

BUILDER



THE MAGAZINE OF THE CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

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BC builders and renovators
share their thoughts on
technology and social media

Market Report:
CHBA BC's M.J. Whitemarsh
talks about building a better B.C.

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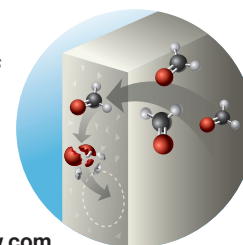


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Columns

- 9 Economics
- 10 Expert Opinion
- 12 Building Science
- 14 Community Development
- 16 Customer Satisfaction
- 18 Technology
- 30 Tool Talk

Departments

- 6 News
- 8 Association
- 34 Renovation
- 35 CHBA Report
- 38 Industry News
- 38 Calendar
- 40 Advertisers Index
- 42 Products

COVER

This house-in-progress is one of many current housing projects underway in Oakville, Ont.

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9

ECONOMICS

The Canadian housing market: greater uncertainty begets greater caution.

10

EXPERT OPINION: BIM

A look at how Building Information Modeling (BIM) can benefit the residential home builders.

12

BUILDING SCIENCE

From the building envelope to the indoor environment to fire safety: An update on some current NRC-IRC housing research.

16

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Having a clearly defined "service recovery strategy" can be a builder's best investment.

20



BUILDER & RENOVATOR PROFILE: Tech Talk

B.C. builders and renovators share their thoughts on technology and social media.



26

GETTING ON THE CLOUD

These days, there's a whole lot of talk about infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) cloud computing. But what does that mean, and how can someone start the journey to get on the cloud?

24

MARKET REPORT: British Columbia

M.J. Whitemarsh, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Home Builders' Association of British Columbia, talks about Building a Better B.C.

30

TOOL TALK

Resident expert Jon Eakes finishes his three-part series in Adhesives: The Final Chapter: Applicators, Tools & Trowels.



Coming Up in the November issue: Industry Leaders Speak What do you have to say?



- 🏠 What can builders and renovators do to succeed?
- 🏠 Projections for 2012
- 🏠 Design trends and innovative solutions for success in 2012
- 🏠 Educational initiatives for builders and renovators

Don't miss out! To find out more, check out page 39 in this issue, or online at www.homebuildercanada.com/ils2011.htm

CREA Updates Resale Housing Forecast

OTTAWA — The Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) has revised its forecast for home sales activity via the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Systems of Canadian real estate Boards and Associations for 2011 and 2012.

Overall, sales activity and prices remained stronger than expected in the second quarter. Sales momentum was also better than expected heading into the third quarter. As a result, the 2011 national forecasts for sales activity and average price have been raised slightly.

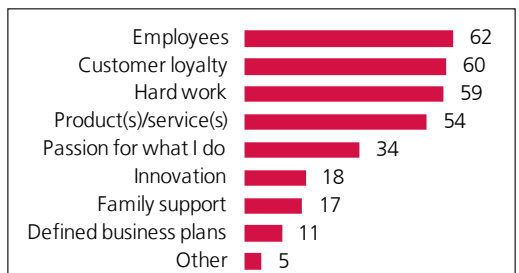
National sales activity is forecast to reach 450,800 units in 2011, up less than one per cent from levels in 2010. CREA had previously forecast a decline of about one per cent for activity in 2011. Erosion in affordability due to higher prices has prompted a small downward revision to the outlook for sales

in 2012.

British Columbia's 2011 sales forecast has been revised slightly higher, in recognition that home sales there appear to have bottomed out sooner than previously anticipated. Stronger than expected activity in Ontario offset slightly softer than anticipated demand in Quebec, Manitoba, and Newfoundland in the second quarter of 2011. Accordingly, the Ontario sales forecast for 2011 has been raised, while the outlook for activity in Quebec, Manitoba, and Newfoundland has been revised lower.

National sales activity in 2012 is forecast to ease seven tenths of a percentage point to 447,700 units, which is roughly on par with its ten-year average. The national average home price is forecast to rise 7.2 per cent in 2011 to \$363,500.

Secrets of Entrepreneurial Success



OTTAWA — In a recent survey on entrepreneurship, 62 per cent of **Canadian Federation of Independent Business** (CFIB) members indicated that their employees were important to the success of their business. Customer loyalty closely followed at 60 per cent. By sector, the construction sector depended on its employees the most (69 per cent). Hard work (59 per cent) and the products or services offered (54 per cent) were also cited by business owners as important.

Moving Up: More Canadians are Upgrading Homes Sooner

TORONTO — According to the recently released *TD Canada Trust Repeat Home Buyers Report*, two-thirds of Canadian repeat home buyers are moving on to larger or more luxurious homes and many are moving earlier than they originally planned. Results for the study were collected through a custom online survey conducted by **EnviroNics Research Group**. A total of 1,025 completed surveys were collected from people who have either purchased a home that was not their first home within the past 24 months, or intend to purchase a home that is not their first home within the next 24 months.

The survey found that seven-in-ten Canadian repeat buyers were moving earlier than they expected (42 per cent) or had no intention of moving but now find themselves on the house-hunt again (27 per cent). Further, the number of people intending to buy a home that is not their first in the next two years increased nearly 10 percentage points over 2010 (74 per cent versus 65 per cent in 2010). Fifty per cent of repeat buyers considered a Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC), as a cushion (46 per cent), or for the purposes of a renovation (45 per cent).

The top five features that Canadians felt they compromised on when they purchased their previous home that they are not willing to budge on this time are price, layout of home, features of home, garage or sheltered parking, and number of bedrooms.

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Publisher
Nachmi Artzy
pub@work4.ca

Contributors:
Tim Bailey
John Burrows
Jon Eakes
Fanis Grammenos
Philip Larson
David Linthicum
Peter Norman

Production Manager
Kelvin Chan
production@homebuildercanada.com

Sales Coordinator
Polly Ma
coordinator@work4.ca

Accounting
Patricia Fleurent
accounting@work4.ca

Circulation Manager
mail@work4.ca

Editor
Judy Penz Sheluk
editor@work4.ca

Published by
Work-4 Projects Ltd.

Advertising/Editorial:
4819 St. Charles Blvd.
Pierrefonds, Quebec
Canada, H9H 3C7
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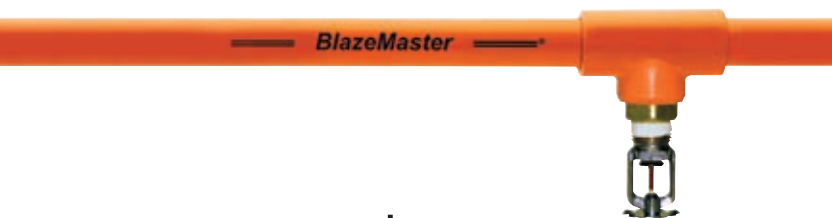




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ASSOCIATION

Social Media on Parade

WINNIPEG — The Manitoba Home Builders Association (MHBA) annually presents its Fall Parade of Homes for three weeks during September and October. This year, 100 new homes from 34 different builders in 17 separate subdivisions will be on display.

Traditionally, a 106 page magazine, published by the **Winnipeg Free Press**, plus standard media advertising succeeded in enticing the public to visit the show homes. But the MHBA realized that today's buyer doesn't get informed strictly by traditional media outlets. Enter social media. Standard fare, introduced for the Spring Parade of Homes, now involves 20 bloggers visiting all of the show homes and writing about what they see. These are loaded on a Parade of Homes Facebook page and their own personal Facebook page for all friends to see. Five additional people tweet live on their Twitter accounts as they move from house to house. The Parade of Homes website is loaded with four photos from each of the 100 homes. For those who want even more, numerous homes and suppliers have implemented QR codes that enable the consumer, with the aid of their Smartphone, to link directly to more features of that particular home, whether it is more photos, a video or a website. www.homebuilders.mb.ca.



Home Builders Care

DARTMOUTH — On Sunday, August 7, the Dartmouth North Boys and Girls Club celebrated a victory at the **Boston Pizza** in Bayers Lake, N.S., with a little help from the Home Builders Care Program and Stanley Cup winner **BRAD MARCHAND**.

Sunday Funday was an auction held to raise funds to install a roof on the Boys and Girls Club of Dartmouth facility located on Farrell Street. Several auction items were donated by the young hockey star, including signed pictures, a signed stick used in a Stanley Cup final game, socks worn in a World Junior Hockey Championship and a signed Boston Bruins jersey. Marchand was also in attendance to show his support for the cause.

"The Homebuilders Care program helps local not-for-profit organizations that are doing great things but facing challenges with their facilities," said **PAUL PETTIPAS**, CEO, Nova Scotia Home Builders Association. "Helping with the facilities is where our expertise and resources come into play."

The event was a coordinated as a joint effort between the Homebuilders Care program and a Public Relations class from Mount Saint Vincent University. The events promotions were so successful they even caught the attention of Nova Scotia Premier, **DARRELL DEXTER** who gladly joined in on the bidding. The event was a great success, raising over \$3,000 for the Boys and Girls Club of Dartmouth's new roof.



Brad Marchand was in attendance to show his support for the cause and give a signed Boston Bruins hat to Dawson Kelly, a seven-year-old member of the club.



By Peter Norman

High consumer debt levels continue to be a concern.

Housing Sector Enjoys Clear Sailing in Stormy Seas

The ongoing international financial and economic crisis seemingly took a turn for the worse this summer, which has created more uncertainty here at home. The main implication for the Canadian housing market is that greater uncertainty begets greater caution.

In particular, prospects are now for slower underlying economic and employment growth. The Canadian economy has been transitioning in recent quarters away from government stimulus and highly-leveraged household expenditures and toward more sustainable factors such as the expansion of the export sector. But the export sector is most at risk as the U.S. economy turns down again and the U.S. housing sector, in particular, languishes. This spells more uncertainty about where Canadian job creation will come from, with the manufacturing sector cautious and the public sector already cutting jobs.

