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**Job-Ready,
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*Prominent Homes
President Sam Bunting.*

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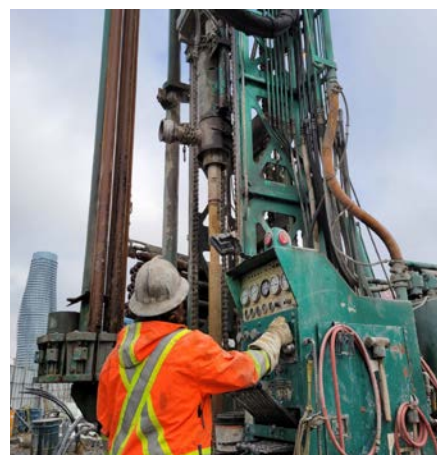
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L to R: Jeff Fung, Dani Gabriele, Domenic Alfieri, Natasha Paikin and Robert Alfieri are part of a promising next wave. *Photo by Danielle Blancher*



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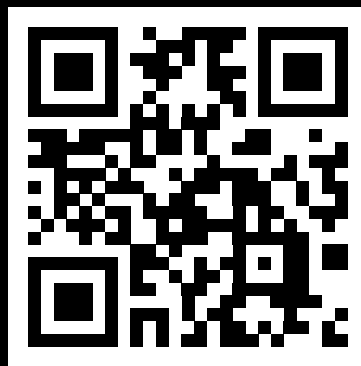
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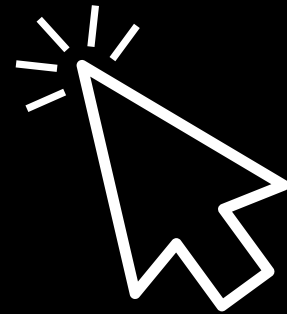


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Building the Future of the Home Building Industry

OHBA Job Ready Program building a sustainable workforce for residential construction future



Ontario's residential construction industry is facing a critical challenge in its workforce sustainability. Over the next decade, a staggering 92,000 workers will leave the industry, creating a significant void that must be filled to meet future growth and demand. To address this gap, more than 116,000 workers will need to be recruited and trained to meet the needs of the industry. We are at a pivotal moment in the long-term sustainability of the industry's workforce, and as a collective, we share responsibility for building the labour force the residential construction sector requires.

That's where the OHBA Job Ready Program comes into play, providing a solution to recruiting, training and filling entry-level roles in the residential construction industry at no cost. Whether it's general labour, pre-trade positions or office roles supporting builders, manufacturers and service companies, the OHBA Job Ready Program provides a diverse pool of candidates to meet the dynamic requirements of the industry.

Now in its third year of funding

from the Ontario Skills Development Fund, the program is building on its foundational success, adding training opportunities to set job-seekers up for a successful career in the residential construction industry. After initial screening, employees enter the first stage of the program, a two-week virtual learning session that includes mandatory Ministry of Labour training, House Construction 101 and important soft skills sessions such as conflict resolution to help ensure retention.

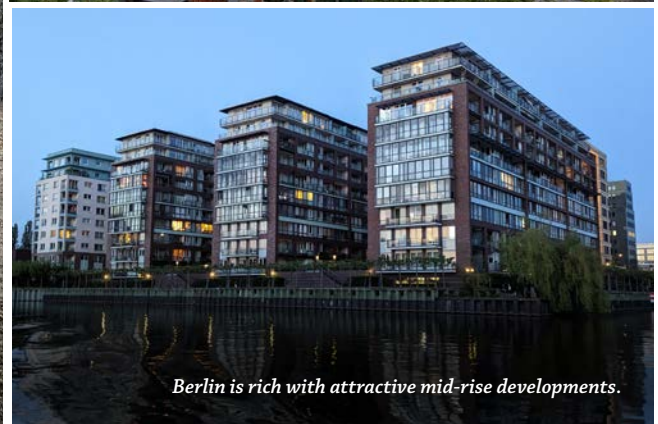
After completing the program's initial phase, our "Fast Track" participants embark on their employment journey following a comprehensive one-day hands-on tools training session. For those in our "Level Up" track, their training continues with an immersive four-week boot camp facilitated by our training partner, Skilled Trades College of Canada. This intensive program delves deep into the fundamentals of home renovation, from framing and drywall to electrical and plumbing rough-ins, right down to the finishing touches.

"The OHBA Job Ready Program is

dedicated to equipping participants for a rewarding career in the residential construction industry," says Sajida Jiwani, Chief Operating Officer at OHBA. "Through both training streams, participants receive a solid foundation in industry essentials, empowering them to assume entry-level positions with the confidence that they are job-ready."

For employers, the program aims to supercharge the recruitment process by seamlessly connecting these enthusiastic and well-prepared job-seekers to open positions across the residential construction industry. With the OHBA Job Ready Program, employers can efficiently find the right talent, benefit from financial incentives and receive comprehensive support—all while contributing to the long-term sustainability of the residential construction sector's workforce.

Recruitment for potential employers is underway as OHBA looks to find matches for Job Ready employees in building hotspots across the province. For more information on the program and to apply as an employer, visit ohbajobready.ca.



Berlin Tour Reaps Benefits for OHBA Members

BY MICHAEL COLLINS-WILLIAMS

Over the past decade, OHBA has implemented a successful educational and professional development program through its International Housing Study tours, examining some of the most innovative and interesting housing and development projects around the globe. Destinations have included Iceland, Sweden, Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands. The objective is to learn from the best and the brightest in the world—not just by sitting in a classroom or attending a conference, but by meeting directly with international academic, research, architectural and business leaders, while exploring new communities to gain a true appreciation for how they look, feel and function.

This past May, 25 OHBA builder

and developer members travelled to Germany for the 2023 edition of the OHBA International Housing Tour. Over the course of four days in Berlin we crisscrossed the city, visiting numerous neighbourhoods and development sites. The tour kicked off in the parliamentary district with a walk through the cupola, the glass dome built over the renovated Reichstag, designed by architect Sir Norman Foster following the reunification of Germany. Much of the tour was focused on reunification and the stitching of the city back together through development projects and urban renewal in areas where the Berlin Wall once divided the city. It has helped reimagine entire districts

in the city centre that were for three decades a vast no-man's land between the Berlin Wall and a second set of fortifications dividing not simply East and West Berlin, but the free world from communism.

Tour participants spent three days with our guide and Ticket B architect Richard Ollig, who shared his experience and expertise with the group. We visited numerous mid-rise intensification sites in the Kreuzberg neighbourhood, including interior site visits of some spectacular projects with unique multi-storey-unit layouts, such as the IBeB (architects: ifau, Heide & von Beckerath). The route through the inner city combined various aspects of contemporary urban development,

7

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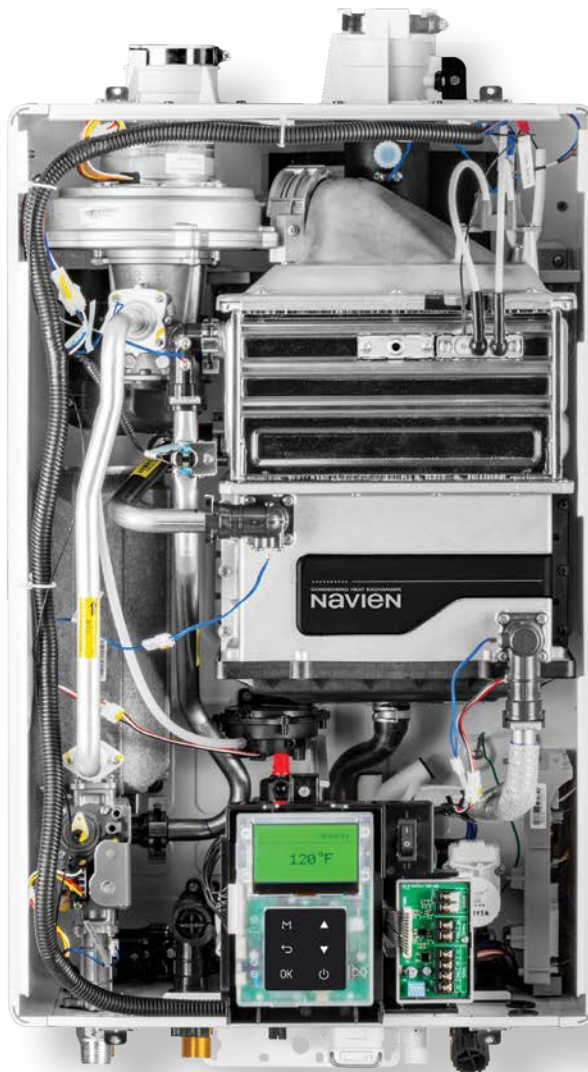
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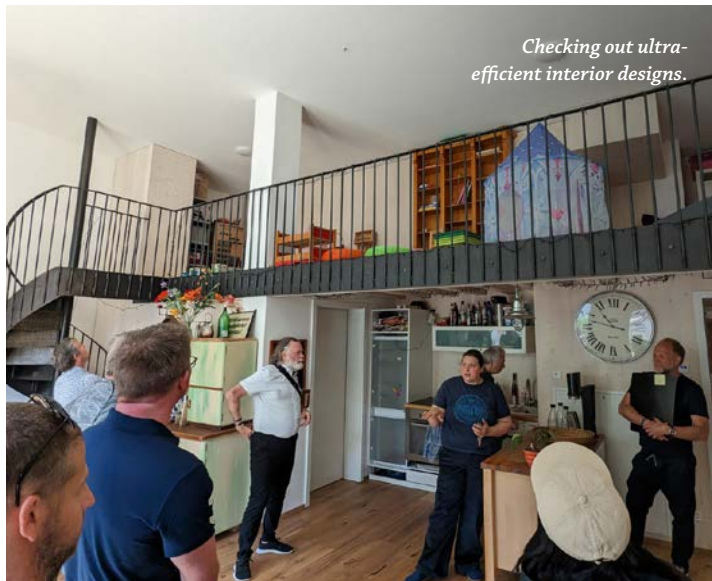


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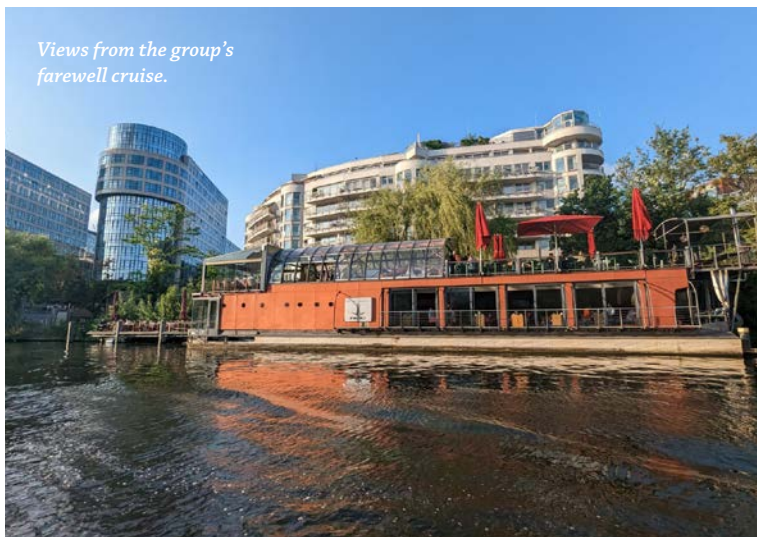
Ontario Report



A huge brownfield revitalization at Rummelsburg Bay.



