, automotive interiors, flooring including carpet underlay, and in many other contexts.

The Actions

There are class action lawsuits certified/authorized across Canada alleging that the makers of Polyurethane Foam Products fixed the price of those products in Canada. The defendants deny those allegations.

The Courts have already approved a settlement with defendants Domfoam/Valle Foam and certain individuals and \$5,450,780.44 has been recovered. Additional money may still be received from Domfoam/Valle Foam's insolvency and an assignment. The Courts have also approved settlements with the defendants Carpenter, Vitafoam, FFP/Flexible Foam, Future Foam, Hickory Springs, Leggett & Platt, Mohawk Industries, Woodbridge and certain individuals for a further recovery of \$29,282,497.

The parties have now reached a new settlement with the remaining defendants, Foamex Innovations, Inc., Foamex Innovations Canada Inc., Les Industries Foamextra Inc. ("FXI") and certain individuals for \$2,450,000.

The Courts have certified/authorized the class actions against FXI and certain individuals for settlement purposes. The deadline for opting out of the class actions has already passed. The defendants' full names are available on the websites set out below.

Who is affected?

Individuals and entities in Canada and related parties who purchased Polyurethane Foam Products in Canada between January 1, 1999 and January 10, 2012, except for defendants and their related parties, are settlement class members and are affected by the settlement and the certifications/authorization against FXI and certain individuals.

This new settlement provides benefits to settlement class members in return for a release of the settling defendants and others from claims regarding Polyurethane Foam Products purchased in Canada.

What happens next?

The Courts will now be asked to approve this new settlement and the lawyers' fees. If the new settlement is not approved by the Courts, the class actions will continue against the FXI settling defendants. If the Courts approve this new settlement, class members will be bound by it.

The hearings will be:

in Vancouver, BC on March 6, 2017 at 10 a.m.;
in Laval, Québec on March 21, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.; and
in London, Ontario on April 12, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.

The lawyers will ask the Courts for approval of a fee of 25% of these additional settlement funds achieved plus taxes and case expenses. The amount that is approved by the Courts as fair and reasonable will be deducted from the settlement funds.

How will the money be distributed to Settlement Class Members?

A proposed distribution protocol has been finalized by the lawyers in consultation with economic and industry experts and the Courts will be asked to approve that distribution protocol and a settlement administration protocol at the settlement approval hearings.

The money will be distributed to settlement class members who purchased certain Polyurethane Foam Products in Canada between January 1, 1999 and January 10, 2012. No money will be paid for purchases of molded or technical flexible polyurethane foam and products which contain molded or technical flexible polyurethane foam.

The distribution protocol will be posted at www.recourscollectif.info/fr/dossiers/mousse and www.foamclassaction.ca. A new notice will also be published when the claims process commences.

Settlement class members should retain all proof of purchase of Polyurethane Foam Products in Canada between January 1, 1999 and January 10, 2012 and monitor the websites above for updated information on the settlement approvals and the future claims process. If you would like direct notice of steps relating to the distribution protocol, contact class counsel at the email addresses below.

Can I exclude myself from the Class Actions?

No. The right to opt out of the class actions was provided when the actions were certified/authorized by the Courts in relation to the Domfoam/Valle Foam settlement approval. The deadline has already passed.

What if I don't like the new settlements, the distribution protocol or the lawyers' fee request?

You can object. If you think the new settlement, the proposed distribution protocol, or the lawyers' request for fees and expenses are unfair, you can write to the Courts. If you wish to do so, you need to send your objection to the lawyers at the address below by **March 1, 2017. Objections and inquiries should not be sent directly to the Courts.** The lawyers will organize and provide all the material to the Courts for you.

You may also attend a hearing and ask to speak to the Court. Please contact the lawyers at the information below if you want to attend one of these hearings.