At the same time, high consumer debt levels continue to be a concern, and consumer spending is contributing less to growth so far in 2011. High debt levels, combined with recent stock market turmoil and setbacks in net worth, could keep some potential move-up buyers on the sidelines. Average mortgage debt outstanding has risen substantially over the past decade across Canada, and particularly in Canada's largest cities (see chart).

Lower Interest Rates Ahead

On the other hand, recent events also have positive implications. The nature of the international crisis, combined with the slower outlook for the economy, has led to a much lower bank and mortgage rate forecast for the remainder of 2011 and 2012 than previously thought. Bond yields in Canada (the 5-year bond, for example, is widely considered the benchmark for the mortgage pricing by banks), have fallen three-quarters of a percentage point in the past month, and most forecasters now expect them to be little changed over the next year. While banks have been slow to follow with lower mortgage rates, at the very least, potential home buyers can put aside worries of higher interest rates for some time to come.

In addition, poorly performing stock markets may also hold a silver lining for housing. As in the past, sagging confidence in equity markets will likely prompt some Canadians to turn their attention to housing as a preferred investment.

Recent Housing Performance

Total Canada-wide housing starts accelerated to 195,000 units seasonally adjusted at annual rate (SAAR) in the 2nd quarter of 2011, according to CMHC, up 12 per cent from the 1st quarter. Gains were experienced in both single-family and apartment starts and in most provinces.

It is still expected that starts will cool somewhat from

their recent pace, in part following the lead of resale markets (existing home sales softened slightly in the 2nd quarter of 2011, down five per cent from the 1st quarter) and also due to the mounting economic uncertainty. Moreover, the tighter rules for insured mortgage lending, introduced by the government in the spring of this year, likely boosted sales and starts in the first half of the year. It also predicates a potential steeper drop off in the second half.

However, the forecast for both 2011 and 2012 has improved modestly on the back of the more favourable interest rate outlook.

Bubble Watch

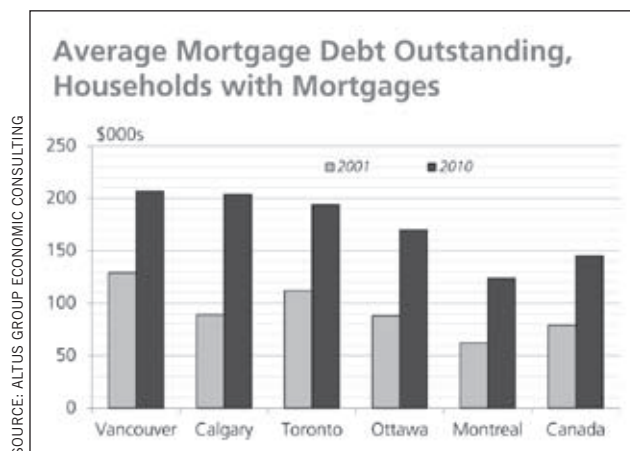
But continued low (or lower) interest rates also increase the risk of a U.S.-style housing market adjustment further down the road. For example, if those households in Canada who currently have substantial debt decide to delay paying their debt down or even extend themselves further, then financial system risks will rise.

The health of the first-time buyer segment is also of concern. First-time buyers could respond to the current interest rate "reprieve" by taking on more mortgage debt than could be handled over the longer-term (when interest rates do finally normalize).

Lower, or at least continued low, interest rates are likely to fuel further house price increases, and so an emerging risk, similar to patterns seen in the U.S. in the 2004-2006 period, is that the low rates could push housing prices above levels sustainable by underlying fundamentals.

All in all, there are many issues to consider in assessing the health of the housing market in Canada today. Tumultuous international storms are bringing dark clouds to the horizon in Canada, but some of those clouds have silver linings for housing.

Peter Norman is a member of the CHBA Economic Research Committee and is Chief Economist at Altus Group (formerly Clayton Research), the leading provider of independent real estate consulting and advisory services.





By Philip D. Larson

BIM is a graphical representation of a project developed by the use of 3D objects that can carry additional "intelligence".

Philip D. Larson, CCE CEP CPE PMP PSP FAACE FRICS, has been providing BIM consulting services with Project & Cost Control (PC2) since 1992. He is Past President of AACE International, a non-profit professional educational association founded in 1956, and the largest organization globally serving the entire spectrum of the cost and management profession. Currently serving as co-chair of AACE's BIM Committee, Phil's specific expertise has been to translate a BIM model into a detailed cost estimate, and then into a resource loaded construction schedule, facilitating the ability to build projects on time and on budget. He can be reached at drphil@att.net.

Building Information Modeling (BIM) for the Residential Home Builder

The benefits of Building Information Modeling (BIM) have been principally touted to non-residential construction in recent years. Most of these have been largely centered on initial marketing efforts showing a 3D model of the project, to time-lapsed depictions, to the ever popular "clash detection" (also known as 3D interference checking). In fact, according to the *McGraw Hill Market Report* in 2009, marketing scored "high/very high" by 49 per cent of those responding. Marketing was also ranked highest by architects rating the perceived benefits of BIM.

But the residential market can benefit from BIM as well, since the use of BIM is not the same thing to all people. Fundamentally, BIM is a graphical representation of a project developed by the use of 3D objects that can carry additional "intelligence". Therefore, the real use is only limited by one's imagination and interest.

Automating the Process

The home building industry is comprised of a wide range of individuals and companies that construct anywhere from just one or two homes per year, to as many as several thousand. But regardless of volume, at the heart of building each of these homes is the need to meet homeowners' expectations; to deliver the quality that their budget can afford, and to complete in a timely manner.

Through BIM, contractors can take advantage of automatic count (each), length, and area calculations to develop detailed cost estimates, and even bills of material (BOM) for use on their projects, as well as detailed construction schedules.

Surprisingly enough, a BIM model does not always have to be a 3D or pictorial representation of a project, in this case a home, to be able to offer these benefits to the home builder; a BIM model can also be a tabular representation of a given project. However, the more sophisticated home builder who has capabilities of authoring a BIM model with products such as Revit Architecture from Autodesk (www.autodesk.ca) can also offer visualization capabilities.

Figure 1 depicts a 3D representation of a one-storey residence with an accessible kitchen. The residence itself can be broken down to Foundations, Superstructure (Floor and Roof Construction), Exterior Closure, Interior Construction, and in this specific case, by room.

The 2D plans for a standard kitchen layout would be fundamentally the same as that for an accessible kitchen, but through the use of BIM, items (objects) such as door handles and electrical switches, etc., could be substituted quickly to adapt each living space as necessary to not only develop a cost proposal, but a bill of materials as well.

As far as emerging standards go, the *AIA Document E202TM – 2008, Building Information Modeling Protocol Exhibit*, under paragraph 4.3 Model Element Table, where elements are represented by the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI) UniFormat TM classification system is an example of how the commercial industry is giving specific definition to what is expected in a BIM.

These same types of protocols can be easily adapted by the residential construction industry in adopting BIM in a more formal way. Quantitatively, home builders can significantly reduce the lengthiness and compilation of the BOM, reduce the risk of missing items, and therefore increase the accuracy and enable more realistic estimating of costs, and better estimates of time for construction.

In the example above for instance, Interior Construction can also be broken down to room by room where the floor, wall, and ceiling finishes can all be quickly calculated. Of course, the fastest and most accurate ways to perform these calculations is electronically either through a generic spreadsheet product, or through tools specifically made for estimating such as Timberline by Sage, or WinEst by WinEstimator, Inc. that also integrate with dedicated scheduling tools such as Microsoft Project or Primavera by Oracle.

The specifics of how to take advantage of BIM are really determined on a case by case basis. But be that as it may, the tools and technology are no longer obstacles, but a means to prioritize goals and determine ways to accomplish them effectively, thereby reducing costs to the homeowner while improving the home builder's profitability.

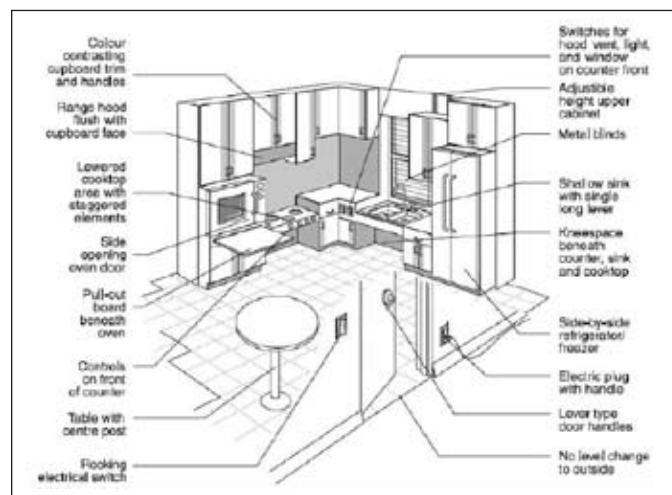


Figure 1 – Accessible Kitchen from the Canadian Home Builder's Association Builder's Manual

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By John Burrows

Some Current NRC-IRC Housing Research

The NRC Institute for Research in Construction (NRC-IRC) pursues a wide range of research and technical activities in support of the housing sector. This article summarizes several current research projects likely to be of interest to builders.

Building Envelope

One interesting project is a study of the performance of innovative roof-integrated photovoltaic (PV) products to quantify their energy production potential and assess their performance as roofing systems. The roof-integrated PV system is being installed at the InfoCentre of the Canadian Centre for Housing Technology and will be evaluated for durability, air leakage, wind loads, and water penetration.

Researchers will use the results to investigate the heat and moisture performance of these new roofing systems under a variety of climate conditions. They will also use them to enhance a simulation model to predict whole house energy performance at selected locations across Canada. The outcomes of this preliminary assessment could open up markets for this new generation of roofing products and identify technical barriers to their adoption.