Checking out ultra-efficient interior designs.



Views from the group's farewell cruise.



Outside the Reichstag Building.

including both residential and public buildings.

Berlin has two main centres—one each in the former eastern and western parts of the city. The housing tour visited the commercial centre in the west of the once-walled city before travelling to the east to Rummelsburg Bay, which is undergoing radical changes. Where ice blocks were once stored and coal shipped, new innovative working environments, studios and residential neighbourhoods are emerging from the industrial past. The volume of construction and change in this thriving European city is incredible.

Our tour concluded with a full-day mass-timber mid-rise construction tour. OHBA visited a number of neighbourhoods with mass-timber

construction, among them the brand new Holzhaus Linse (Scharabi Architekten) that features movable walls that residents can adjust based on evolving circumstances. There was also a site tour of an under-construction building where members of the development team took us through a detailed technical overview of the Dresdener housing project (architects - Schulte Frohlinde/ZRS).

The tour capped off with a special evening dinner cruise on the River Spree through the centre of Berlin, passing by many of the sites that we visited.

With an objective to cross-pollinate innovative ideas in terms of sustainability, urban design and architecture with our European counterparts, there was a bounty of takeaways for

tour participants. These international housing tours enable OHBA members to engage in trans-Atlantic business opportunities and professional development to learn from the most innovative projects in global cities like Berlin.

OHBA would like to thank our Housing Tour sponsors and partners: EnerQuality, Building Knowledge Canada, In2ition Realty and Reliance Comfort. And we would especially like to thank our tour delegates for spending four days travelling with us in Germany to visit some of the most innovative developments in the world.

Stay tuned for details on the 2024 tour destination!

—Michael Collins-Williams is the CEO of the West End Home Builders' Association



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Beautiful Blue Mountain Resort will host this year's OHBA Annual Conference and Awards of Distinction. Here are five reasons why you need to attend!

1. INDUSTRY-LEADING EDUCATION

Stay ahead of the curve with our lineup of industry experts, sure to bring you the latest and greatest from Ontario's residential construction sector.

In our **Builder/Renovator stream**, gain valuable insights into upcoming changes to the National Building Code and discover new solutions to meet the needs of today's homebuyers.

In our **Professional Development stream**, explore strategies for attracting and retaining tomorrow's talent, creating a leadership culture within your team and preparing your business for the next generation.

2. ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

Your opinion matters! The OHBA Annual Meeting of Members (9-11 a.m. Monday, Sept. 18) is an opportunity to stay informed on important association updates and help set our course for the year to come.

ALL MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND.

3. CHAIR'S DINNER (FORMERLY PRESIDENT'S GALA)

On Monday, Sept. 18, OHBA will induct the 55th provincial association Chair, Dave Depencier, of the Chatham Kent Home Builders' Association. The OHBA Chair's Dinner is an opportunity to recognize the outstanding achievements of our association over the past year and provide an outlook for the year to come.

4. BUILDING CONNECTIONS BBQ

New this year! On Tuesday, Sept. 19, join us for an exclusive networking BBQ, bringing together some of the most influential OHBA members. From builders to renovators and service professionals to suppliers, this luncheon provides an unparalleled opportunity to connect, collaborate and explore potential partnerships that can propel your projects and businesses to new heights.

5. AWARDS OF DISTINCTION

The always sold-out Awards of Distinction recognizes the best and brightest in Ontario's Residential Construction industry. Don't miss the opportunity to be inspired by exceptional projects and individuals who have made remarkable contributions to the home building industry.

Finalists for this year's AoD will be announced in August at ohbaod.ca.

Seating is limited, so be sure to book your table early! Get your tickets today at conference.ohba.ca! Register today at conference.ohba.ca.

DATE: September 17-19

LOCATION: Blue Mountain Resort/Conference Centre
190 Gord Canning Drive Blue Mountains, Ontario, L9Y 1C2

New Shapes and Sizes

Housing Supply Action Plan

BY ALEX PICCINI

In April, the provincial government outlined its next Housing Supply Action Plan. Bill 97, the *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act*, brought forward important changes to help incentivize purpose-built rental construction, while providing more certainty to new-home builders and buyers on the time it takes to bring new supply to market. As part of Bill 97, the government introduced changes that would help provide consistency in rental replacement bylaws that municipalities can implement. OHBA was strongly encouraged by these changes, as they will offer more certainty to members constructing rental housing with regard to the features and characteristics required when renewing existing rental stock.

Further, as was initially identified as part of the 2023 Ontario Budget, calls continue for the federal government to consider changes to the Harmonized Sales Tax on all housing, and purpose-built rental in particular. This would further encourage housing and rental starts, bringing badly needed supply to market.

Speeding up approvals is a central focus for industry and, ultimately, current and future Ontarians. However, building that capacity at the municipal level continues to be a challenge in many communities. Bill 97 brings important changes to the building officials sector by completely redesigning the qualification program and increasing the availability of internships. These changes will help ensure that municipalities have the staff they require to review and approve new housing, while also encouraging more people to enter these roles.

Alongside the latest legislative changes, proposed changes would see the Provincial Policy Statement and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe merged into one new provincial planning document. This would end considerable duplication and streamline existing land use policies to ensure housing supply and variety is the core focus of the new document. OHBA welcomes these proposed updates, as they will help put municipalities on the right path for growth through establishing minimum density targets for major transit station areas. The changes will also implement intensification policies while strengthening municipalities' ability to refocus employment land uses in order to create more homes and jobs. In addition, updates to require municipalities to plan for wastewater management infrastructure is crucial to support new housing supply—something OHBA has long called for.

The latest Housing Supply Action Plan will help Ontario build new homes of all shapes and sizes, while also planning for the growth anticipated in the years ahead. It builds on previous measures to streamline the development approvals process and pushes back against NIMBYism that denies housing to thousands at a crucial time. More housing supply in all communities means more attainability for families looking to call Ontario home. **OHBA**

—Alex Piccini is the Manager of Government Relations for the OHBA.



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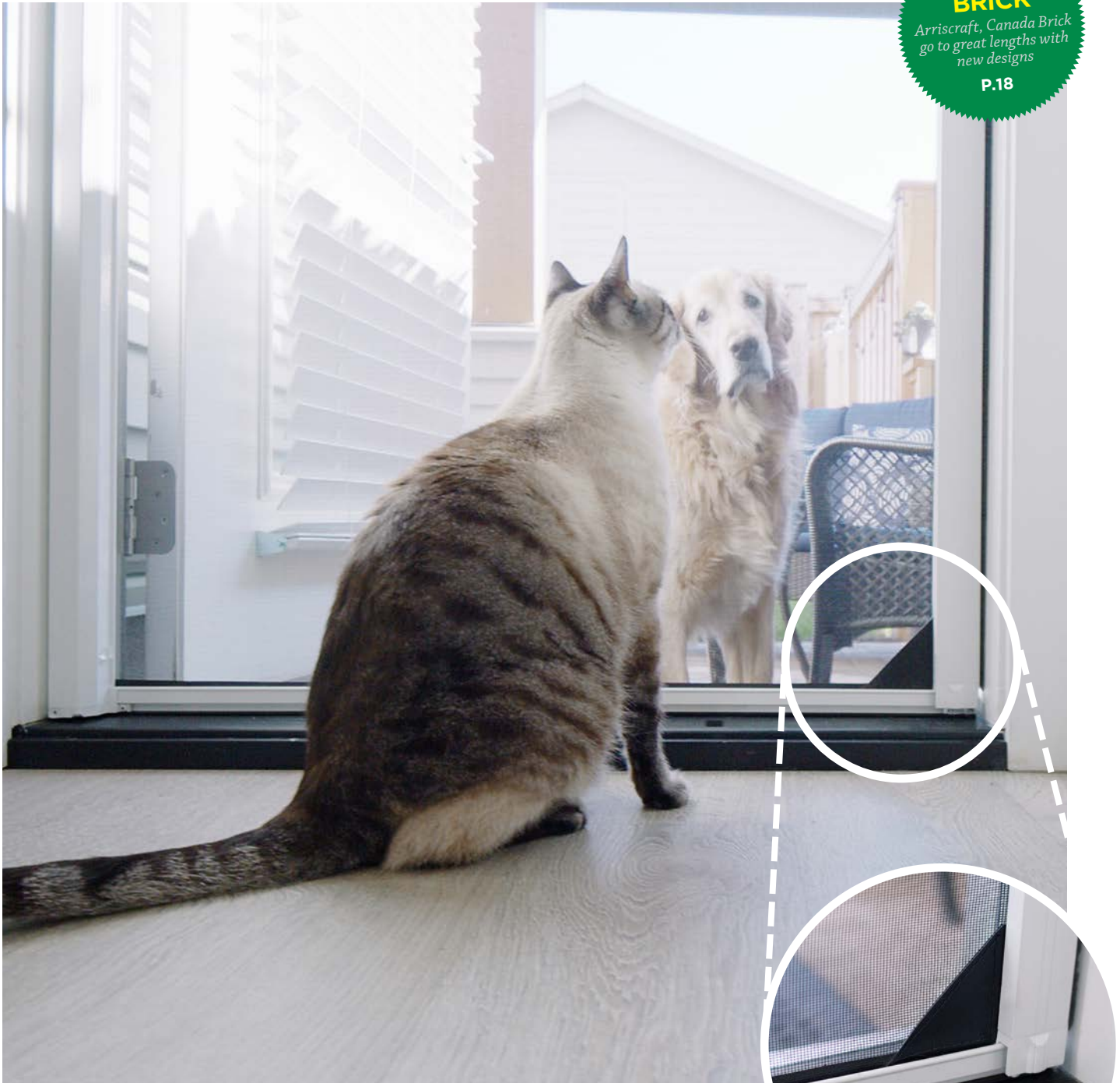
Trending

IDEAS FOR BUILDERS & RENOVATORS

BRICK BY BRICK

Arriscraft, Canada Brick go to great lengths with new designs

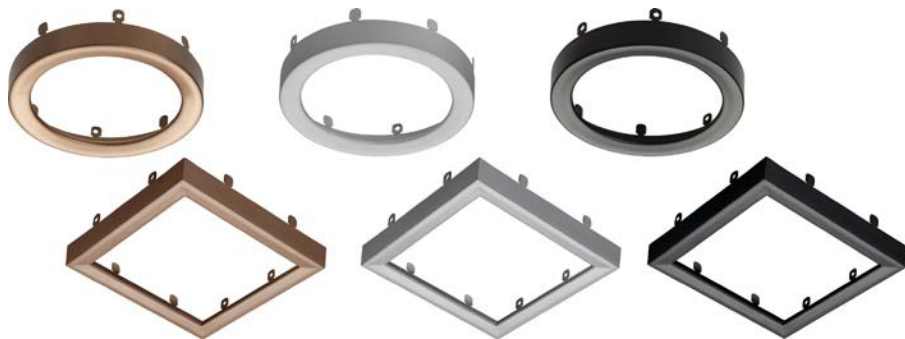
P.18



STAY, SCREEN! STAY!