GET MORE INFORMATION BY:

Visiting www.foamclassaction.ca or
<http://www.recourscollectif.info/fr/dossiers/mousse/> or
contacting the lawyers below:

BC residents: Branch MacMaster LLP at chermanson@branmac.com, and Camp Fiorante Mathews Mogerman at polyfoam@cfmlawyers.ca

Quebec residents: Belleau Lapointe at membres@recourscollectif.info

All others: Suttis Strosberg LLP at polyclassaction@strosbergco.com

Settlement Class Members should monitor the websites for updated information and future claims process.

Annual New Product Showcase



July/August is Home BUILDER Magazine's Annual New Product Showcase (NPSC) Issue. This is a great opportunity for manufacturers and suppliers to connect their new products and services with our 100,000+ readers.

We will be announcing details and guidelines for submission in May. Sign up and we will send you detailed NPSC information when it becomes available.

To sign up, scan QR code or visit:
www.homebuildercanada.com/NPSC2017.htm






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Cordless Drywall Screw Guns [details]

				
DETAILS	DeWalt 20V Max XR DCF620D2	Milwaukee M18 Fuel 2866-20	Festool DWC 18-4500	Comments
Sound	DeWalt and Milwaukee run at about 66db with the Festool a little lower at about 60db. I tried an analysis of pitch, frequency, and volume but the numbers didn't tell the story that my ears were hearing.			With slightly lower volume and much lower pitch as well as the motor only running while the screw is turning, one has the impression that the Festool is far less noisy than the others.
	Pretty standard sharp whining we are used to with drywall guns.	Slightly higher pitch than the DeWalt but less noticeable when used with Auto Start – motor not running if the screw is not driving.	A lower dull sound although almost the same volume as the others.	
Size of tool	Compact	Compact	Larger than others but still compact — a bit square.	All very well balanced.
Weight of bare tool	2.4 lbs / 1.09 kg	2.5 lbs / 1.13 kg	2.6 lbs / 1.18 kg	Amp hours of the battery change the weight dramatically.
Bit anchoring into chuck	Magnet and retaining ring – tight. Hard plier pull to change bit.	Magnet and retaining ring – moderate. Slight plier pull to change bit.	Magnet and retaining ring – very light. Occasionally bit stays with screw.	
Belt hook	Comes in box – left or right installation. Belt hook interferes with 20V Max XR battery. Mounting not giving clearance for battery.	Comes with belt hook attached, can be switched to other side.	Comes with belt hook on left and scaffolding hook on right. Both can be reversed.	
Collation device	Yes. Super easy no-tool switch from standard chuck to collation device. 180° alternate mounting. 1" to 2" screws.	Yes (available March/April). Super easy no-tool switch from standard chuck to collation device. Screw strip hang down can be rotated 360° in 45° increments. 1" to 2" screws.	Yes. Super easy no-tool switch from standard chuck to collation device. Screw strip hang down can be rotated 360° in 30° increments. 1" to 2-1/4" screws.	
Reverse	Must depress bit to engage reverse drive. Screw must be proud enough to not engage the depth clutch. Popping off the depth stop nose cone will allow reverse to remove recessed screws.	Must depress bit to engage reverse drive. Screw must be proud enough to not engage the depth clutch. Popping off the depth stop nose cone will allow reverse to remove recessed screws.	The reverse button disengages the depth clutch and the bit turns upon a trigger pull without depressing the bit – in both Auto and Manual mode.	The Festool is the only tool of the three capable of removing recessed screws directly.
Price without batteries	\$150 bare tool. \$100 collation accessory.	\$200 bare tool. Collation accessory price info not available at press time.	\$425 bare tool, but includes collation attachment.	



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

TrustedPros: Top 10 Home Renovation Projects in Canada for 2016

TORONTO — TrustedPros Inc., a Canadian home improvement contractor review platform, has collected data from over two million users to inform Canadians about 2016 home improvement market trends.

Data was collected from submissions to the website's free Post a Project tool and user search behaviour over the past year.

Bathroom renovations are the most desired project of the year, comprising 19% of all renovation projects that were submitted. Basement renovations closely followed at 15%. Fence construction was a significant home improvement priority, as the fourth most popular project in Canada, making its first appearance on the TrustedPros Top 10 list.