Another full-scale facility employed by NRC-IRC for housing research is a two-storey house equipped for studies of wall systems and ventilation issues. Currently, one exterior wall of the house is being used to investigate the performance of vacuum insulation panels. The objective of the project is to develop construction specifications and guidelines for assembling this promising type of building envelope system and help encourage its use in Canada.

Indoor Environment

Building envelope projects often go hand-in-hand with studies of the indoor environment. In a new project just underway, researchers are assessing the performance of tubular daylighting devices (TDDs) from the standpoint of lighting and thermal issues.

TDDs are alternatives to conventional skylights, delivering daylight without the unwanted solar heat gain. At the moment, their use is limited because manufacturers lack reliable and accurate calculation methods and design tools to predict the energy performance of their products when installed, to show compliance with energy codes and standards, and to rate existing and/or innovative TDDs. The NRC-IRC project will develop performance indicators for various types of residential TDDs and a simple design guide to help in selection and installation.

In a project that is part of a larger Indoor Air Initiative, NRC-IRC is combining laboratory investigations of air supply, air distribution and air movement within residential buildings with a field study involving 115

houses in the Greater Quebec City area. The project seeks to investigate the impact of increased ventilation rates on indoor air quality and the respiratory health of asthmatic children.

Preliminary results indicate that there is a marked seasonal dependence of the air change rates and the concentrations of certain pollutant gases, with some having higher concentrations in winter and others having higher levels in summer. In general, higher concentrations of gaseous pollutants were observed in homes having lower ventilation rates. Overall, the majority of the participating homes did not meet the nominal ventilation rate goal of 0.30 air changes per hour for residential buildings.

A project in the research house finds researchers challenging the traditional thinking that air supply registers for residential forced air systems should be located under windows. This has been the practice, the idea being to counteract the cold down draft from the window. Researchers are running experiments to evaluate whether, in a new, well-constructed building with little draft, the supply registers can be moved away from the conventional location without affecting indoor air quality, thermal comfort or energy loads. Positioning the registers away from windows could have a significant impact for builders as duct lengths could be shortened, saving materials and construction time.

Experiments have been completed for one heating season and one cooling season. Preliminary results indicate that, in terms of thermal comfort and indoor air quality, in an airtight building there is no requirement to position supply air registers under windows for the heating season.

Fire Safety

After completing Phase I of a study of the fire performance of houses, researchers undertook a follow-up project to investigate the performance of ceiling/floor systems protected by various measures, and the impact of those measures on the tenability conditions. Four types of floors—wood I-joist, steel C-joist and metal web wood truss assemblies as well as solid wood joist assemblies—were studied in full-scale fire experiments in a test structure involving a typical basement fire. The four assemblies were protected on the basement side with regular gypsum board, sprinklers or a suspended ceiling.

With gypsum board protection, all four assemblies provided similar durations of structural fire endurance under the test fire scenario. The sprinkler system not only protected the structural integrity of the floor assemblies but also maintained tenable conditions in the test house.

Further information about these and other NRC-IRC housing initiatives may be found by accessing the Institute's web site at: www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/ibp/irc.html.



A roof-integrated PV system is being installed at the InfoCentre of the Canadian Centre for Housing Technology, and will be evaluated for durability, air leakage, wind loads, and water penetration.

John Burrows is an engineer and technical writer.



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By Fanis Grammenos

In the pursuit of closeness, we have found ways to kill distance.

Global Neighbourhoods

Social animals have a survival advantage over lone foragers. Take ants, for example. They build not nests, but sophisticated, climate-controlled cities, for millions of inhabitants. They may be small (and kind of annoying), but they have beaten the odds for an inconceivably long time.

We have become just as adept at living anywhere on earth, not only by being social, but also by becoming technologically-minded. Being social rests on exchanging information and, invariably, trading goods and services. To do these exchanges, closeness is vital; villages and cities were built on this premise.

In the pursuit of closeness, we have found ways to kill distance. Some of the solutions, now taken for granted, were once considered extraordinary, sci-fi stuff. Not so long ago, thinking that it would be possible to land on the moon would have branded you a lunatic.

But kill distance we did, first by building lines where none existed: rail lines, ship lines, telegraph and telephone lines, and a few years later, airlines. These lines were followed by networks resembling webs on land, on water, and in the air. And on these lines we pushed the speed limit forever up. Finally, we built the ultimate web with physical and invisible lines; the last, deadly blow on distance—we reached the unbreakable speed limit of light.

As distance collapsed, communities grew larger, more specialized and segmented by interest, occupation and affluence. Neighbourhoods did, too. Early town residents took 10 or 15 minutes to walk to its heart, a mere 800-1,000 metres away. For many of today's city dwellers, that centre is now 6-10 kilometres away, resulting in a 10- to 15-minute drive or subway ride. While the time stayed the same, there was more than a one-hundredfold increase in city area and citizens; with them comes new countless opportunities for exchange. And with such an increase comes the natural tendency to self-select and cluster in groups of like-minded people.

Virtual Neighbourhoods

Let's look at a family of professionals, for example. Perhaps they live in a secluded neighbourhood where tranquility and nature are part of their cherished experience. Their home, built to the highest standards, displays the gamut of advanced technology: fully connected and wireless, automated and eco-friendly.

Though the family life unfolds in a quiet cul-de-sac, the homeowners' professional activities will now extend over a 200 sq. km. city, and, perhaps, into adjacent cities or even beyond the country borders. Remember, distance is dead: their intellectual neighbourhood crosses provincial, national and international borders. They follow and connect with kindred minds anywhere. A true techno-smart neighbourhood liberated from physical boundaries.



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Much of this is taken for granted by their teenaged kids. They may attend the local high school and play football there, but, at the end of the game, more fun and learning continues, covering unimaginable distances and range. They can match up in multiplayer video-games with kids from countries around the globe, read technical articles from multiple libraries or specialized sites without travel—they can even attend lectures and take university courses while munching on potato chips in the privacy of their bedroom. Movies, music and gossip stream in at megabyte speed. Books can be bought at a quarter of the printed copy price and read on a portable tablet: the virtual "book/video store" stays open 24/7. It even provides suggestions on what they might enjoy—just as a friend would.

And of course, the must-have cell phone lets them stay in touch with family and friends instantly, anywhere and through a variety of social networks, acquire new friends. The youth of today have developed their very own techno-smart neighbourhood—one that goes beyond their home, their street, their block, and their local "community".

The household operations have also changed. Fridge and freezer are big enough to contain goods for at least a week of family meals. Before long, images of depleted items will magically appear as a reminder on the refrigerator door—not the old-fashioned paper list attached with a magnet, but a "smart" solution that tells them they have just run out of orange juice. Perhaps it will even warn the unsuspecting that the milk has gone sour.

For other items, from books, gadgets and flowers to clothing, furniture or electronics, tripping around town to find and buy them will become ancient history. A few online taps, and, presto, the object will arrive at the doorstep a few days later. A techno-smart house and a neighbourhood that reaches well beyond the city lines.

Where is/who is the HP address that we are having an engaging, informative conversation with? Not easy to tell. It could be someone down the block, someone in India or Antarctica—perhaps even an itinerant thinker currently between countries.

We are all part of the Global Neighbourhood and we are very much enjoying it.

Fanis Grammenos is a principal of Urban Pattern Associates and was a senior researcher at CMHC for 20 years. He can be reached at fanis.grammenos@gmail.com, and you can see his planning work at www.fusedgrid.ca

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By Tim Bailey

Handled effectively, customer breakdowns provide unique opportunities for customer loyalty breakthroughs.

Tim Bailey is General Manager of AVID Canada, a leading provider of customer loyalty research and consulting to the home building industry. Through the AVID system, Tim's team improves referrals, reduces warranty costs, and strengthens the brand of its industry-leading clients. He can be reached at tim.bailey@avidglobal.ca.

Service Recovery Takes the Checkered Flag

Leading home builders invest considerable resources into developing products and processes that delight customers with consistently great homes and custom experiences. However, mistakes will happen, and that is why having a clearly defined "service recovery strategy" can be a builder's best investment.

A service recovery strategy is analogous to the pit crew in NASCAR racing. A winning NASCAR team is always working to ensure that their car is in peak condition. They do, however, spend an equal or greater amount of time strategically planning and training for when the inevitable problems occur. This ensures that they are prepared to get their car back on the track faster than the competition. If there were not a defined strategy in place to recover from a breakdown, there would be little hope of victory. In fact, it is often said that the races are won and lost in the pits, and the same may be true when it comes to service recovery in home building.

In home building, there is tremendous opportunity to create delighted customers by having defined processes that deliver exceptional experiences and produce homes free of defects and deficiencies at closing. That is similar to the occasional NASCAR race won due to high performance and no breakdowns. Then there are the times when people, processes, or products create a breakdown and customer delight depends on the proverbial pit crew's ability to seamlessly execute a deliberate service recovery strategy.

A Look Under the Hood

A service recovery strategy should not involve providing a discount or credit in an attempt to appease a customer, as it has been studied and proven that customer loyalty cannot be bought. This is especially true with home buyers, as money will not take the edge off the disappointment of getting less than expected or having to accept inferior quality. A homeowner will quickly forget about a credit or discount, but they will be reminded

about any concessions in quality for years to come.

According to preliminary findings from the AboutFace's Service Recovery Index designed by Jane Edwards-Hall and Paige Hall in cooperation with Rexer Analytics, the behaviours that matter most to consumers during a service failure are responsiveness, empathy, attentiveness, and direct problem resolution. These are key ingredients that must become embedded in any service recovery strategy. Leading home builders understand that service recovery is not a haphazard attempt to right a wrong, but rather a systematic method that can close the loop on customer loyalty and increase referral sales.