Phantom Screens' newest product innovation is MeshLock, a captured-edge solution that adds an extra layer of protection by securing the mesh in the top and bottom tracks. Something that pet owners can't get anywhere else in a retractable screen, this new feature helps prevent small pets from escaping, unwanted pests from entering and mesh from blowing out from the track. PHANTOMSCREENS.CA

Trending



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Easily installed, particularly in areas with limited plenum space or when recessed downlights are impractical, the new Juno SlimForm JSF Switchable White Series offers flexibility by providing an integrated switch that allows for five options of easy colour temperature adjustments during installation. The series is available in round or square options, and in 5" or 7" sizes. Larger sizes will be available in mid-summer. Trim inserts are available in Bronze, Satin, Nickel and Black finishes for both round and square models. ACUITYBRANDS.CA

SWING FOR THE FENCE

Al-Mar Vinyl has expanded its portfolio with offerings from Quebec's Procama Distribution. The new products include aluminum pergolas and privacy fences, spigot glass railings and modern-looking, low-maintenance aluminum ornamental fencing. Great for security, pools and yard fencing where privacy is not needed, the latter line is available in 4' or 5' heights. Prefabricated 7'-wide panels are ready to install, with pre-welded gates available in 42" or 48" widths. ALMARVINYL.CA



GOING TO NEW LENGTHS

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FINE LINES AND DETAILS

Here's a fresh, linear-style brick that's perfect for modern homes. Canada Brick's new District Series includes six sophisticated tones in Metric Norman size (11.5" long) that create an elegant, linear effect for custom homes. In stock now, District Series delivers a comprehensive colour range from light to dark, including five options in a luxurious velour finish, as well as the popular White Ash with iron spot details. CANADABRICK.COM





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FEEL THE HEAT

Schluter has added the DITRA-HEAT-E-RRS smart thermostat to its Ditra-Heat floor-warming system. Offering third-party integration with popular voice and home assistants such as Google Home, Apple Home and Alexa, it features a sleek design with a mirror finish. Multiple energy-saving functions includes geofencing, which turns up the heat when you're coming home and detects when you're away. 'Scenes' can also be created for activities like "Morning Routine" or "Gym." [SCHLUTER.COM](https://www.schluter.com)



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GUIDING LIGHT

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60 Years On

*Nine past presidents
highlight OHBA challenges
and achievements*

BY TED MCINTYRE



T

o provide a little historical perspective, John Diefenbaker and Lester Pearson were squaring off in Parliament. The tallest two structures on the Toronto skyline were both more than 30 years old: the Canadian Bank of Commerce building at 184 metres (604 feet), and the Royal York Hotel standing 124 metres (407 feet) in height. The Government of Ontario Transit (later shortened to GO Transit) was still four years away from receiving its first passengers.

That was the scene in 1963 as a group representing 10 of Ontario's local building associations met with representatives from the 20-year-old Canadian Home Builders' Association at Evergreen's Motel in Kitchener. The entity they formed, the Ontario Home Builders' Association, would serve to provide residential builders with a voice in the provincial government, enable them to facilitate changes in the industry and provide networking opportunities for home building businesses, suppliers and services.

Among the primary challenges faced by OHBA's first chairman, Eric Johnson, was the surging growth of the GTA. In *Governing Metropolitan Toronto: A Social and Political Analysis, 1953 – 1971*, author Albert Rose indicates that Metro Toronto housed 9% of the Canadian population within its 240 square miles in 1963, and that “developed urban land had more than doubled, from 45 to 92 square miles” over the previous decade. “The population has grown by 450,000—from 1,175,000 in 1953 to 1,625,000 in 1962—an increase of 40%,” 55% of which was accounted for by immigration, Rose indicated. “To accommodate growth on this scale, the stock of housing has increased by more than 50% since 1953, with the addition of 160,000 new dwellings to the 1953 housing stock of 265,000 dwellings.”

As OHBA celebrates 60 years of constructing high-quality, energy-efficient homes across the province, the challenge of meeting demand has remained a constant—but the association's advocacy for its industry has also been unwavering. Its consultation with government officials has continued to be vital in protecting the interests of OHBA members as well as the needs of future homeowners by helping Queen's Park make informed choices and to understand the long-term results of policy decisions.

Nine OHBA Past Presidents share memories from their terms, and the pivotal policy battles they experienced in ensuring a healthy, affordable Ontario housing market.

Get Them to the Table

Peter Saturno

2003-2004

It was a time of political upheaval as Peter Saturno seized OHBA's presidential reins just as Dalton McGuinty's Liberals were ousting Ernie Eves' Conservative party in the October 2003 provincial election. "We went from the previous Ontario Minister of Housing asking, 'Is there anything we can do for you?' to a Premier who would not even meet with us," Saturno remembers. "My first thought as president was, 'It's all gonna go down the drain and it's gonna be on my shoulders!' And then I thought, 'If I'm going to go down, I'm gonna go down swinging.'"

Saturno and OHBA staff brought all guns to bear to get Liberal party ministers to the table.

"We weren't the Premier's favourite industry. At the time, he said the auto industry was the engine of Ontario's economy, so I wrote him a letter, noting the home building industry was the true economic engine and, using a classic David Horton line, that the only thing different between us and the auto industry was that we didn't want any subsidies—we just wanted them to get out of our way. 'Tell us what the rules are, keep fees and taxes fair and let us do our job.'"

Painted in a negative light by a few vocal opponents, OHBA "embarked on a plan to put a fresh coat of paint on our tarnished image—we need to restore the respect that the residential construction industry merits in Ontario," Saturno observed at the end of his term.

The Association had certainly made inroads at Queen's Park to that effect. "We are now again forging strong relationships and elected officials are starting to get the message and understand our contributions to the overall economy and quality of life we enjoy in Ontario," Saturno wrote.

But it was far from the only raging torrent that needed to be crossed in 2003-04. "I have dedicated more time this year towards Tarion than I would like to admit," Saturno noted at the time. "The Ministry was being told that Tarion could not control what was going on with bad actors in the building community because OHBA got to pick the board and would not allow Tarion to enforce rules and regulations. Those were complete inaccuracies and mistruths. We convinced the Ministry to look below the surface and find out what's actually going on—that they'd find that the best consumer advocates in the home building industry are builders, because we actually have to sell homes to make a living. About six months later, Minister of Consumer and Business Services Jim Watson turned around and agreed, becoming an advocate and friend to the industry."

The Greenbelt, a Growth Plan and a Sprinkler System

Danny Gabriele

2004-2005

Ontario's population is estimated at 14.5 million today, 2 million more than it was in 2005 when the *Greenbelt Act* came into law. But it wasn't actually the protection of nearly 2 million acres that concerned Marz Homes President Danny Gabriele at the time—it was the red tape in which it was packaged.

"We weren't really focused on the Greenbelt as much as all these other policies that were coming into play and dragging out the planning approvals process—all these agencies were being created and all these timelines that were being added," Gabriele remembers. "When people ask me how long it takes to build a home, I tell them, 'A quarter century!'"

Gabriele is only half-joking—Marz Homes has awaited the go-ahead for land it has held in Hamilton's urban boundary for more than 20 years.

To be sure, there were victories for Gabriele during his tenure. "We had 84,000 housing starts during my year, so we were doing well, and we were able to hold off the idea of sprinklers in every house—that was a significant win for OHBA."

But there was also a developing storm that OHBA forecasted from the outset. "A Place to Grow," the growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, came in during my term. While it had good intentions to align growth with infrastructure, it ultimately brought in unrealistic density targets that over the past decade have become the direct precursor to the shortage of many different forms of low-rise housing we have today," Gabriele observes. "OHBA worked hard to make improvements from the original plan, and forewarned the government that there was no way they could achieve housing affordability without an adequate supply of land. A lot of the problems we have in the housing system today can be traced back to the policies put in place by the government at the time. But I also think the housing crisis would be 10 times worse than what it is now, had it not been for the OHBA over the years."

Code Changes and the Growth Plan

Bob Finnigan

2010-2011

As Bob Finnigan was preparing to exit his presidential post in the autumn of 2011, OHBA was working hard to ensure fair and balanced technical analyses as it approached the end of an exhaustive consultation for the upcoming edition



Presidents and politicians offer a thumbs-up at OHBA's 2019 Industry Leaders' Dinner.



*Official Opposition leader
Tim Hudak with OHBA
President Bob Finnigan in
November 2010.*



*Danny Gabriele and Peter Saturno
at the 2018 Annual Conference.*



*Finnigan takes the stage at
the 2010 President's Gala.*

“OHBA was there every step of the way, providing representation on various technical committees.”
—Bob Finnigan

of the Ontario Building Code. “OHBA has been there every step of the way, providing representation on various technical committees,” including its “high-profile Building Code Energy Advisory Committee,” Finnigan wrote at the time. “It is important for the government to consider both the cumulative impact of such changes on the cost of construction and potentially conflicting impacts on other public policy objectives.”

But it was the Growth Plan that would prove the greatest source of frustration during Finnigan’s term. “When it was launched in 2006, it was an excellent piece of work,” he says. “Where it fell apart—and continues to fall apart—was in its execution. There we were, five years later, still struggling to get the parameters of exactly how it was going to work. We spent a lot of time trying to get urban form into their heads.”

But Finnigan was ideally suited for the job. “I did my degree in geography, specializing in land and

economics, so I could 100% relate to the Growth Plan and could try to help educate them,” he says. “Sometimes that falls on deaf ears—the Liberal government at the time was not builder-friendly and were more interested in implementing the Growth Plan than listening to the problems and concerns the industry had with it. But I think we worked the best we could on those issues. Every President will say the same thing at the end of their year: ‘Crap, we didn’t move the needle too far.’ But we were winning battles.”

“The most unfortunate event during my term, though, was the passing of David Horton. He was very ill when I came in and by January he was staying home for the most part. I was meeting with him weekly or biweekly to get his input because he had such a vast knowledge of what was going on. And my last day was the day (Building Industry and Land Development President and CEO) Stephen Dupuis died suddenly.