On average, Canadians budgeted fairly accurately for home improvement projects in 2016. However, Canadians had impractical budgets for floor installation, kitchen renovation, and fence construction projects.

TrustedPros found that several provinces had unrealistically low budgets for top-rated home improvement projects, including bathroom and kitchen renovations.

On average, Canadians were willing to



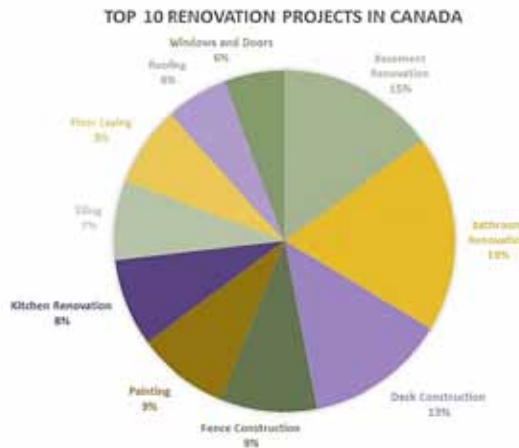
spend \$7,905.80 on bathroom renovations, whereas industry professionals recommend homeowners spend roughly \$4,600-\$10,000 in addition to this budgeted amount.

Homeowners in some provinces had more realistic average budgets

for kitchen renovations. Alberta and British Columbia homeowners had the most realistic budgets (\$20,338 and \$22,774 respectively), whilst Nova Scotia and PEI had unreasonably low budgets (\$9,333 and \$7,750 respectively).

These findings suggest that homeowners may be misinformed about industry standards. Homeowners may be influenced by industry professionals and other thought leaders across Canada who misrepresent project pricing, the cost of labour, and the cost of materials.

For more information, please visit www.trustedpros.ca and look under "articles." 🏠



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For more information and to learn how to order yours, visit www.eheat.com or call 1-800-807-0107.

WIDE BLADE tape measures from Milwaukee



Milwaukee just launched its wide blade tape measures, now exclusively available in Canada. With 13ft. of stand-out and a 1-1/4 inch wide blade, they have all the features that make Milwaukee tapes unique and the most durable in the industry. Offered in 5m/16ft, 8m/26ft, 16ft and 25ft lengths, they have a 5-point reinforced frame for 10x the durability, plus, a nylon-coated blade to resist wear and tear on the jobsite. The tapes feature a wire form belt clip that won't tear pockets and are ergonomically designed for easy measurement and use.

For more information or to find a dealer near you, contact:

www.milwaukeetool.ca
1-800-SAWDUST
(1-800-729-3878)



CaGBC: Zero Carbon Building Standard in Spring 2017

OTTAWA — Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) released a Zero Carbon Buildings Framework for the assessment of highly energy efficient buildings that minimize greenhouse gas emissions. The Framework is the first stage of a broader CaGBC Zero Carbon Buildings Initiative to champion the move to lower-carbon commercial, institutional and high-rise residential buildings in support of Canada's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2030.

Working with Integral Group's Research and Planning group in Vancouver, the CaGBC consulted with approximately 50 individuals representing 40 organizations in the building sector and undertook a comprehensive review of nine international net zero building approaches. The resulting CaGBC Framework facilitates broad participation across a range of building types and sizes, provides a clear definition for zero carbon buildings, and establishes five key components for the evaluation of building carbon footprints that are detailed below.

1. A greenhouse gas intensity metric for assessing a building's emissions, calculated using regional emissions factors.

Construction Climate Challenge

The Construction Climate Challenge initiative (CCC) has been funding research studies since 2014. Through supporting and initiating research projects in relevant areas of construction, CCC acts as a bridge between the industry and sustainability research. During spring 2016, CCC launched a new call for major research projects. The research request resulted in a large number of submissions from all across the globe. Two proposals have now been selected to receive funding.