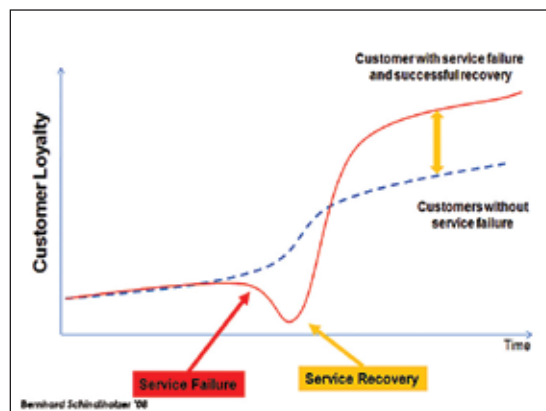
Handled effectively, customer breakdowns can provide unique opportunities for customer loyalty breakthroughs. Effective service recovery can, in fact, create a higher level of customer loyalty than what might have been achieved if a service failure did not occur, as illustrated in the graph.

Service Recovery Builds Brands

Many customers today expect to encounter difficulties when getting issues resolved, which provides a great opportunity for companies that have a service recovery strategy in place. Indeed, the use of a defined service recovery strategy can differentiate and create value for a company's brand. Furthermore, handling customer issues effectively restores trust with customers, which is essential for referrals to occur.

Positive or negative word-of-mouth advertising by customers can now leverage the megaphone of social media, and it is dangerous and foolish for any company to trivialize the power and far-reaching impact of the voice of customers. According to a study conducted by Forrester Research, 71 per cent of consumers who said that problem resolution fell far below their expectations also said that they are very likely to tell someone about their experience. Similarly, 65 per cent of those who said that problem resolution far exceeded their expectations also said that they are very likely to tell someone. If a service failure occurs, this is definitely not the time to overwhelm the customer further or leave customer issues unresolved.

In home building it is vital to ensure that your people, processes, and products are operating at peak performance levels, just like in NASCAR. It is equally important to be sure that service recovery is planned, practiced, and ready to be engaged whenever inevitable problems occur. NASCAR pit crews are able to turn breakdowns into victories, and a well-developed service recovery strategy can similarly ensure that a home builder takes the checkered flag in the race for referral sales.



The Service Recovery Index from AboutFace shows that service recovery often increases customer loyalty in the long run. www.aboutfacecorp.com.



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By David Linthicum

Why the shortage of cloud architects will lead to bad clouds

Designing and building cloud computing-based systems is nothing like building traditional applications and business systems. Unfortunately, many in IT find that out only when it's too late.

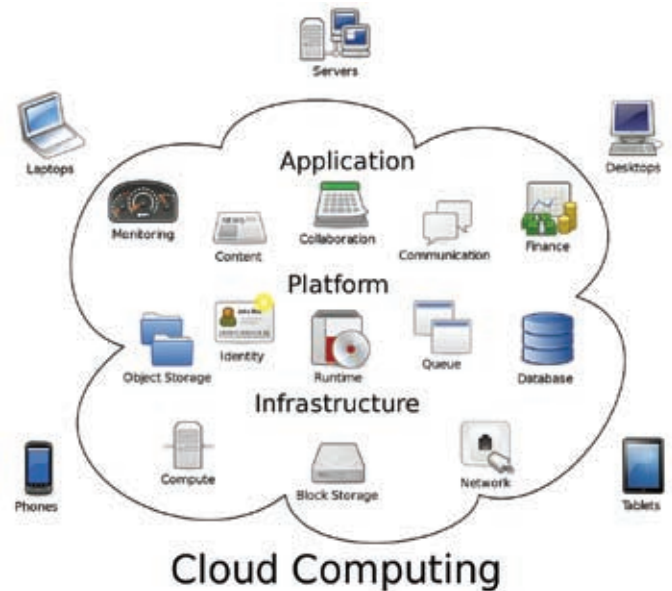
The complexities around multitenancy, resource sharing and management, security, and even version control lead cloud computing startups — and enterprises that build private and public clouds — down some rough roads before they start to learn from their mistakes. Or perhaps they just have to kill the project altogether as they discover all that investment is unsalvageable.

I've worked on cloud-based systems for years now, and the common thread to cloud architecture is that there are no common threads to cloud architecture. Although you would think that common architectural patterns would emerge, the fact is clouds do different things and must use very different architectural approaches and technologies. In the world of cloud computing, that means those who are smart, creative, and resourceful seem to win out over those who are just smart.

The demand has exploded for those who understand how to build clouds. However, you have pretty much the same number of cloud-experienced architects being chased by an increasing number of talent seekers. Something has to give, and that will be quality and innovation as organizations settle for what they can get versus what they need.

You won't see it happen right away. It will come in the form of outages and security breaches as those who are less than qualified to build clouds are actually allowed to build them. Moreover, new IaaS, SaaS, and PaaS clouds — both public and private — will be functional copies of what is offered by the existing larger providers, such as Google, Amazon Web Services, and Microsoft. After all, when you do something for the first time, you're more likely to copy rather than innovate.

If you're on the road to cloud computing, there are



a few things you can do to secure the talent you need, including buying, building, and renting. Buy the talent by stealing it from other companies that are already building and deploying cloud-based technology — but count on paying big for that move. Build by hiring consultants and mentors to both do and teach cloud deployment at the same time. Finally, rent by outsourcing your cloud design and build to an outside firm that has the talent and track record.

Of course, none of these options are perfect. But they're better than spending all that time and money on a bad cloud.

This article, "Why the shortage of cloud architects will lead to bad clouds," originally appeared at InfoWorld.com. It has been reprinted with permission from InfoWorld and the author.

David (Dave) S. Linthicum is the Founder and CTO of Blue Mountain Labs (www.bluemountainlabs.com) and an internationally recognized industry expert and thought leader. He is the author and co-author of 13 books on computing. His latest book is "Cloud Computing and SOA Convergence in Your Enterprise, a Step-by-Step Approach." You can follow Dave on Twitter at www.twitter.com/DavidLinthicum.

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TechTalk

B.C. builders and renovators share their thoughts on technology and social media

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK

The theme of this issue of *Home BUILDER* is Technology, and our provincial focus is British Columbia. Rather than our typical “one builder” profile, we decided to pose some questions to a handful of respected builders and renovators in B.C. Sort of a mini survey, if you will, on how technology and social media have impacted the way they do business in 2011.

Home BUILDER Magazine: How has technology changed the way you build homes?

BOB DEEKS, president, **RDC Fine Homes**, Whistler

Technology has had the greatest impact on how we frame and insulate our homes. Ten years ago we used traditional 2x6 framing and fiberglass insulation with a plastic vapour barrier. Most of our framing was dimensional

lumber and windows were simple double-glazed units.

Today we are using pre-manufactured Structurally Insulated Panels for all our exterior framing and insulation, and the structural lumber we use is typically of the manufactured variety: gluelam beams, TGI's, micro-lams, etc.

Most of our windows are now triple-glazed gas-filled units with UV coatings to match the orientation of the building: one coating to maximize solar gain on the south face and a different coating on the remaining faces to limit gain and enhance the insulation values. Improvements in design software have helped us design homes that better maximize solar gain and adjust overhangs to maximize summer shading.

HBM: How has technology changed the way you communicate? And how much has it impacted consumer knowledge?

JOHN FRISWELL, president, **CCI Renovations**, Vancouver

We are light years ahead of where we were 10 years ago. We started with cell phones back in 1986 that cost \$1,200/month to operate. Today we have smartphones in the hands of

every one of our employees (currently 18) and we are paying less than \$2,000.

We now have a server, use double monitors on all workstations, use common web-based calendars and project management software and have more computers and laptops than I can count!

Almost all of our internal communication is done by e-mail, and employees are clocking in using a smartphone app, which eliminates time sheets and ties directly to our accounting software. All of our drawings — right from our initial “sketches” through to our working drawings are done on the computer.

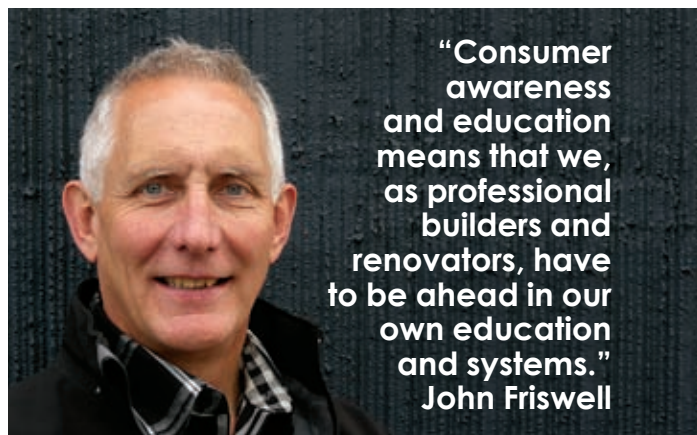
The movement toward energy efficiency and sustainability has combined into the “green” movement, and clients are now on top of every aspect of the products in their homes. Consumer awareness and education means that we, as professional builders and renovators, have to be ahead in our own education and systems.

HBM: How has technology changed the way you do business?

DAVID ADAIR, director, **Blackfish Homes and Construction Limited**, Vancouver

With today's ever-evolving technology we are able to communicate effectively and rapidly from office to site and back to the client. With a smartphone, we now snap a picture or a shoot a short video at the

“Consumer awareness and education means that we, as professional builders and renovators, have to be ahead in our own education and systems.”
John Friswell



BOB DEEKS

“Technology has had the greatest impact on how we frame and insulate our homes.”