“During that period, past presidents and the folks at BILD all dug in and lent a big hand. We were all tied by the David bond, and it ended up being a really good team-building experience for the association.”



Vince Molinaro at Queen's Park Day in 2014 with Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Glen Murray and BILD board member Corey Libfeld.



Vince Molinaro with Premier Kathleen Wynne in 2013.



REMEMBERING David Horton

"I'm looking at my wall at the moment. Let me tell you something about David Horton," Peter Saturno relates of the beloved longtime former executive director, who passed away in 2011. "David would take notes on you throughout the year. When your presidential term ended, he'd give you a plaque with a quote of yours from the past year. He'd actually date it and note who the quote was said to. My plaque says, 'I'm not combative; I'm just honest.' I said it to the Minister and Deputy Minister of Consumer and Business Services. David did that with everybody. He'd remind you it was your kid's birthday. Every time we had a builder forum, it fell on my wedding anniversary, and Horton realized that. So if my wife joined us, David would always have a little white cake waiting in the room. When you became president, he also did this walk-and-talk with you. He'd say, 'At OHBA, your family will come first, your business second, and hopefully you can find a spot for us to come third while you're president.' And he meant it."

Six-Storey Wood and Other Wins Vince Molinaro

2014-2015

"There was a lot of negative noise out there about our industry at the time, and the *Condo Act* provided a soapbox for some naysayers to preach about it," reflects Molinaro Group President Vince Molinaro of his OHBA presidential term. "Bill Mauro, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, decided to do a town hall approach, putting all the stakeholders in a room for several meetings, so that everyone could have their say. There were a lot of people who relied on us as an industry who tried to throw us under the bus with fantastic stories about how we're supposedly trying to do silly things like leasing back windows to the condo corporations. But I think the staff and ministry saw through that. OHBA did a lot of good on that front."

Being a condo builder, Molinaro was well positioned to inform on the matter. "And with industry champions like Harry Herskowitz, a renowned condo lawyer, OHBA staff member Stephen Hamilton, some past presidents and builder members—we were really well represented."

It was a productive give-and-take process, Molinaro says. "Every few years you live and learn, so it can be healthy to take a fresh look at legislation. There were some things they did fix—things being leased back to the condo corporation that maybe shouldn't have been. And they added items like the condo office for dispute resolution and put mandatory training in place for the board of directors, which made a lot of sense."

Molinaro's term also saw an OHBA-backed push of the Home Energy Ratings and

Disclosure (HER&D), which would have helped inform consumers of the energy performance of a home they were planning to sell, buy or upgrade—expanding the energy-improvement focus beyond merely newly built homes to the more problematic existing home stock, but the proposed program was cancelled.

Clearing the path for six-storey wood construction, though, would prove to be the biggest feather in Molinaro's cap. "Drawing evidence and experience from Europe and an association tour of B.C., OHBA was armed with the material it needed to push through legislation for six-storey wood buildings. "In a country like Canada, with wood being an extremely renewable resource, why not us?" Molinaro asked. "It was a missing-middle piece that was really needed, one that we co-championed with Ted McMeekin, Minister of Housing. It took a little while to catch on, but now we're seeing projects being built. We have a lot of low-rise stick-frame constructors. For them to build a mid- or high-rise might be a bit of a leap, but to jump to six-storey wood is not. It gave them a way to progress as a company—to build a different product."

"It required an extensive education process to show how all the safety protocols were in place so that it could be done safely," Molinaro says. "It was a legacy piece for which I credit a much bigger group and the staff at OHBA."

But some of that foundation was poured in the years leading up to Molinaro's term. "We were building relationships with everyone, even when the PCs were third behind the NDP. And now we're seeing all the good relationships and the positive legislation toward building more affordable housing and getting through the process quicker."



Left to right: Pierre Dufresne, Neil Rodgers, PC leader Patrick Brown, John Meinen and Rick Martins in 2017.



Neil Rodgers with Premier Kathleen Wynne in 2016.



President Rodgers at work with the OHBA board.

Fighting the Good Fight Neil Rodgers

2016-2017

You can't win every battle, but there's always honour and purpose in fighting for those you represent.

"My presidency was dominated with Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government, and they never took their foot off the gas with respect to planning and OMB reform," recalls Neil Rodgers. "Whether it was motivated by the municipal sector arguing, 'The pace of development is too fast and we need more time to review applications,' or 'The OMB is out of check with local ratepayer interests,' it was very much an agenda of putting additional timelines into the process. There are greater economic forces related to affordability and interest rates that are outside of the provincial government's realm, but certainly the additional processes and time imposed on residential construction during my term made things categorically worse.

"I vividly remember face-to-face meetings with Premier Wynne and some senior ministers in the cabinet room," shares Rodgers, now president of Dumara Projects Ltd. "We as an association argued about serviced land supply and an inefficient approvals process. Sadly, they just didn't care how it would become the most pressing

problem of a generation.

"Politics is the art of compromise, and everyone has to give something up to get forward progress," Rodgers continues. "But I felt the government had made its mind up before going into certain consultations and just gave us time because we were a stakeholder."

But even amid the most frustrating times, Rodgers and company were laying bricks. "You don't lie down as an industry or association. You must demonstrate value to the membership. The effort put into policy submissions to help the Opposition party hold a ruling government to account is equally as important as the determination it takes to advocate with the current regime. We've always curated relationships with opposition MPPs. And there were many times when they were hungry for information and solutions that we were able to supply. And next thing you know, Steve Clark becomes the Minister of Municipal Affairs in a Doug Ford government. I know he and his colleagues valued all of that effort and trust we built."

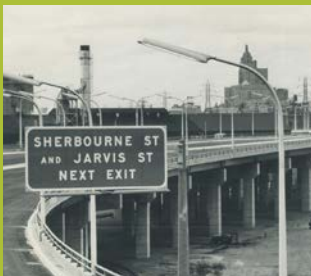
Rodgers' term also saw a victory on the WSIB front, with the groundwork having been paved by some of his predecessors. "The increase in WSIB premiums was getting out of hand, particularly for small to medium-sized builders and renovators," Rodgers says. "The government heard us, and the data was there to demonstrate that employers were

Timeline

1963: A group representing 10 of Ontario's local home building associations meet with representatives from the CHBA in Kitchener at the now-defunct Evergreen's Motel, where they elected Eric Johnson to serve as their first chairman, with the Canadian association agreeing to provide support staff.



October 1964: Originally proposed in 1947, with shovels finally breaking ground in 1955, the Gardiner Expressway is completed. The vision of Metropolitan Executive Committee Chair Frederick Gardiner, the highway linked the QEW west of the Humber River with the Don Valley Parkway, helping to bring the city's infrastructure into the modern age and paving the way for huge population and development growth in the city core.



1968: Ontario's first condo project, Peel Condominium 1, comprising 37 two-storey townhouses and built by Bramalea Consolidated Developments, welcomes its first residents.

1973: The first OHBA annual conference is held in Kitchener.

1975: The Federal Housing Action Plan is launched to stimulate the residential construction industry and ensure an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs of middle and lower income families.



OHBA Past Presidents Bob Schickedanz (left) and Pierre Dufresne (right) with Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Jim Clark.



Pierre Dufresne and Rick Martins flank Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Bill Mauro.



President Dufresne at the 2018 Industry Leaders' Dinner.

being vigilant in terms of on-the-job safety and that the number of incidents were down dramatically. Government began a number of rate reductions and it was a welcome relief. That no doubt showed to a large cross-section of our membership that there was value in belonging to the OHBA."

The Right Man for the Job

Pierre Dufresne

2017-2018

OHBA Past Presidents have all taken advantage of their respective fields of expertise during their traditionally annual assignments, but few have been more perfect fits than Pierre Dufresne.

"I'd already been involved in dealing with Liberal government policy for a few years with all the legislation being passed to me as an OHBA board member," says Dufresne, currently Senior V.P. at Cavanagh Communities. "And responsible for development approvals, I was able to get myself to the table with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing—both at the bureaucratic level with staff who were writing policy as well as Queen's Park. The policy being written was very prejudicial to our industry and to new homebuyers. I think Mike

Collins-Williams (OHBA Policy Director at the time; now CEO of West End HBA) noted there were something like 23 open files or pieces of legislative changes—everything from inclusionary zoning and development charges to changes with conservation authorities and species at risk.

"We created a line of dialogue with ministry staff in a professional manner that enabled us to stay at the table, have our feedback continue to be heard and considered, and to improve the situation," Dufresne says. "So although the policies might have been prejudicial toward our industry and to new-home buyers and affordability, we were always able to, in a reasonable fashion, temper the severity of those proposals as they were going through legislation."

As a planner, Dufresne was also able to educate and forewarn policymakers of the potential ramifications of their decisions. "There were things like inclusionary zoning that were promoted to be able to create more affordable housing stock. They were actually creating subsidies for a portion of housing stock, but then adding those costs to other types of affordable housing typologies, and therefore acting counter to the intent," Dufresne explains.

But even when the Conservatives were victorious in the 2018 provincial election and endeavoured "to reverse what the Liberal government had done in terms policy framework, dialogue still has to continue," Dufresne

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Dec 31, 1975: The Ontario Building Code comes into force.

July 1, 1976: Ontario's new-homes warranty program, called HUDAC takes effect.

1984: HUDAC changes its name to the Ontario New Home Warranty Program.

1990: *The Planning Act* is created by the Government of Ontario. A set of rules on how land use planning must be conducted in Ontario, the *Act* looks to integrate community input, environmental health, economic growth and development.

October 1991: OHBA's inaugural Awards of Distinction celebrates excellence in Ontario home building. OHBA also debuts the Sales & Marketing (SAM) Awards at a conference in Windsor.

1998: With a partnership between OHBA and the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance, EnerQuality is founded; its mission to transform Ontario's housing into the most energy efficient and sustainable in the world.

2004: The Ontario New Home Warranty Program changes its name to Tarion.

February 28, 2005: *The Greenbelt Act* is passed by the Ontario government, creating the world's largest greenbelt.

2005: EnerQuality joins forces with Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) to develop Energy Star for New Homes.



October 2008: Oshawa's Durham Custom Homes becomes the first builder in Canada to adopt the new GreenHouse standard at its Kingsway Forest site.



The Honourable Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, with Rick Martins in 2019.



Martins is introduced as OHBA's new president in 2018.

notes. "OHBA members are on the ground. We negotiate development charges, background studies and subdivision approvals, get plans registered, manage projects and sell units. The legislation government creates has to be implemented. Sometimes it can handicap municipalities' ability to meet the intent, or it can run contrary and municipalities can find ways around it or to challenge it. That's why it's so important for people in the industry to actually be at the table and say, 'This is how things work.' So you can go from the higher-level policy approaches of the Province, to the implementation or translation of that policy and the regulatory authority, through the municipalities, to us as implementers. So it's important to be able to scope it or frame it in a way that enables it to meet its intent."