The research projects that CCC has selected are within the area of collaboration along the construction industry value chain. They both aim to reduce climate impact in construction. The Impres project at the Swedish Royal Institute of Technology focuses on procurement requirements for sustainability assessment on a global level. The CITT project at the University of Edinburgh Business School is developing a tool for construction companies to identify and reduce carbon in the construction supply chain.

For more information, visit constructionclimatechallenge.com.

2. Energy intensity metrics to incentivize the design of highly efficient, reliable and resilient buildings.
3. A peak energy demand metric to encourage the use of "peak shaving" measures.
4. An embodied carbon metric to recognize the importance of building material lifecycle impacts.
5. A requirement that renewable energy be generated on-site or procured directly in order to ensure the addition of clean power generation.

The next phases of the Zero Carbon Initiative include the identification of specific pathways to zero carbon, a zero carbon building pilot program, and the development of a verification program to be completed and launched by CaGBC by the end of the second quarter of 2017.

WorkSafeBC: Young Construction Workers Less Likely to Wear Hearing Protection

RICHMOND, B.C. — New 2016 data from WorkSafeBC indicates young construction workers are less likely to wear hearing protection devices at work compared to other age groups in the same industry. In addition, young workers in construction are less likely to wear hearing protection devices as compared to young workers in other industries, such as manufacturing and primary resources.

Among construction workers age 21 or younger, 24% reported not wearing hearing protection as compared to 13% of workers over the age of 50, and 11% of workers in all other age groups. The data was collected in 2016 from more than 160,000 hearing tests conducted by B.C. employers as part of hearing loss prevention programs.

According to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and Guidelines, employers are required to provide hearing loss prevention programs, monitor noise levels and conduct annual hearing tests for workers exposed to hazardous noise. All workers are responsible for wearing appropriate hearing protection and to take part in their employer's hearing loss prevention program. Hazardous noise levels are defined as 85 decibels in the 'A' scale for eight hours or the equivalent. The A scale is used for measuring environmental noise.

CALENDAR

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

March 31-April 2

Nova Scotia Spring Ideal Home Show
Halifax, NS
www.SpringIdeal.ca

March 31-April 2

CHBAGP Home & Garden Show
Grande Prairie, AB
www.gphomeandgarden.com

April 7-9

Home Show 2017
St. John's NL
chbanl.ca

April 8

Stratford Home & Leisure Show
Stratford, ON
stratfordhomeleisureshow.com

April 21

Northern BC Home & Garden Show
Prince George, BC
www.chbahomeshow.ca

May 10-12

CHBA 74th Annual Conference
St. John's, NF
www.chba.ca

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Home BUILDER NPSC	27	514-620-2200	www.homebuildercanada.com
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Milwaukee Electric Tool Corporation	29	800-729-3878	www.milwaukeetool.ca
Owens Corning Canada LP	3	800-438-7465	www.owenscorning.ca
Royal Building PRODUCTS	11	866-620-9745	www.royalbuildingproducts.com
Simpson Strong-Tie Canada	32	800-999-5099	www.strongtie.com/lssj
Trilogy Class Action Services	27	416-644-3088	www.nationalclassactions.ca
TYPAR / Fiberweb Inc.	4	800-284-2780	www.typar.com

Meet the People.



www.chba.ca/conference



CHBA's 2017 National Conference will deliver insightful speakers, amazing social events and the excitement of the National Awards for Housing Excellence. Be part of it all, and discover the warmth and hospitality of a remarkable land full of the friendliest people anywhere!



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A whole new era for jack hangers.

The new Simpson Strong-Tie® LSSJ jack hanger has arrived. More importantly, it will greatly simplify the way you connect jack rafters to hip/valley roof framing. The LSSJ features a versatile hinged seat that adjusts easily to the roof pitch, is skewable up to 45° and installs easily with nails from one side.

The code-listed LSSJ is your faster, easier jack hanger. To learn more, visit strongtie.com/lssj or call (800) 999-5099.

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