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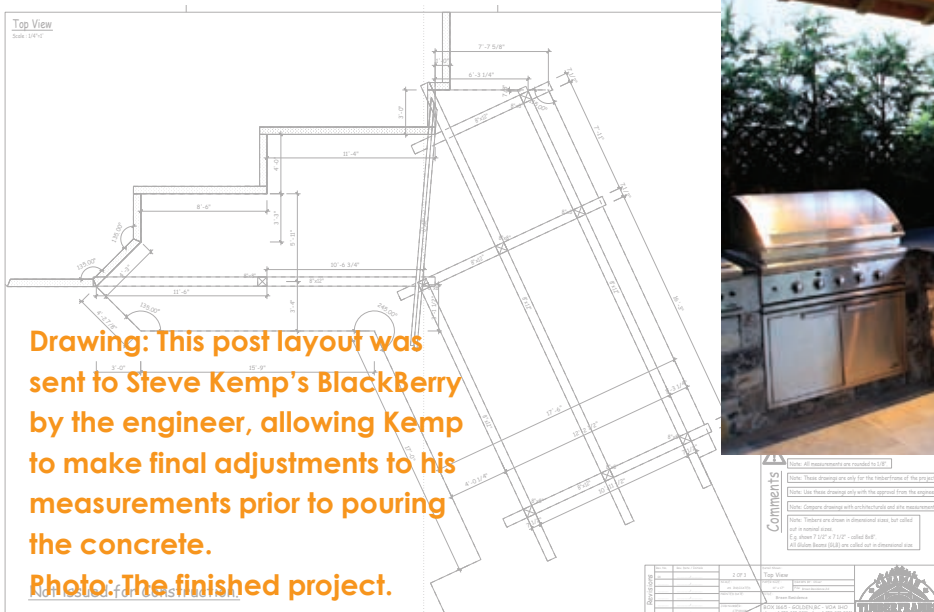


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was double or triple the amount of time needed today. It allows me to spend more time with my current clients, or to put together bids for future work.

20 ▶ job site, e-mail or text it to multiple recipients, and get almost instant feedback.

We post all important job files on an Internet-based server, which allows all parties to have access to the same paperwork at all times. Our budgets are all developed with digital takeoff software and estimating software to minimize the risk of incorrect math or missed

portions of the budget. This also allows for easy reference for current needs or future projects.

Our crews check in at work on a digital time clock with a key-tag fob registered directly to them and their job classification, thus ensuring our clients are only truly paying for the time our crews are on site. Looking back four to five years, the management of these needs

HBM: How have online management systems changed the way you do business?

STEVE KEMP, Certified Renovation Professional, owner, **Kemp Construction Management Ltd.**, Vancouver

At Kemp Construction we use an online management system (Cloud computing) to communicate with our clients. The system



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manages items such as: change orders, PDF design files, documents, progressive photos, client selections, scheduling and messaging. The project information is managed, stored and shared on one site, ensuring that we and the client are working from the same information. Additionally, it allows the client to see design files or photos of selections, and sign off online, using a tablet, a laptop, or a smart-phone—no matter where they (or we) might be at that moment. Time is saved, miscommunications are eliminated. The contractor's productivity has increased substantially using these communications tools.

HBM: How important is social media to your business?

TODD J. SENFT, president, **reVISION Custom Home Renovations Inc.**, Vancouver

With the vast amount of people using computers and handheld devices coupled with



reVISION Custom Home Renovations Inc. See more of this project on Facebook.

the "need to know now" desire, it is becoming increasingly important for businesses to become somewhat savvy with social media. Consumers have access to large amounts of information at their fingertips; you want your company to be the one at the top of the list that pops up on their screen (and their minds).

Using social media can be a very pow-

erful tool if used properly to reach and teach your target market. For example, Facebook is quite popular and using it effectively will enhance the brand of company; it can be used to provide a plethora of information, from photographs of projects and new products to the latest details on government rebates, tax changes or building code changes. A company can quickly become "the" source of information for a particular segment of the residential construction industry based solely on the value of information it provides.

Twitter is also becoming popular because it provides an avenue for

people to send quick short communication much like a text message. This type of communication is very to the point and needs to have quick responses if you want to keep your audience captivated. This may take some resources to manage but if done effectively, Twitter can be a very powerful tool for improving the service a business provides.

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British Columbia

Building a Better BC



*An interview with M.J. Whitemarsh,
Chief Executive Officer, Canadian
Home Builders' Association of
British Columbia*

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK



In 2011, the residential construction and renovation industry in British Columbia is expected to generate over 130,000 person years of employment, \$6 billion dollars in wages, and more than \$1 billion dollars in provincial tax revenue. The overall value of the residential construction and renovation industry is \$15.1 billion dollars.

And it's one proactive community: BC has 10 active regional Home Builders' Associations, as well as a provincial HBA. We asked M.J. Whitemarsh, CEO, CHBA BC, to comment on some of the key issues facing builders and renovators in the province.

Home BUILDER Magazine: British Columbians live in some of the most expensive real estate in North America. As the provincial HBA, have you formulated an action plan to address this concern?

M.J. Whitemarsh: In November 2010, CHBA BC, along with industry and government stakeholders, held a Housing Affordability Symposium (HAS) where we established an Action Plan. The four overarching components of the Plan are Regulatory Barriers; Maximizing Housing Stock; Economic Issues; and Community Planning. Specific time-frame recommendations have been provided for four stakeholder groups: industry, municipal/regional authorities, provincial government and federal government.

HBM: How has the implementation of HST impacted the sales of new housing?

MJW: In some areas of the province the housing market for primary residences has

remained stable. This is in part due to the raising of the threshold to \$525,000. The threshold must be adjusted bi-annually to align with the New Housing Price Index. Currently the median price of a new home is hovering just below \$600,000.

The second home market, which has always been strong in areas like Okanagan, the Kootenays, Vancouver Island, has been hit hard. As secondary residences, these homes are not eligible for the HST rebate. Buyers who come here from Alberta where there is no provincial sales tax now find their own province offers

The underground economy is alive, well, and thriving.

a more affordable solution. We've also lost a lot of buyers from Europe and the US due to economic uncertainty in those areas.

HBM: How has the HST impacted renovations?

MJW: The underground economy is alive, well, and thriving. Our members are professionals, our builders are licensed, embrace education and training, are registered for HST, get the proper permits. Our position is that all persons conducting any type of business should be required to register for HST with no exemptions. We also believe the government should institute a renovation income tax rebate, requiring invoices showing taxes paid and the HST number of the company providing the service.

HBM: Inclusionary Zoning is practiced in many municipalities throughout B.C. What is CHBA

BC's position on this?

MJW: Inclusionary Zoning continues to be a major concern to CHBA BC. Economic research indicates that such policies ultimately have negative effects on the affordability of new homes in a development, and potentially on the market as a whole. Our HAS recommendations include reduced government-imposed costs on new housing; removal of regulatory barriers to new housing developments; tax policies that encourage private sector investment in rental housing production; housing combined with support services for households with special needs; and, expanded opportunities for accessory units as integral elements of new housing developments.

HBM: Bordered by mountains, ocean and the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), buildable land in the Greater Vancouver area is almost non-existent. Is there a viable solution?

MJW: One solution would be to release 'marginal' land from the ALR. This is land that is not and never will be suitable for agricultural pursuits. Also, municipalities should encourage secondary suites and laneway housing where possible.

HBM: Vancouver's recently completed Canada Line and the under development Evergreen Line will support the movement of residents across the Metro Vancouver region. Will this allow for the densification of housing and mixed use commercial along these lines?

MJW: The Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future – Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) proposes to freeze industrial lands along the skytrains. If we want residents to use mass transit, we also have to look at how the lands surrounding it are zoned. Private developers should be able to have their lands re-designated from industrial to an alternative designation to support affordable market housing while protecting the overall intent of the RGS.

HBM: CHBA BC has won the Dave Bell Memorial Award for the promotion of education and training programs for members and consumers four times in the past six years. What sort of initiatives have you introduced?

MJW: We understand that building houses is a science, and we have invested considerable time, energy and dollars into developing one of Canada's first industry-driven self-certification programs, the Canadian Home Builders' Institute (CHBI). The portal is available to anyone at www.learnyourliving.ca.





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Getting on the Cloud

BY JUDY PENZ SHELUK

These days, there's a whole lot of talk about infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) cloud computing. But what does that mean, and how can someone start the journey to live on the cloud? I decided to find out.

I started my research by looking up the definition of cloud computing. This is what I came up with: Cloud computing is a style of computing whose foundation is the delivery of services, software and processing capacity using private or public networks. The focus of cloud computing is the user experience, and the essence is to decouple the delivery of computing services from the underlying technology.

If you're super-tech savvy, then you're probably nodding wisely right about now. If you're like me, however, you're probably thinking, "Huh?"

That's why I called **ALDO GALLONE**, a 22-year veteran in the high-tech industry, and Cloud Leader for **IBM Canada**.

"Simply put, cloud computing is a once-in-a-generation shift in a computing paradigm," Gallone told me. "It isn't just another trend—technology comes and goes—rather,

it is a collection of several trends that are converging, i.e. laptop, desktop, Smartphone, all streaming to a centralized environment.

"The underlying economic model is also very compelling, especially to a new generation of users used to these types of comput-

The technology behind the cloud remains invisible to the user.

ing mechanisms," Gallone said. "Furthermore, beyond the user interface, the technology behind the cloud remains invisible to the user, making cloud computing incredibly user-friendly. For example, not so long ago, if we liked a certain song on the radio, we'd have

to purchase an entire album of music. Today, we can simply download that one song from iTunes."

Okay, that makes sense. Cloud is sort of a "pay-as-you-go" centralization of computing.

"Exactly," said Gallone. "Let's take the example of a professional renovator. Not that many years ago, he'd carry a pager, paper and pen to his appointments. But today, every company, even the smallest renovator, uses e-mail. And cloud computing takes it one step further. It leverages a pooled resources environment that uses virtualization in order for the physical assets to support multiple workloads.

"Getting specific, I can envision a point where, instead of individual renovators or builders each purchasing their own drawing package, there is a community cloud set up to share non-competitive resources; perhaps it's a benefit offered through their regional, provincial, or national Home Builders' Association. And within that public cloud is a web-based, community cloud-based designing package available as a pay-as-you-need-it. The data is secure, the software is up-to-date with the latest upgrades, there's no significant hardware investment on the part of the user, and there's no need to install anything on a PC."



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26 ► Picking the Right Cloud

There are three basic deployment options when it comes to getting on the cloud:

Public Cloud: IT activities / functions are delivered as a service over the Internet; elastic scaling (the ability to provision resources on-demand allows users to elastically expand and contract the resource base available to them based on an as-needed basis); pay-as-you-go.