Home Believers and Trades Rick Martins

2018-2019

Maybe it's his Portuguese blood, but on the eve of his presidency, the typically soft-spoken Rick Martins was anything but timid when discussions turned to the College of Trades at the 2018 OHBA Annual General Meeting in Ottawa. "Everyone was talking about how we should petition whatever government comes in to amend the College of Trades, and I said, 'We've just gotta *&@#ing can it! It has done nothing to bring in trades or to apprentice people,' and they had \$52 million that they'd collected but done absolutely nothing with. I said, 'If I'm coming in, I'm asking for it to be tossed.' They were afraid

of me being that young bull and wanted me to be a little more sly, but I was like, 'No man! You've gotta throw a grenade!' And that was exactly what (Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development) Monte McNaughton did when he came in. He blew the College of Trades out of the water."

The move was complemented by the Ontario government's move to set journey-person-to-apprentice ratios at 1:1 for all trades where ratios applied—something that reaped rapid rewards, particularly for small- to mid-sized builders and renovators who, after years of delay, were finally able to hire apprentices.

"The biggest thing during my term, though, was the Home Believer campaign that we ran before the election," says Martins, V.P. at Huron Creek Developments. "That came from the mind of Joe Vaccaro, which was always going 1,000 miles a minute. I think that campaign really set the tone—not just for the provincial election, but the next federal election too. It's something I still hashtag out every once in a while, because at the heart of our industry, if we're not Home Believers, then what are we? It's a roof over someone's head. It's safety!"

Martins is all too familiar with the spiraling costs of building new homes in his own stomping grounds. "We were buying lots at \$1,500 a front foot in Kitchener about 20 years ago. They're now \$15,000 a front foot!" he says. "When I came in, Joe wanted us to be screaming from the highest mountaintop that the system had gone awry and that we needed to get back to what true homeownership is all about. Fortunately, we had a government

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2009: OHBA purchases the RenoMark licences for all Ontario Chapters. Each Chapter has the option of joining the RenoMark program by signing an agreement with BILD.

April 30, 2011: Executive Director David Horton passes away. Described as “OHBA’s Rock of Gibraltar,” Horton served the association for 25 years.

November 2011: A passion project of outgoing President James Bazely, OHBA bypasses its Annual Conference in exchange for a humanitarian build in the Dominican Republic.



2013: OHBA Celebrates its 50th anniversary with “50 Good Deeds,” with multiple Chapters engaging in volunteer work and fundraising for their local communities.

September 2013: Joe Vaccaro steps into the role of OHBA’s Chief Executive Officer, a post he will hold for the next eight years and two months.

January 1, 2015: Ontario allows six-storey wood-frame construction, unlocking countless opportunities for mid-rise construction with sustainable timber technology.

October 25, 2018: The new PC government led by Premier Doug Ford announces sweeping changes to the province’s outdated and broken skilled trades system. The bureaucratic College of Trades is disbanded and journeyman-to-apprentice ratios are reduced across the board to 1:1. These were both long-called-for advocacy points with successive governments.



OHBA’s board of directors during the 2022 Annual Conference in Niagara Falls.

whose ear was open to listen. But those were easy conversations to have because we had all factual numbers that I could bring to the ministers and say, ‘You need to invest in these roads and make sure that there’s more money going into municipalities, because if they don’t have staff, they can’t approve things.’

“And we were able to arm our HBAs with those statistics so that they could make their voices heard with their MPs and MPPs. That all rolled into President Bob Schickedanz’s campaign of the elephant in the room, where now we all know about the problem, but what are we doing about it?”

Martins is eminently modest about OHBA’s accomplishments during his term. The stars were aligned for me,” he says. “The political climate was there, and I had a lot of puppetmasters behind me making me look really good.”

Keeping the Doors Open During Covid

Bob Schickedanz

2019-2022

It wasn’t long after the tremor was first felt and the waters rippled that the tidal wave consumed Ontario, remembers Bob Schickedanz. “I was about five months into my term when the Covid pandemic hit Ontario. The lockdown came in early March 2020, and not unlike individuals or businesses, there was the initial shock and so many unknowns—from personal lives to our business lives—and our industry was not immune. We really hunkered down and started looking at the impacts for our industry and how we could navigate through it.”

Schickedanz, OHBA staff and representatives from local chapters across the province

worked diligently with government officials and the Ministry of Labour to have residential construction declared as an essential service, and then to establish the conditions under which it could continue its work. “On the building side, we had to ensure that permits would be issued and that inspections would take place, meaning making sure that municipal business continued,” Schickedanz says. “Planning and public meetings, in many cases for the first time, were done virtually! We managed to work with our friends at Tarion to make sure inspections would move forward and claims would be addressed—all while having a record number of units to build, compounded by the lack of supplies and labour shortages and increased volatility and pricing.

“It was needed for our industry but, more important, it was needed for our customers. There were thousands of homes across Ontario in various stages of construction, and those people had already committed to selling and moving out. Had building ground to a complete halt, what would they have done?”

“There were so many detailed pieces that had to come together to make this puzzle work. I’m tremendously proud of the effort of so many who have their fingerprints on it. It wasn’t long afterward that we implemented measures that were acceptable to allow renovators to go into people’s existing homes and continue their work.

“These accomplishments were like minor miracles,” Schickedanz observes. “Sometimes people question the value of the membership fees they pay to the association, but the work that was achieved through these short couple of years and the benefit to our members and our industry was worth many lifetimes of those annual fees. What if we were like the retail or the hospitality sector, where we just had to shut down our business and carry our inventory of land and projects and high debt? It would have been ruinous for so many.”

The passing of Bills 108 (the *More Homes*,

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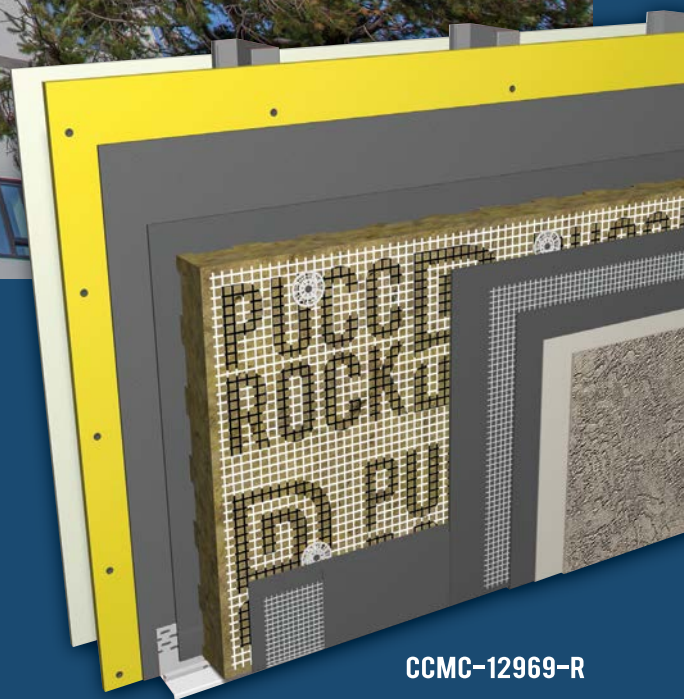
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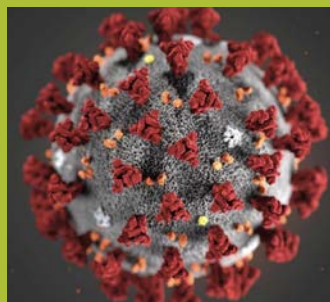
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March 17, 2020: A provincial state of emergency is declared in Ontario due to the COVID-19 pandemic. OHBA members re-double efforts to ensure jobsites remain healthy and safe places to work. This is ultimately a critical factor to ensure the industry stays open and is not shuttered, as retail was.



February 1, 2021: The Home Construction Regulatory Authority is formally designated as the new-home construction regulator for the province, separating warranty functions from Tarion.

2022: HCRA is created to handle licensing and regulating new-home builders and vendors, while Tarion will continue to provide warranty protection for homeowners.

June 2022: Luca Bucci takes over as OHBA Chief Executive Officer.



October 25, 2022: Bill 23: *The More Homes Built Faster Act* is introduced in the Ontario Legislature by Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Steve Clark. The most impactful housing legislation in the past 15 years, it set municipalities on the path for growth by significantly streamlining new-home construction, allowing up to three units on a single lot as-of-right and injects urgency into the development approvals process. This legislation offers more predictability and certainty for builders and homeowners alike. **OHBA**



Incoming President Bob Schickedanz with Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark at OHBA's 2019 Annual Conference.



President Louie Zagordo with Ontario Minister of Transportation Caroline Mulroney at the 2023 OHBA Industry Leaders' Dinner.

More Choice Act 2019) and 109 (*More Homes for Everyone Act* 2022) fuelled the momentum, as did the passionate ‘Cut the ****’ advocacy campaign, with Schickedanz and OHBA staff criss-crossing the province to hear face-to-face stories about the issues of housing affordability and supply. Candidates running for election were asked for their plans to address the housing crisis and to sign a pledge to do so. While the estimated need of a million new homes within 10 years rose to 1.5 million, local chapters joined OHBA staff in ensuring that the housing crisis was prominently on the election radar screen.

But it wasn't just about pointing out the problem but identifying solutions, Schickedanz notes. “We've come from making the broader community aware of the challenges and the need for more housing, to helping craft out policies and provide advice, to now helping implement them—and that's where the rubber hits the road.”

On a Roll

Louie Zagordo

2022-2023

It has been a momentum-building term for OHBA and President Louie Zagordo, whose continuing cross-province tour has been nurturing bonds with the association's Chapter HBAs and members. Emerging from the pandemic with a full head of steam, OHBA has helped spur a string of productive legislation and policies for the industry, beginning with Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act* in October 2022.

“I think it's the most impactful housing legislation in the past 15 years, setting municipalities on the right path for growth and streamlining new-home construction,”

says Zagordo, SLV Homes' founder and president, “and it's a big win for new-home builders and buyers who will benefit from more predictability and certainty.

Spring forward to March, with the Ford government's renewal of the Skills Development Fund grant for OHBA, enabling the association to continue to deliver its highly successful Job Ready program, which introduces young people, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds, to rewarding careers in residential construction. Just two days later, the 2023 Ontario Budget signalled that the Province was prepared to work with the federal government to begin discussion on the HST on new homes. “Either through prorating, deferrals or exemptions, particularly for first-time homebuyers, this would have an immediate positive impact, and is a measure that OHBA has been pushing for years,” notes Zagordo.

April witnessed Bill 97—*Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act* and the Provincial Policy Statement. Part of the provincial government's latest Housing Supply Action Plan, these combined measures will help encourage more rental construction and improve housing supply and choice across our province, all while laying out a bold planning framework to help Ontario meet future housing demand.

