

Green News to Go

Energy-saving news continues to grow this spring



NET-ZERO ENERGY HOME BUILDERS RECOGNIZED

Canada's elite net-zero energy (NZE) home builders gathered in Ottawa in March to celebrate and accept awards for their contribution to the largest Canadian net-zero energy (NZE) housing demonstration project by advancing building science and responding to the global climate change challenge.

A total of 26 homes were built in four provinces as part of the Net-Zero Energy Housing demonstration project with Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) and Owens Corning Canada.

The five project home builders (and community locations) are: Construction Voyer (Laval, Quebec); Mattamy Homes (Calgary, Alberta); Minto Communities (Ottawa, Ontario); Provident Developments (Halifax, Nova Scotia); and Reid's Heritage Homes (Guelph, Ontario).

Measured over a year, a NZE home can potentially produce as much energy as the home consumes. This could mean an average annual energy bill of zero for its homeowner. Natural Resources Canada data suggests that housing accounts for 15 per cent of the country's greenhouse gas emissions. These NZE energy homes can significantly reduce Canada's energy use, reliance on fossil fuels, and carbon and greenhouse gas emissions.

Working with NRCan and the CHBA, the outcomes of the home designs and the learnings from the five builders will be shared and disseminated to the industry. This was not only a demonstration project to show that NZE homes are feasible in today's market but it is also a knowledge transfer success story.

Participants of this project do not believe that the NZE home recipe should be a secret. These innovative builders have become educators and mentors to their peers, sharing their learnings and designs at numerous building industry events.

All the NZE homes will eventually be sold to the public. Beyond this project, these builders will offer net-zero energy-ready (NZEr) homes as a standard or an upgrade on a production scale for their next subdivisions – featuring energy efficiency equivalent to their full NZE houses. Preliminary simulations show that these NZEr homes have an impressive 70 per cent reduction in energy costs compared to comparable houses built to code. Solar panels to make them full NZE will be offered as an option.

For a profile of each net-zero Energy community and more information about the project visit zeroenergy.ca

SHORTAGE OF MASONRY WORKERS AND FRAMERS

In March, Finance Minister Charles Sousa released the Ontario budget for 2016. The masonry industry is happy to see that the Ontario Government is willing to continue investing in the province through pragmatic, balanced policy and reported these comments on the subject.

The commitment to invest \$139-billion in public infrastructure will no doubt be the legacy left by this government which will be enjoyed by Ontarians for years to come. With this huge project, the Government of Ontario needs to

ensure there is enough skill in the labour force to build this infrastructure. Currently, the labour market capacity is not consistent with the ambitious infrastructure goals of our province's leaders.

The Ontario Government is moving in the right direction to ensure post-secondary education becomes more accessible for Ontarians with a lower income. However, the approach put forward in the budget does nothing to encourage Ontario students to pursue an education and career in the trades. This is concerning for a number of reasons.

Primarily, the skills gap will slow the construction process in all sectors which require skilled tradespeople. Secondly, as the demand for skilled tradespeople continues to rise while the supply of skilled tradespeople drops, this will cause the cost of the skilled labour required to build to rise. A higher construction cost will then be passed on to the taxpayer, or in the private sector, the average home buyer. Already in the building construction sector, there is a significant shortage of masons and framers. This will only get worse if we do not think about strategic investment in education and training.

MasonryWorx is encouraged to see that the 2016 budget includes significant spending plans for institutional buildings (schools and hospitals), but has concerns about how these buildings will be completed with the shortage of skilled trades people in Ontario. This is not only a concern for public projects, but also the private residential construction sector, where there is a similar demand for skilled labor.

For more information visit MasonryWorx.com

ENERGY STAR BUILDER WINNERS ANNOUNCED

EnerQuality announced the 2015 EnerQuality Award winners recently in Toronto. Each year the awards are presented to builders committed to building energy efficient and sustainable homes.

The Energy Star for New Homes Builder of the Year - Large Volume award was given to **MATTAMY HOMES**, Canada's largest home builder, who earned the achievement for the third time.

Two Oshawa based builders walked the green carpet. **MIDHAVEN HOMES** received the Energy Star for New Homes - Mid Volume award and **JEFFERY HOMES** received the Energy Star for New

Homes - Small/Custom award.

The **MINTO GROUP** was awarded Ontario Green Builder of the Year for a second year in a row. The award is presented annually to a builder that raises the bar for the rest of the industry through its leadership in improving the environmental, energy efficiency, and overall image of the industry.

REID'S HERITAGE HOMES took home the inaugural Net Zero Builder of the Year award. Net Zero homes are energy self-sufficient and are designed to produce at least as much power as they consume. Reid's Heritage Homes was also the recipient of the Building Innovation - Low Rise award, and the Best Green Marketing Campaign of the Year, for their efforts to educate home buyers.

TRIDEL, the largest builder of condominiums in the Toronto area, was awarded the inaugural award for Building Innovation - Mid and High Rise. The award recognizes technical excellence in energy efficient and green building practices, which is key to achieving more sustainable communities.

ANDY GOYDA, Canadian builder lead and market development manager for Owens Corning Canada was inducted into the EnerQuality Hall of Fame. The award is presented to an individual who, over the course of their career, has made a lasting impact on energy efficiency and green building in the housing industry.

SONJA WINKELMANN, Director of Net Zero Energy Housing for the Canadian Home Builders' Association was recognized as EQ Leader of the Year.

The awards show followed the EnerQuality Housing Innovation Forum, where a sold out audience discussed the future of green building in Ontario. In the closing keynote conversation, Diane Saxe, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, and Peter Gilgan, founder and CEO of Mattamy Homes and member of Ontario's Climate Action Group, discussed the future of homebuilding in light of Ontario's new Climate Change Strategy.

Also returning to the forum this year was the Innovation Gauntlet – a Dragon's Den-style competition where industry manufacturers and organizations pitched their smartest, most innovative products and services to a panel of judges.

The Innovation Gauntlet winner is chosen live by the audience. This year's Innovation Gauntlet award was presented to LiteBuilt for their concrete "LITEBOK" building system – an environmentally friendly, interlocking building block that is ideal for taller buildings.

COMMON PAINTING QUESTIONS

Canadian homeowners are seeking a recipe for success when it comes to updating their kitchens. That's the message of CIL Paint in announcing that the number one décor question fielded by its popular *Ask An Expert* service in 2015 was about painting kitchens.

Roughly 25 per cent of consumers using the service sought guidance on kitchen painting, from wall colour recommendations to how to paint kitchen cabinets, says Alison Goldman, brand manager for CIL paint, a brand of PPG.

The second-most popular décor-related paint question of 2015 – asked by about 18 per cent of consumers – focused on how to use paint to make small spaces appear larger, Goldman says. Other top queries included what colour to paint a home for resale (12 per cent), and what colour combinations work best on a home's exterior (10 per cent), from entranceways and garage doors to siding and decks.

Accessed free-of-charge at cil.ca/ask-an-expert, the CIL paint *Ask An Expert* service is designed to take the stress out of painting and provide consumers with personalized answers to individual design dilemmas. Questions are filtered to the appropriate CIL paint expert, depending on the topic, and are answered within one to two business days.

In addition to submitting questions online, users can upload photos of rooms that need a lift. "Many people think of paint colour in isolation, but it's important for our experts to see the entire room in order to make recommendations," Goldman says. "For example, our décor specialist may suggest moving around some furniture in addition to a new colour scheme to pull the room together."

Likening the service to "having a personal decorator at your fingertips," Goldman says that many users find it hard to believe that it's free. **PC**