Private Cloud: IT capabilities are delivered as a service over the Intranet within the enter-

prise, behind the company's firewall. or **Rogers** will soon be providing a consumer cloud. As a homeowner upgrades services, those companies will offer back-up services for the home computer, or allow the homeowner to run automatic security.

Of course, even good clouds might have a storm, and so that also means asking, "What happens if there is a failure?"

"It's vital that the purchaser understands the elements of a service level agreement," Gallone said. "What is the guarantee, what are

providing opportunities to build a smarter planet, a core philosophy of IBM. "Our view is this is really about making buildings, houses, sewage systems, roads smarter. New analytics capabilities from IBM Research analyze the information from a variety of activities within a building (heating, cooling, hot water, lighting, running equipment etc.), as well as factors contributing to the inefficiency in energy consumption. We're currently in collaboration with McMaster University in such a program.

"But let's consider an industry-specific example: all new home builders provide a warranty. If the builder could place a small electronic device on certain parts of the foundation or framing—and this is possible—then they could track for faults, like moisture, or mould, or air leakage, or toxicity. Proactively maintaining those issues during the warranty period is not only cost effective, it's good customer service. Finally, the builder can get the data collected and analyzed to improve upon future construction."

I guess you could say that when it comes to cloud computing, the sky's the limit. 

Cloud computing is a once-in-a-generation shift in a computing paradigm.

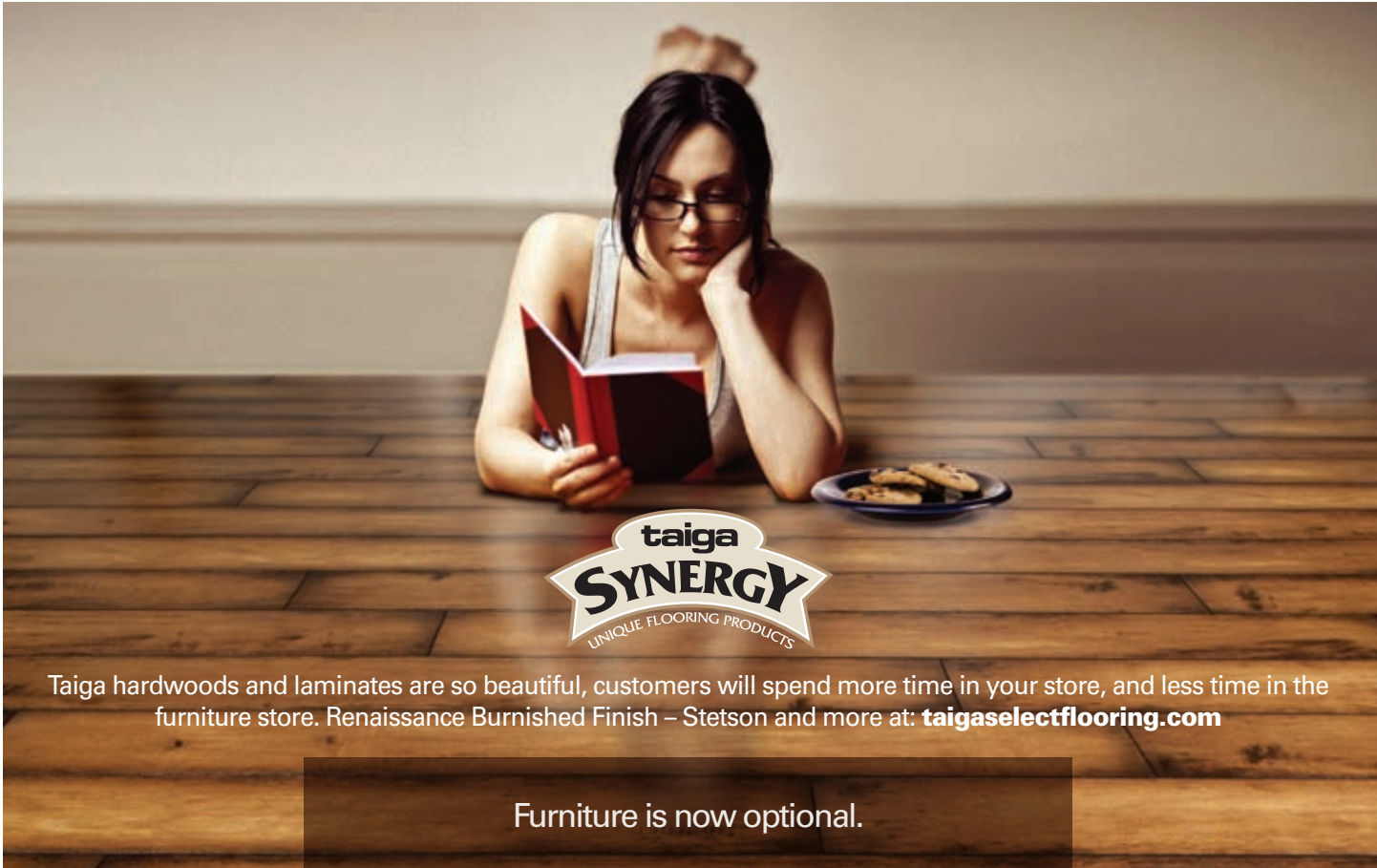
prise, behind the company's firewall.

Hybrid Cloud: Internal and external delivery methods integrated.

Going forward, the possibilities for cloud services are endless. New home buyers, for example, might partner with IT or telephone/cable service providers. Companies like **Bell**

the service hours, how dependable is the provider? You need to balance the price you pay vs. the reliability you expect to receive. Secondary things to consider include 'How do I share that data?' or 'When I start to run this, how can I move (or remove) the data?'"

Gallone also envisions cloud computing



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Adhesives

The Final Chapter

Applicators, Tools & Trowels

For the last two issues I have been talking a lot about glues and adhesives. To finish my “glue-run” I want to talk about a few tools.



Notched Trowels

Notched trowels for mastic and thin-set mortar are very accurate volume measurement tools. Each job has a specification for the notched trowel to use. When the trowel is pushed hard to the surface, and drawn at a 45 degree angle, it will leave a very specific volume of adhesive in rows. When the second surface is pushed into these rows and the adhesive is spread out evenly, you have the exact thickness of adhesive required by the manufacture over the entire surface—like magic. When you try spreading anything with a flat trowel you know how hard it is to get an even application or a well defined thickness. It is important to use the trowel tooth configuration specified by the manufacturer—usually the tile manufacturer makes that call— and it is important to hold the trowel at 45 degrees to the surface. Tip it higher and you get too much, tip it lower and you don't get enough. One special working tip: always make straight line

rows. If you draw tight curves, air gets trapped under the tile and the adhesive doesn't end up the right thickness. Almost straight lines let the air out one end or the other.

Glue Rollers

Applying liquid adhesives to large surfaces evenly can be difficult. Notched spatulas don't work as well as with thick adhesives as with thin-set or mastic that will take the shape, and volume, of the notched trowel. Here is where the bottle fed rollers work so well, either on large surfaces or even board edges. Squeezing the bottle will flow the glue onto the roller and it then gets spread as the roller hits the surface. This can be very important in avoiding bare spots.



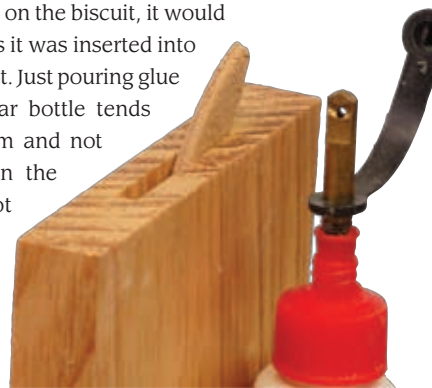
Board Centering Applicator

This little attachment goes in the gun before the caulking tube and simply guides the adhesive tip perfectly along the centre of a joist. It

stays on true centre at any speed you draw the bead.

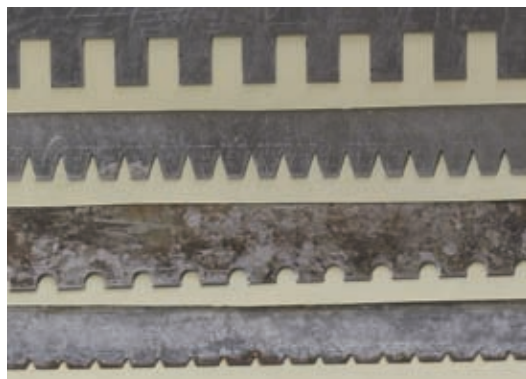
Slot Applicators

Slot applicators are sometimes speciality glue bottles and sometimes just speciality tips to put on regular bottles. The slot applicator has a flat tip with holes on each side for the glue to come out, which permits spreading a very even coat of glue on both sides of narrow slots—like for biscuits, splines or T&G boards. If you were to apply the glue on the biscuit, it would smear all over as it was inserted into the groove or slot. Just pouring glue in with a regular bottle tends to fill the bottom and not spread much on the sides. The Slot Applicator puts the glue exactly and evenly right where it needs to be.



Twist-n-Seal

And to cap off all this talk about glues and adhesives, this great little invention takes all the honours of closing off any cut glue tip, be it a small bottle or a large caulking tube. The pyramid shaped plug has a spiral thread cut all around. This allows you to screw it into any sized opening, and the threads keep it there despite pressure from the contents trying to force it out. The plastic is non-adherent for most adhesives, allowing it to be used over ► **32**





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President and CEO, Rohit Group of Companies

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30 ►

and over. For difficult adhesives, like PL Polyurethane, squirt a bit of oil on the plug before inserting and it will unscrew with ease long after other plugs would be stuck solid. It is starting to show up on store shelves but if you can't find it, check Lee Valley Tools.