The spring was capped by OHBA Leadership Day on April 24—an event Zagordo considers “a significant demonstration of political strength that our association has with all levels of government.

“It marks a turning point,” he says, “where the narrative has shifted from the scope of housing supply challenges to how we are going to meaningfully add more housing of all shapes and sizes.” **OHBA**

60 years strong: celebrating the voice of Ontario's new homebuilders

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*Left to right: Dani Gabriele (Marz Homes), Jeff Fung (Forever Homes),
Natasha Paikin (New Horizon) and brothers Domenic and Robert
Alfieri of Windrush Hill Construction.*





RISING STARS

Meet 12 next-generation players shaping Ontario's home building future

BY TRACY HANES

They grew up hearing home building discussed around the dinner table. In their teens, they worked on family business construction sites or in the office. Now they are working alongside their parents or have stepped into leadership roles.

From a pair of St. Catharines brothers to a New York City-educated project manager, here are 12 inspired individuals under the age of 35 who are helping to define the future of the province's residential construction industry.



SAM BUNTING

AGE: 34

TITLE: President, Prominent Homes (Simcoe); President, Haldimand-Norfolk HBA

BACKGROUND: “From when I was 12, my dad Brian had me doing general labour and trained me to install trim, doors and windows. When I got to high school, I framed houses for a couple of summers. I studied Architectural Construction Engineering Technology at Conestoga College. As I’d basically grown up on-site, I was able to picture complex details and layouts. I was selected to represent Conestoga in an architectural design competition and I won regionally, then at provincial and national competitions. In 2008-2009, I joined Prominent full-time. My first design job was a massive 6,000 sq. ft. luxury home. The recession (2008-2009) worked in our favour, as it allowed us to offer a level of service we’d been missing. Before, we contracted out design services and it took months to get blueprints. I took over and we were able to provide clients with blueprints in weeks. We were also able to downsize our blueprints to make more efficient spaces and to build smaller homes that felt the same size as our competitors’ large homes. We built six to eight homes a year back then, but now build 20 to 25 custom homes a year.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “I might not have been as understanding in the past as I should have been. I’ve learned it’s important to protect your clients when things go wrong and maintain relationships with subtrades.”

BEST ADVICE: “Get involved and volunteer for your industry. I gained

humility from doing that and have built significant relationships and contacts. It creates a desire to achieve more. I got involved with the Haldimand-Norfolk HBA in 2009 when I saw Dad volunteering. I served my first term as president from 2013-15 and I’m currently president again.”

BEST DECISION: “Asking my sister Nettie Culver to stay involved in the business and creating an atmosphere where everyone contributes to the success of the company, so it’s not just built on me. It’s our staff, our subtrades and our suppliers. Although she doesn’t work for the company, my wife Rikki-Lee and my two boys Oliver and Theodore support me in the business.”

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS:

“We build highly energy-efficient homes and I see growing into Net Zero homes. We’ve started expanding into multi-family developing and building. I’d love to see us grow the development side, creating home designs and communities that are vibrant and offer healthy lifestyles.”



DANI GABRIELE

AGE: 31

TITLE: Project Manager, Marz Homes (Hamilton)

BACKGROUND: “With my father and great uncle being home builders/developers and my mother being a realtor, I was exposed to the industry at a young age. I joined our family business in 2018, primarily focusing on marketing,

sales and development. Prior, I worked as a financial analyst for a residential high-rise developer in Toronto, and as project analyst for a developer in New York City. I hold a Bachelor of Commerce in Real Estate and Housing from The University of Guelph and a Master of Science in Real Estate Finance from New York University.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “I had my first child in October 2021. I’ve always heard of the challenges women face with work-life balance, but never experienced it until I had my son. I don’t like

to use the word ‘balance,’ because I feel it is an elusive term and almost impossible to achieve—especially when working in a family business—but at times I feel it’s challenging to be managing so much at one time. I continue to work through these challenges and find solutions that work best for me and our family, the main one being organization!”



“Get involved and volunteer for your industry. I gained humility from doing that and have built significant relationships and contacts. It creates a desire to achieve more.”

BEST ADVICE: “The Golden Rule—‘Be kind to people and treat people as you would like to be treated.’”

BEST DECISION: “Going to New York City for my Master’s, then gaining work experience there. It was truly incredible to connect with people from all over the world in the same industry I was interested in. I worked with some of the most intelligent, motivated people I have ever met, and I felt very grateful to have had a seat amongst them.”

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS:

“By then, our family business will have been around for 55 years! I see us continuing to provide quality housing through complete communities, while also addressing affordability and climate crisis through product type and innovative construction techniques. I see us continuing to hire and retain an incredibly talented team of staff, trades and consultants who are an integral part of our identity.”



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TIMOTHY CAMPANALE

AGE: 28

TITLE: Contracts Manager, Campanale Homes (Ottawa)

BACKGROUND: “My father Tony and his brothers Vince and Rocco started the business 40 years ago. I’m part of the second generation in the company, along with my brothers Michael and Matthew and cousins Cody, Jenna and Santana. We’re all really close and we specialize in different things. Michael and I used to sweep houses for quarters when I was 10. I always knew I’d work in the business. My first job was doing purchase orders, filling in for people on vacation, then I got into payables. When I was 16, I started working as a labourer on construction sites. I went to Carleton University for one year, then studied for a business degree in real estate and housing at the University of Guelph. I joined the family business in 2017. I filled in for someone who did the estimating jobs, then he quit and I ended up in that position, and then contract managing, where I do budgets, contracts and drawings.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “As a small to mid-size builder, it’s competing for land against large builders. We’ve managed to make it work and have decent land reserves and are finding the ‘sneaky pieces.’ But there are a lot of challenges on the municipal side, and it takes the same amount of work to do nine acres as it does to do 90.”

BEST ADVICE: “Don’t let small things upset you. Some things are not worth arguing about, especially in a family business. You’ve got to focus on the big picture.”

BEST DECISION: “Going to university. I worked in the industry from a young age, so I understood it, but I learned so much about land development, finance, economics and housing. I still learn a lot every day and part of that comes from being involved in the local home builders’ association and different organizations.”

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS: “We’ve always built to sell. We’d build homes and sell them, or if we didn’t sell them, we rented them. We are thinking more about transitioning from a for-sale to a for-rent business. We are building a lot of energy-efficient developments for rent and planning some of our first high-rise developments in Barrhaven.”



DOMENIC CRIGNANO

AGE: 34

TITLE: V.P. of Development, Cityzen Development Group (Toronto)

BACKGROUND: “I worked on our construction sites during school breaks in my teens. Every year I took on a different role, and after graduating from university I transitioned into construction project management.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “There are many advantages to operating a family business, but when we blur the line between business and family after hours, it can be quite tricky.”

BEST ADVICE: “If you really want to get things done, get off Zoom, stop emailing, pick up the phone, get out the door and meet people.”



“If you really want to get things done, get off Zoom, stop emailing, pick up the phone, get out the door and meet people.”

BEST DECISION: “Jumping into every project headfirst and getting my hands dirty.”

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS: “Whether we deliver housing in the form of high-rise condominiums in urban centres or lower-density purpose-built rentals in suburban areas, we will

have to be more agile and flexible than ever to deliver a wide range of housing options to meet the needs of our fast-growing population.”



JEFF FUNG

AGE: 32

TITLE: V.P. of Operations, Forever Homes (London)

BACKGROUND: “My parents came from Hong Kong in 1990 and started the business in 1993. I started by sweeping floors and taking out garbage. I hated it! I attended Redeemer University in Hamilton and got a business degree with a focus on accounting. I didn’t love the ins and outs of accounting but liked business as a whole. When it was time for me to join the workforce, my family had a student housing project on the go. I took the lead on that and slowly fell in love with the business.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “Earning the respect of older people. A lot of people saw me grow up on-site. I was involved in the broader industry when I was 22,

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and when you're young and have large decision-making power, you are going to make mistakes. Owning up to mistakes and gaining the respect of others was a challenge."

BEST ADVICE: "Accept that you are probably wrong and that there's nothing wrong with that. I had a hard time with that coming out of university when I was all about being right. It's not wrong to make a mistake—it's about correcting it."

BEST DECISION: "Taking six months off after university to travel. It opens your perspective. Seeing a lot of different perspectives, lifestyles and viewpoints was very impactful and allowed me to become more open-minded."

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS: "I see us being a more vertically integrated residential producer. We are predominantly a single-family home and townhouse builder. We want to have multiple products. We're looking at land development and expanding into rental. We want to offer houses plus multi-residential units so that clients can move through our products as their needs change."



CONNOR JOHNSTONE

AGE: 30

TITLE: V.P., Johnstone Homes (London)

BACKGROUND: "I was on-site alongside my father since before I could walk. I started working as a labourer at age 16. I completed a finance degree at Dalhousie University and gained real estate finance experience through co-op

placements. After working in capital markets for several years, I returned to London to be further involved with the family business."

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: "Getting my feet underneath me while our developments began to receive significant interest and sales happened essentially overnight. Looking back, this time was an amazing growth opportunity to experience early in my career."

BEST ADVICE: "Be loyal to your trades, suppliers and professional partners. This advice paid off, as these longstanding relationships were instrumental to ensuring our homes and developments have maintained scheduling and quality through these past few years."

BEST DECISION: "Starting my career in a relevant field, outside of the family business. This provided perspective and experience, which I use daily."

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS: "Expanding our presence in medium-density developments throughout Southwest Ontario, and continuing to provide award-winning energy-conscious homes and communities."



NATASHA PAIKIN

AGE: 27

TITLE: Director of Client Experience, New Horizon Development Group (Burlington)



"Accept that you are probably wrong and that there's nothing wrong with that. I had a hard time with that coming out of university when I was all about being right."

BACKGROUND: "Growing up, I worked for New Horizon (co-founded by her father Jeff Paikin) in summer and after school, stuffing envelopes, shredding paper and doing administration work. I completed a Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting at Bishop's University in Quebec. I worked at marketing agencies, and it was helpful to see their perspective when dealing with real estate clients. Eventually, I joined New Horizon full-time on the marketing team."

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: "The biggest challenge is reframing the (negative) perception around our industry. It's about leading by example as an individual and company."

BEST ADVICE: "Portray yourself the way you want to be seen. Self-awareness is arguably the most important skill you can bring. Get involved in industry associations like the OHBA and learn from others. You learn by listening, and that you have something to contribute to others' learning as well. I've been involved with the West End Home Builders' Association for five years, on subcommittees and, since 2021, on the board of directors."

BEST DECISION: "I am constantly working to get better. I hope I haven't made it yet!"

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS: "Continuing to be a leader in building sustainable and attainable new-home communities in the GTA West. Our management team is unintentionally primarily women-led, which puts us in a position to become a primarily women-led company in the next 10 years and represents an exciting change happening throughout the industry. We push the envelope when it comes to sustainable building and will continue to do that."