Saw and Drill of the Month

Saw and drill in one: Here is the new Lenox Speed Slot Hole Saw. The plug removal design is simple but efficient. Some young lad simply thought of creating a slot with a stair step design allowing three leverage points from which you can force out a plug. There exist fancier and quicker plug removal designs, but none that take no space and don't increase the cost of the hole saw.



In addition, the Lenox testing is showing that two other innovations in this blade have it cutting many more holes per blade in wood and metal than the competition. First, a narrow kerf design reduces friction. Second, leaving the paint out of the inside of the saw—yes this is the only saw that leaves the paint out—actually reduces friction and heat.

What looks like just another hole saw is beating the competition.



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

Contractor's Survival Guide

Building Your Business in Good Times and Bad

By Jason Reid, *Cengage Learning*



Written by a contractor with first-hand experience, this book is packed with proven techniques that will increase leads, cut costs, drive profits, and improve

overall productivity. Topic coverage includes identifying the most effective areas to spend marketing dollars (branding), gathering qualified but inexpensive leads, selling more estimates, driving business through the Internet and social networking sites, and more. With special attention to industry-specific trends and the latest technologies, this is a must-have for anyone seeking to develop a strong business that is driven by growth. US \$19.95 at www.cengage.com.

Dewalt Carpentry and Framing Complete Handbook

By Gary Brackett, *Cengage Learning*

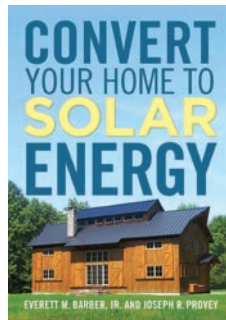


Whether you are a seasoned professional or just entering the construction industry, this is the ultimate handbook for residential wood framing and related topics. Packed with

powerful, full-color diagrams and an easy-to-understand writing style, *DEWALT Carpentry and Framing Complete Handbook* does just that by spelling out, through pictures, the step-by-step procedures associated with key carpentry concepts. The accompanying text is clear, straightforward, and accessible, clarifying and elaborating on the visuals. Coverage begins with a discussion of house types and foundations, gradually progressing to more complex areas. Logically organized for easy reference, this is a thorough yet concise introduction to the world of carpentry and framing for professionals. US \$24.95, www.dewalt.com.

Convert Your Home to Solar Energy

By Everett M. Barber Jr. and Joseph R. Provey, *Taunton Press*



Although the data is all U.S. based, this book is filled with practical information, handy cost calculators, maintenance tips, great graphics, including Tech Corners, and full colour

photography. Chapters include Solar Energy Basics, Putting Solar Energy to Work, Solar Domestic Hot Water, Solar Pool Heating, Passive Solar Heating and Cooling, Active Solar Space Heating, Converting Sunlight to Electricity and more. Renovators and builders looking to educate potential clients on the benefits of solar will find the US \$24.95 price point well worth the modest investment. www.taunton.com.

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CHBA NATIONAL
SAM AWARDS
DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES

NOVEMBER 4, 2011

The CHBA National SAM Awards celebrate the best in our industry and serves to honour the people who create the homes and communities that transform our lives as Canadians.

The Call for Entries for the 2011 awards has been issued. Visit our website at www.chba.ca/SAMS for complete information.

The 2011 National SAM Awards will be presented at the CHBA National Conference in Mont-Tremblant, Québec on March 17, 2012. Please join us for an unforgettable evening.

The deadline for entries is November 4, 2011.



CMHC Renovation Forecast: 2011 and 2012

OTTAWA — The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) *Housing Market Outlook - Canada Edition*, released in the third quarter 2011, forecasts a small decline in renovation expenditure in 2011, which will give way to modest growth in 2012, supported by gradual improvement in labour market conditions and stronger existing home sales.

Renovation Expenditure

		2010	2011F	2012F
Newfoundland	(\$ millions)	1 031	916	933
	(% change)	12.4	-11.2	1.9
P.E.I.	(\$ millions)	220	191	188
	(% change)	20.0	-13.2	-1.6
Nova Scotia	(\$ millions)	1 823	1 583	1 656
	(% change)	14.0	-13.2	4.6
New Brunswick	(\$ millions)	1 403	1 125	1 148
	(% change)	10.5	-19.8	2.0
Quebec	(\$ millions)	15 038	16 000	18 000
	(% change)	9.3	6.4	12.5
Ontario	(\$ millions)	22 866	21 723	21 831
	(% change)	8.1	-5.0	0.5
Manitoba	(\$ millions)	1 912	1 730	1 844
	(% change)	10.6	-9.5	6.6
Saskatchewan	(\$ millions)	1 657	1 507	1 571
	(% change)	8.8	-9.1	4.2
Alberta	(\$ millions)	6 195	6 411	6 580
	(% change)	10.9	3.5	2.6
British Columbia	(\$ millions)	7 773	7 500	7 625
	(% change)	10.0	-3.5	1.7
Canada	(\$ millions)	59 918	58 687	61 377
	(% change)	9.4	-2.1	4.6

SOURCE: STATISTICS CANADA, CMHC FORECAST 2011 AND 2012

In 2010, renovation spending grew 9.4 per cent (up to \$59.9 billion from \$54.8 billion in 2009), despite a four per cent fall in existing home sales. CMHC notes that the Home Renovation Tax Credit (HRTC), which was introduced in January 2009 and expired in February 2010, was one of the factors that helped offset the impact of weaker existing home sales, as households likely pulled forward renovation projects in order to benefit from the HRTC. A recovering economy and growth in employment were cited as other important factors.

Regionally, CMHC reports that all provinces saw higher renovation spending in 2010, led by Prince Edward Island at 20.0 per cent. However, most provinces are expected to see declining renovation expenditures in 2011, with the exceptions of Quebec and Alberta. In 2012, the general pattern will be reversed, as all provinces are forecast to see positive growth in renovation spending, with the sole exception of Prince Edward Island, which is expected to experience a small decline of 1.6 per cent. The complete report is available at www.cmhc.ca.

Does Your Reno Council Have News to Report?

Why not tell us what's happening in your neighbourhoods. E-mail Judy Penz Sheluk at editor@work4.ca, and put Reno Council in the subject line.



Ron Olson
Acting President, CHBA

Low interest rates can serve simply to “paper over” an underlying deterioration in housing affordability.

Setting the Stage for a Productive Fall Season

CHBA's leaders and staff have been pushing ahead on a number of important industry issues, setting the stage for a productive fall as the federal government gets back to work.

Given the growing economic uncertainty in both Europe and the U.S., it is more important than ever that the CHBA ensures the federal government leaders understand current housing market conditions, and the need to address policies that undermine housing affordability and choice.

The health of our industry is closely tied to that of Canada's economy—that's the core message CHBA's leaders will be delivering to our national political leaders in the coming months.

Urgent Need to Focus on Housing Affordability

In July, the CHBA wrote to the Honourable Diane Finley, and Alberta's Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, the Honourable Jonathan Denis, concerning the urgent need for governments to focus on the issue of housing affordability. The two ministers co-chair the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Housing Ministers Forum.

In recent years, the Ministers Forum has been concerned largely with issues related to social housing and homelessness. While these are important issues, deserving of the ministers' attention and action, it is only part of what the ministers should be addressing.

To date, there has been little, if any, political attention paid to the continuing deterioration in housing affordability related to market housing, or to the root causes of this problem. This situation needs to change, and the Housing Ministers Forum is where such change should begin.

In writing to the ministers, the CHBA pointed out that, until recently, there was a clear understanding of the differences between “housing affordability” and “housing accessibility.” Affordability is determined by house prices and rents in relation to income levels. Accessibility refers to the availability of financing and is determined by mortgage terms and conditions, and heavily influenced by interest rates.

It has long been understood that improved housing accessibility resulting from low interest rates, without a corresponding improvement in affordability, fuels demand, drives up prices and makes housing less affordable in the long-run.

Low interest rates can serve simply to “paper over” an underlying deterioration in housing affordability, creating significant longer-term economic risks for our industry and financial risks for homeowners. And that is exactly what has been happening in many Canadian markets since the financial crisis drove mortgage interest rates to historically low levels.

New home builders know that new homes are not less expensive to build or buy—quite the opposite.

Residential mortgages are simply cheaper to finance. As a result, while low monthly payments make new homes accessible to buyers, homes are becoming less and less affordable.

Housing ministers need to recognize and address this situation, because the surging cost of bringing a new home to market is, to a very significant extent, being driven by government-imposed costs and regulatory policies.

Low interest rates and the entrepreneurial drive of new home builders have kept our industry on its feet since the financial crisis and resulting recession. What has been ignored is the growing and substantial gap between housing affordability and accessibility, and the longer-term risks this creates.

It is time for this to change. The housing ministers must turn their attention to market housing, and the issues that threaten housing affordability. Waiting until this situation grows into a crisis in the marketplace is neither responsible nor wise.

A “LEEP” Forward

Moving innovative building products and practices into the worksite is a complex process. R&D can provide new ways to build homes, but that is only the first step.

Before new home builders can apply a technical innovation, they need to know what risks and impacts are involved. Will trades be able to get things done right? Who will provide the training required, and how will this get done? Will building inspectors understand and approve the new approach? Will buyers recognize value in it?

Far too often, worthwhile innovations fail to be applied because such practical issues are not addressed. Investment in R&D is vital for our industry, but so are processes that provide builders with the practical support they need in order to consider adopting innovations.

For the last few years, Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan) CanmetENERGY division has piloted a unique initiative called LEEP (Local Energy Efficiency Partnerships). CHBA has been very supportive of the LEEP pilots, because it is exactly what is needed by new home builders looking for better ways to build.

LEEP is a builder-led process organized at the local level, where builders examine various energy efficient innovations, decide which ones have market potential, and then are provided with the practical information they need to put innovations into practice.

Most often, local building officials are also involved in the LEEP process, providing builders with greater assurance that inspectors will be “on board” when they arrive at the construction site.