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LOGAN PRYCE

AGE: 24

TITLE: Sales Manager, Prycon Custom Homes (Barrie)

BACKGROUND: “My father Matt and my uncle Steve founded the company in 1994. I was a ski instructor when I was in high school, but had an interest in building and construction. I started an apprenticeship in general carpentry and worked for the company. Dad needed help in sales, so I started working with him. I worked on preliminary construction aspects—design, plans, permits, minor variances. Office life is different, but I enjoy it.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “Keeping up with building science. The Code is always changing, the science of building is changing and people are going to need more modern houses, and it’s figuring out how to make those work in this climate. The red tape you have to go through for permits and approvals can be difficult and lengthy too.”

BEST ADVICE: “I’ve noticed how friends and my generation are getting more into computers and technology. However, my best advice is get into a trade. There is so much work and so much demand. And never be afraid to move up in a company; never be afraid of new challenges or to ask questions.”

BEST DECISION: “To work in the family business and continue the legacy.”

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS: “Our business has doubled in size in the past five to eight years. I want to keep continuing to grow the business and hopefully to become an owner.”



DOMENIC ALFIERI

AGE: 23

TITLE: Project Manager, Windrush Hill Construction (St. Catharines)

BACKGROUND: “I’ve been immersed in the industry for as long as I can remember. My father (Tony) started the company before I was born, so I’ve watched it grow, develop and change. I was always proficient in mathematics, so I knew my pathway would leverage those skill sets. I graduated from Brock University in 2022 with a Bachelor of Business Administration, concentrating in finance with a minor in economics. This provided me with a solid foundation of knowledge in finance, accounting, business strategy and project management.”



“Get into a trade. There is so much work and so much demand.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “It was and continues to be learning about the intricacies and technical details of the construction process. The industry is hands-on, and it takes an in-depth understanding of various trades and processes. This takes time, on-site experience and countless questions to our team members.”

BEST ADVICE: “Keep an open mind and always be willing to learn. There will be new and unique challenges that remind you that you’ll never know everything, and there’s always someone who can teach you something new. The constant introduction of new technology and practices means a commitment to learning is essential.”

BEST DECISION: “To pursue post-secondary education. University provided

me with countless skills I apply on a daily basis. It opened my eyes to new ways of thinking that will help drive the growth and evolution of the company.”

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS: “An evolution of its current self. Currently, it’s a boutique renovation company that turns outdated homes into dream homes. Attention to detail, transparency and customer relationships are key to our success. Maintaining those aspects will provide a solid foundation for the future. I envision us to still occupy the high-end renovation market, but in an expanded capacity—providing an all-encompassing experience. It will start with in-house real estate team that can help clients find their property, then in-house designers and architects to design their home, and then the construction and project management team to turn their design dreams into reality.”



ROBERT ALFIERI

AGE: 21

TITLE: Junior Project Manager, Windrush Hill Construction (St. Catharines)

BACKGROUND: “Since I was young enough to be on jobsites, I was there with my father, seeing the process and understanding the industry. I’ve been going to industry events since my teens. I’m a musician and was interested in the music business and was supposed to go to Toronto Metropolitan University for music management. I decided to take a year off school. Covid was the final push to not go to university and go into my father’s business. We focus on renovation and people wanted to maximize the experience of their homes—that was my first introduction to what was possible in the world of renovation.”

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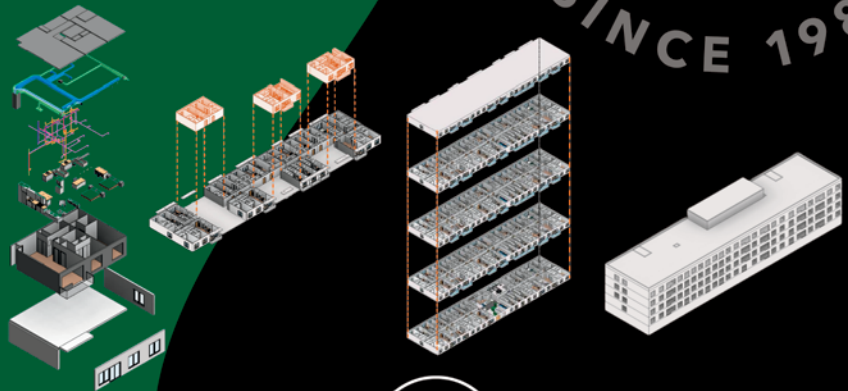
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BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “My brother and I have big shoes to fill. The company is based on client relationships my father has built. One of biggest challenges is finding my place and role, as well as being part of the client community.”

BEST ADVICE: “People my age feel a lot of pressure about knowing what they want to do as soon as they get out of high school. That’s really pushed by social media, where you see people very young become extraordinarily successful. Enjoying the journey is one of the important things you can do. My dad didn’t start this company until his 30s. Find a balance between the business and time for yourself. I do music gigs on Tuesdays and on weekends and it helps me de-stress.”

BEST DECISION: “Deciding to join the company rather than study music management.”

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS: “My brother Dominic and I are building on the foundation that our father put in place. My role is to make sure our quality stays at the highest level. We’ve branched into the design space and I find that part very cool. I want to create a design branch and focus on our designs and offer our services beyond the Niagara Region. I’m pursuing my real estate licence and want to build more custom homes as well as do renovations.”



RYAN LI

AGE: 31

TITLE: Senior Associate, Development at Tricon Residential, Tricon Residential (Toronto)

BACKGROUND: “I am a lawyer by trade, turned real estate developer. My company still pays for me to maintain my law licence, but I would no longer consider myself a practising lawyer.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “Being a jack-of-all-trades means needing to know a bit of everything. Having to understand multiple fields and how they impacted projects—from hydro or geotechnical reports to how certain water or soil conditions will impact construction schedules, to how to work in financial models and track budgets and costs—were all challenges, given that I had no formal education in these areas. It was difficult at the outset to provide good direction and instructions to consultants or to even ask the right questions. I had to learn on the job.”

BEST ADVICE: “Find a company and good mentors willing to spend time giving you guidance and direction to advance your career goals. It might initially be tempting to take a job that offers slightly more money at the outset, but a company that provides good mentorship and work opportunities is worth a million times more. Also, be patient! Promotions, advancements and pay will all come eventually.”

BEST DECISION: “After I was called to the bar, I decided to pivot and work in real estate development. I’d worked and articulated at a law firm that specializes in land use planning and municipal litigation, so the transition was natural. My legal background allowed me to get offers from a few developers. I haven’t looked back since. Working in development allows me to wear different hats. Every day is different and exciting.”

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS: “I’d love to continue to help Tricon continue its fast growth and trajectory in becoming the largest and best rental housing developer and provider in Canada and the USA.”



MARK ZAGORDO

AGE: 32

TITLE: V.P., SLV Homes (Sudbury)

BACKGROUND: “My grandparents, who are immigrants, worked very hard to make a living and displayed exceptional work ethics. My dad Louie and my mom Alba had nothing when they started. Their ambition and dedication rubbed off on me. I knew at a young age that this is what I wanted to do. I started at the bottom, learning every aspect, from sweeping up construction homes to working with tools, to receiving my carpenter’s licence, to managing projects.”

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: “Working for my dad and accepting that he knows more and has experienced more. I have no regrets working for him, as my knowledge about real construction worksite situations, finances and solutions has evolved and given me the experience to work at the managerial and ownership level.”

BEST ADVICE: “Follow your dreams, but be ready for the challenges, the hardships and sacrifices needed to get there. Never give up on your dreams.”

BEST DECISION: “To stick with this for 10 years and have the ambition and dedication to continue this amazing family business.”

WHERE I SEE THE COMPANY IN 10 YEARS: “We’re a growing company and I hope to keep it growing. I am proud to be a young entrepreneur, husband and dad of three kids. I want to continue to work toward keeping the great reputation of SLV Homes until I retire. Maybe one of my children will carry on the legacy.” **OHB**



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To learn more about the OHBA Job Ready Program and how to become an employer, visit ohbajobready.ca

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Building Buzz

NEWS AND MOVES FROM THE INDUSTRY

Left to right: Student speaker Braden Sass, Branthaven President Steve Stipsits, Mohawk College President & CEO Ron McKerlie and Samara Young, Associate Dean, Construction & Building, Mohawk College.



BRANTHAVEN DONATES A MILLION TO MOHAWK

City School funding will spur workforce development

Branthaven President Steve Stipsits, his wife, V.P. of Sales & Marketing Elizabeth Stipsits and Branthaven Homes have made a \$1 million donation to Mohawk College's workforce development in the construction trades for the college's City School program.

The donation will promote new education and employment opportunities in the residential construction sector for people in underserved communities through City School training programs, the college reports.

"We are incredibly grateful to Steve, Elizabeth and Branthaven Homes," said Ron J. McKerlie, president and CEO of Mohawk College and president of the Mohawk College Foundation. "This powerful gift will allow City

School to provide training for people and help them secure lasting, meaningful work in construction trades while addressing labour shortages in the field."

"The main reason for our investment in City School is to see up to 1,200 students and their families no longer having to choose between paying for food or rent," said Steve Stipsits. "I have never seen a more powerful vehicle than City School for helping people step into careers and out of the cycle of multi-generational poverty."

The Mohawk connection is a special one for Steve, who graduated from the college's Architectural Technology Program in 1984 prior to beginning his home building career. A Distinguished Fellow of the College and a Mohawk

College Alumnus of Distinction, he also served as a governor from 2017 to 2022.

This Branthaven Homes donation will support a \$2-million, five-year workforce development strategy that leverages the City School by Mohawk College rapid skills-training programs and other Mohawk assets to increase training capacity and address acute workforce shortages in the construction sector. That includes: development of industry-focused training programs; addressing and removing barriers to training and employment for people in underserved communities; promotion of construction trades careers; and delivery of demand-led programs through City School by Mohawk College.

To acknowledge this gift, City School mobile classrooms will include branding that recognizes the support of Branthaven Homes. The college has additionally unveiled the Branthaven Construction Trades, Technology & Research Centre at its Stoney Creek Campus for Skilled Trades.



Kohler sheds light on the move to bigger showers with lots of technology.

INTERIOR DESIGN

PAMPERING TREND OF BATHROOMS STAYS STRONG

The focus on the bathroom as a personal retreat is showing no signs of slowing, suggests Wolseley Canada, a market leader in the wholesale distribution of plumbing, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, refrigeration, waterworks, fire protection, pipes, valves, fittings and industrial products.

“If there is any room in the house that should have a touch of luxury, it is the bathroom,” says Harry Kandilas, Director of Showrooms with Wolseley Canada. “As we shift our perspective of the bathroom and its role in the home, we are seeing more advanced accessories, more technology and more bold design ideas make their way into both renovations and new builds.”