A process like LEEP represents a low-cost and highly effective way to get better returns on R&D investments. It is based on collaboration, and respects the principle of voluntary, market-driven change in housing technology

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A process like LEEP represents a low-cost and highly effective way to get better returns on R&D investments.

35 ► and building practices.

The CHBA has urged NRCan to expand the availability of the LEEP initiative beyond its Ontario pilot locations. LEEP offers a practical and effective way to bring new home builders, manufacturers, government researchers and building officials together, and get them on the "same page."

Public Review of Proposed Changes to the Model National Building Code, Part 9

The public review period for proposed changes to the model National Building Code (NBC) affecting the energy efficiency of new homes is scheduled for this October. CHBA staff and volunteers have been heavily involved in the development of the proposed code changes, which provide both prescriptive and performance routes to compliance.

It is hoped that adoption of these new code provisions will lead to greater conformity among provincial building codes in the future.

All CHBA members will have the opportunity to review the proposed new NBC provisions and to comment on them. The CHBA will notify members once the review period is initiated by the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes.

The 2011 SAM Awards – Check Your Mail!

The Call for Entries for the 2011 CHBA National SAM Awards was mailed to New Home Builder, Renovator and Developer members immediately after Labour Day. All SAM entry information is also available online at www.chba.ca/SAMs.

The SAM submission deadline is November 4, 2011, so this is the time to get your best project lined up, and get your SAM entry completed. Come next March at the CHBA National Conference in Mont-Tremblant, you could be a SAM finalist or winner.



CHBA Completes Pre-Budget Submission

The CHBA has completed its Pre-Budget Submission, which will be presented to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance in the fall. Members are encouraged to read the short five-page document, which has three specific and inter-related recommendations to make to the federal government:

- Changes to the GST treatment of new housing and renovations.
- Vigorously tackle the underground "cash" economy.
- Encourage investment in new purpose-built rental housing.

The Submission points out the two key changes

required with respect to the GST treatment of new housing and renovations: (1) adoption of a single-threshold/full rebate for new housing; and (2) a home renovation tax rebate.

Since the thresholds have now been frozen for two decades, the CHBA is recommending that the federal government adopt the rebate model for new housing which has been adopted by the provincial governments of Ontario and British Columbia under sales tax harmonization. This model is designed to protect housing affordability through a single price threshold.

In addition, in order to restore fairness to how home renovations are taxed by the federal government, and to provide an incentive for homeowners to hire legitimate tax-paying contractors rather than underground "cash" operators, the federal government should introduce a permanent Home Renovation Tax Rebate equal to 2.5 per cent of the total cost of a home renovation. Visit the Members' area of www.chba.ca to read the full Submission.

Accessibility in Housing

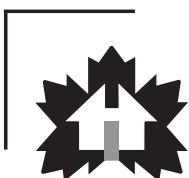
The CHBA has completed a report, *Housing Accessibility Regulation in Canada*, and has called on the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes to examine the differences in the accessibility requirements among provinces. The CHBA wishes to avoid a situation in which provinces, acting unilaterally, introduce new requirements for houses which are inconsistent with one another and do not have the benefit of the National Code Development process. The CHBA has recommended that the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes (CCBFC) address and resolve these differences on a priority basis for the National Building Code.

Create and Transform in Mont-Tremblant

"Create and Transform," the theme of the 2012 CHBA National Conference, will focus on the powerful forces transforming Canadian housing markets, and the compelling business opportunities this presents to CHBA members. Confirmed Conference speakers include General Rick Hillier, former Chief of the Defence Staff for Canadian Forces; Mitch Joel, author of the business best-seller *Six Pixels of Separation* and columnist on digital media; Sean Wise, venture capitalist and known for his role on CBC Television's *Dragon's Den*; and Dr. Nick Bontis, ranked among the Top 30 management gurus world-wide, and recognized by the *Harvard Business Review* and *Fortune Magazine* as "a pioneer and one of the world's real experts in intellectual capital."

Our 2012 Conference location is superb. The Fairmont Tremblant Resort is located at the heart of Mont-Tremblant, a European-style mountain village, and just steps away from the ski lifts and the village centre that combines European ambiance with Québécois hospitality. Mark your calendar now for March 16-18, 2012 in Mont-Tremblant, Quebec.

Visit www.chba.ca/conference for more information.





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320,000 Construction Workers Needed in Next Decade

OTTAWA — Canada's construction industry will need about 320,000 workers over the next nine years to meet demand for new construction and to replace retirements and mortalities.

The finding, from the Construction Sector Council's national forecast of labour supply and demand from 2011–2019, says Canada's slowing population growth combined with its rising demand for large natural resource construction projects is challenging the industry to find the required number of skilled workers.

The forecast estimates that half of the industry's total labour needs will be met with 163,000 first-time new entrants to the workforce, leaving a requirement of 157,000 workers – an average of about 15,000 workers per year over the 2011–2019 period.

The national and regional scenario-based forecasts are available online at www.csc-ca.org.

COR Pilot Program Launched in Ontario

MISSISSAUGA — The Infrastructure Health and Safety Association (IHSA) and Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA) have collaborated to develop and pilot a Certificate of Recognition Program (COR) for Ontario construction contractors. For more information, visit www.healthandsafetyontario.ca.

Smart Home Monitoring

TORONTO — Smart Home Monitoring is now available to Rogers Hi-Speed Internet customers in the Rogers cable footprint across Ontario. An innovative home monitoring and automation service, Smart Home Monitoring lets consumers automate and manage sensors, cameras, thermostats, lights and small appliances from their computer or smartphone.

At the heart of the system is an ultra-rugged, easy-to-use wall-mount or table-top touchpad that consumers use to arm/disarm and manage their system. Available in wall-mount or table-top, the touchpad provides quick 1-touch access to home security functions, home automation apps, as well as multimedia apps for photos, traffic, weather and sports. When an alarm occurs, the touchpad instantly connects with the Rogers central monitoring station simultaneously over both Rogers cable and wireless networks. To learn more, visit www.rogers.com/smarthomemonitoring.



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NKBA Launches New Non-Design Certification

HACKETTSTOWN, N.J. — The National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) has announced the launch of a new non-design certification: the Certified Kitchen & Bath Professional (CKBP).

The CKBP was developed to enable kitchen and bath professionals in all non-design segments of the industry to demonstrate their experience, education, and expertise. This universal certification was created in response to repeated requests from NKBA members for a certification path that would support builder/remodelers, distributors, fabricators, manufacturers' representatives, and all other qualified professionals in the industry.

CALENDAR

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

September 22-24

Iidex/Neocon Canada
Interior Designers of Canada
Toronto, ON
www.iidexneocon.com

October 3-4

Canadian Brownfields 2011:
Making Great Places
Canadian Urban Institute
Toronto, ON
www.canurb.com

October 4-7

Greenbuild International Expo
and Conference
Toronto, ON
www.greenbuildexpo.org

October 19-20

Landscape Ontario's Expo 2011
Toronto, ON
www.loexpo.ca

October 20-21

Green Infrastructure
Pacific Business and Law
Institute
Vancouver, BC
www.pbli.com

October 20-22

SMEs: Moving toward
Sustainable Development
International Conference
Montréal, QC
fr.nbs.net/sme-conference.htm

Industry Leaders Speak

What do you have to say?



Talking Points: A Call to Industry Leaders

Last November, we called on Industry Leaders to comment on the coming year. The response was amazing. And so, we're going to do it all over again in November 2011.

Don't Miss Your Chance to Speak: Deadline is October 14.

If you are a builder, contractor, renovator, designer, manufacturer or industry professional, we welcome your brief (200-word) commentary on one or more of the following talking

points as they affect the residential construction industry:

- 🏠 What can builders and renovators do to succeed?
- 🏠 Projections for 2012
- 🏠 Design trends and innovative solutions for success in 2012
- 🏠 Educational initiatives for builders and renovators

THE FINE PRINT: Submissions must be received no later than Friday, October 14, 2011 and are subject to editorial revision for space considerations. Please, no advertorial submissions: we want your point of view, not your sales pitch. All submissions must be accompanied by a hi-res head shot and company logo. For additional information, please e-mail Judy Penz Sheluk at editor@work4.ca.



Reread Nov. 2010 at: www.homebuildercanada.com/Issue2306.htm

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2010 National Award winners

Across the country, committed industry volunteers are driving our Association forward. The CHBA's National Awards Program

recognizes members who are making things happen through their outstanding service and accomplishments.

CHBA National Awards also recognize the accomplishments of provincial and local HBAs that deliver real value through services to members.

Contact your local Home Builders' Association or visit the Members' area of www.chba.ca for information. The deadline for entries is December 16, 2011.

Join the celebration of excellence at the Awards Ceremony at the 2012 CHBA National Conference in Mont-Tremblant, Québec.

Canadian
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Recognizing Commitment & Celebrating Excellence

Condos Continue to Surge in the GTA

GREATER TORONTO — While it's pretty much common knowledge that the GTA high-rise market is through the roof, what a lot of people don't realize is how far along it has come: As of the end of July 2011, high-rise condominium suites have made up approximately 60 per cent of total new homes sold in the GTA, which equals to nearly 16,000 units in just seven months.

According to the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) there are several factors behind the GTA's condo surge, but it seems as if the most prominent one is the shortage of land supply in the GTA's low-rise sector. With limited land to build on, the cost of detached, semis and townhomes escalated to make smaller, more affordable condominiums extremely appealing. Builders are also using a "right-sizing" approach, to make units more space-efficient and, thus affordable, appealing to first-time buyers and foreign investors. 

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For more information on Readership Survey, please contact the publisher of Home Builder Magazine.
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69th CHBA National Conference

Fairmont Tremblant Resort, Mont-Tremblant, Québec

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We will explore how new home builders, renovators and their business allies can translate the market, technology and business changes occurring today into new avenues for success.

It is an exciting time in the Canadian housing industry. Our National Conference will capture this energy, and invite you to create and transform your business future.

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