Wolseley identifies the following bathroom trends this year:

BOLD COLOURS — More than just the colour of the paint on the wall, this includes bold tiles that bring new life to showers, backsplashes, floors and even the bathroom fixtures. Kohler is re-introducing two heritage colours, to help mark its 150th anniversary. Later this year, expect to see sinks, toilets and other elements in Spring Green (an original shade from Kohler’s introduction of colour in 1927) and the 1930s-era Peachblow.

BIG SHOWERS — In the 2020s, tubs are coming out in favour of spacious walk-in showers. Shower panels give these a spa-like feel. They often incorporate rainfall showerheads or multiple showerheads to add an element of romance to the shower.

MIX-AND-MATCH DESIGN — Matte black faucets with gold or chrome accents (or vice-versa) are showing well for this year. The mixing of hues on faucets adds a unique and stylish element to the sink area or in the shower.

TOUCHLESS faucets remove what was once a common touchpoint where germs could be spread, combining innovative infrared technology with a futuristic look.

TECHNOLOGY — Some elements of the tech boom include: intelligent toilets that incorporate heated seats, touchless flushing and lid-opening, bidet functionality and night lights.

COMFORT — Modern bathrooms are re-creating the spa experience, with massaging hand showers, body sprays and steam systems.

SUSTAINABILITY — Look for faucets and showerheads that don’t compromise quality and water flow while still minimizing the water you use during your daily routines.

TRADES

BARRIERS COMING DOWN FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED WORKERS

Engineers trained outside of Canada no longer require Canadian experience to get licensed in Ontario. Professional Engineers Ontario, which represents 85,649 members, is the first professional regulatory body to remove the requirement.

Introduced in March as part of *Working for Workers Act, 2021*, the new law alleviates some of barriers that prevent internationally trained engineers from working in their professions in this province. Ontario was the first province in Canada to ban use of discriminatory Canadian Experience Requirements in occupations under the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, 2006* (FARFACTA).

Other regulatory bodies have until December 2, 2023 to remove Canadian work experience as a licensing requirement.

Before the change, lack of Canadian work experience was a critical barrier for international engineers seeking work in Ontario.

“It’s an all-too-common experience: meeting a skilled newcomer trained as an engineer, doctor or accountant, working in a low-wage job that has nothing to do with their profession,” said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. “Our government has a plan to build a stronger Ontario that works for everyone, and we’re going to do it by unleashing the talent we have right here at home. I congratulate Professional Engineers Ontario for taking this historic step to support our mission.”

The amended law covers 36 non-health-related professions and trades, including architecture, plumbing and electricians.

Internationally trained engineers will still have to demonstrate their

knowledge and competencies in technical communication, project management and professional accountability. They will still need 48 months of professional experience in engineering and to pass a national professional practice exam on ethics, professional practice, engineering, law and professional liability.

DOCUSERIES

ALAIR IS LIVING BETTER WITH CHERYL HICKEY



Alair has debuted a digital docuseries with *ET Canada* host Cheryl Hickey.

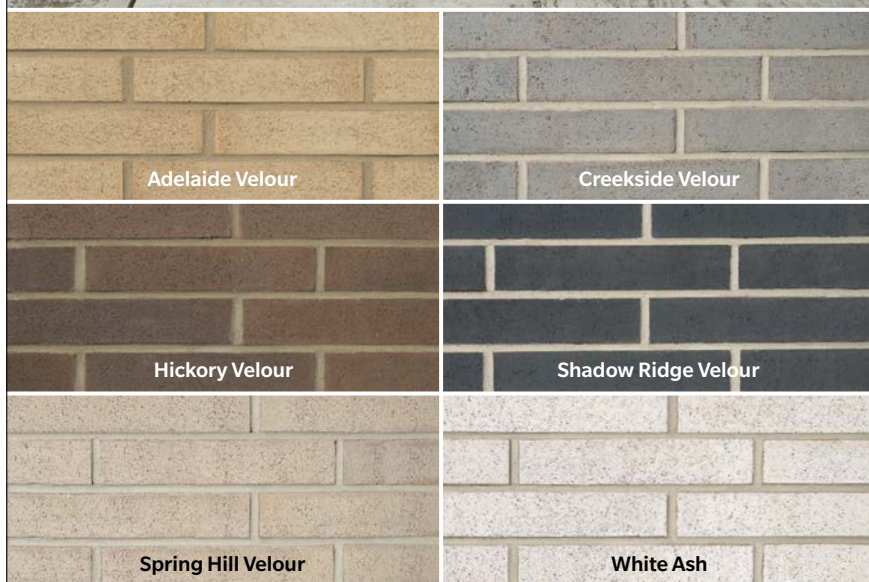
Viewers with a passion for architecture, design, decor and renovations should enjoy this collaboration, aptly named *Living Better with Cheryl Hickey: A Modern Family Home Makeover*. In the docuseries, Hickey shares the candid and heartwarming journey of her total family home transformation with Alair, all while working with industry-leading partners.

Though the series shares a fun, exciting and emotional look at renovations in the GTA, it has also committed to donate \$100,000 to SickKids Foundation over the next five years, becoming an official accelerator to help fund the construction of a new hospital.

The docuseries includes a total of five feature phases, each with a summary episode and extended content on project milestones. The first phase dropped on May 23 on YouTube and Facebook, with subsequent episodes published online roughly every two weeks through the summer.

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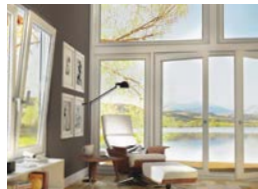


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HEALTH

NAXOLONE KITS NOW REQUIRED ON-SITE

The Residential Construction Council of Ontario is reminding builders that as of June 1, employers are required to have life-saving naloxone kits on construction sites. Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS)*, all Ontario employers who know, or ought to know, that there is a risk of an opioid overdose in their workplace are required to ensure, at all times while there are workers in the workplace, that a naloxone kit is made available in good condition.

The kits are important because they have medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and allow time for medical help to arrive. Ensuring there are kits on hand will also help to reduce the stigma around opioid abuse and raise awareness about the risks of accidental overdoses. About 2,500 people in Ontario died from opioid-related causes between March 2020 and January 2021. Of the victims who were employed, 30% worked in the construction industry.

Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development Minister Monte McNaughton has indicated that the province is bringing naloxone kits to high-risk settings and making them free because it must do everything possible to save lives. The ministry's first approach is education, but under the *OHS* more significant fines can now be imposed on poor performers and repeat offenders.

APPOINTMENTS

UPONOR NAMES PICCHETTI AS V.P.

Uponor North America has appointed Anna Picchetti as its new V.P. of Marketing & Strategy. In her role, Picchetti will oversee Channel Marketing, Portfolio, Analytics, Sustainability, Segment, Engagement, Brand and Communications.



Picchetti joins Uponsor with 20 years of experience in marketing and operations across industrial, technology and medical device industries, and boasts a strong track record of execution at industry-leading brands such as Tennant, SPS Commerce and Honeywell. She has worked at the forefront of innovations such as autonomous vehicles and renewable energy.

APPOINTMENTS

TAS APPOINTS NEW OFFICER



TAS, an industry leader in “impact real estate,” has appointed Hugh Clark as Chief Development Officer. Clark previously served as the Executive V.P. of Development at Allied Properties REIT, a leading operator of distinctive urban workspace in Canada. A graduate of the University of Toronto and Harvard, Clark oversaw the construction of several notable buildings across Toronto while at Allied. He previously spent several years at an award-winning architectural firm in Toronto and has worked as a licensed architect in both Ontario and Massachusetts.

TAS has an active pipeline and portfolio totalling over 7 million square feet across 22 properties throughout the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

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E-COMMERCE

A DIGITAL MARKETPLACE FOR TIMBER PROS

Established to transform the timber industry in a sustainable manner, Timbera enters the market with the aim of connecting buyers and sellers on a global scale. The new brand provides a single location—a secure, transparent and transforming digital marketplace—for all professionals in the architecture and construction sector.

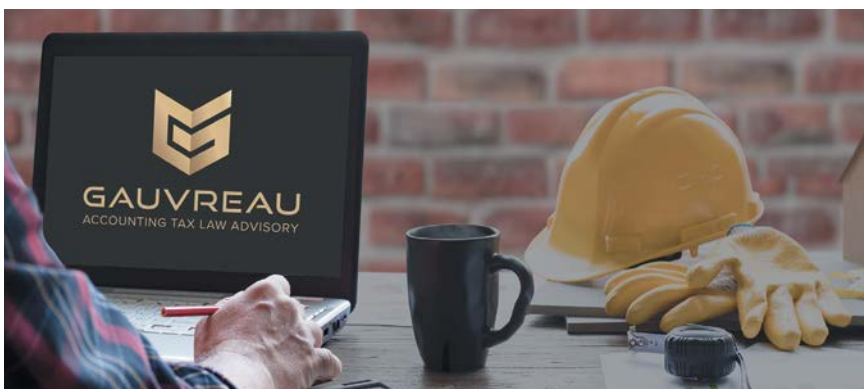
From sourcing and purchasing to compliance and financing, the all-in-one global platform offers a comprehensive set of services based on cooperation and an intuitive and humanized user experience, including advanced search tools and a chat room where each buyer and seller are able to interact directly.

Among several functionalities, Timbera also has a centralized document-sharing feature, enabling everyone involved to monitor each purchase and sale process in detail, as well as a team of live-chat specialists to support professionals on a personal basis.

The company’s origin “arose from the clear identification of the complex obstacles currently faced by the timber industry within the international framework, whether in terms of transactions, transparency of information or delivery times,” says Timera Board Director Tomás Costa Leite. “In this way, the brand naturally positions itself as a solution to all these setbacks, so that professionals can, on a single platform, find an accessible, responsible and efficient way to market timber. It’s our belief that this is the industry’s future.”

Timbera grants buyers access to a wide network of verified products and suppliers to deliver high-quality services based on secure and environmentally responsible transactions. For sellers, it offers, among other benefits, an extended reach, assuring market visibility on a global scale.

Timbera is the latest venture of the Vicaima Group, which boasts more than 60 years of history and operates in more than 50 countries. **OHB**



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CABER
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CARLETON PROGRAM
SPURS INNOVATION
P. 58



Diverso Energy is providing the geothermal expertise at Edenshaw Developments' 32-storey Alba Condos in Mississauga.

EMPOWERING GREENER BUILDING

Enbridge, Diverso among those offering cleaner, more practical energy solutions

BY TED McINTYRE

WITH A LOT more devices, cars and homes needing to be powered, and with the planned closure in 2026 of the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station, which supplies 14% of the province's energy needs, competition for Ontario's electric power grid is heating up.

It's one reason why Canada's Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) has just given the green light to a joint effort between Atura Power and Massachusetts-based Ameresco. The 250-megawatt battery energy storage system (BESS), situated next to Aturo's Generating Station in Bath, between Kingston and Napanee, will mark the largest energy storage procurement ever in Canada, with the ability to power 250,000 homes for four hours daily.

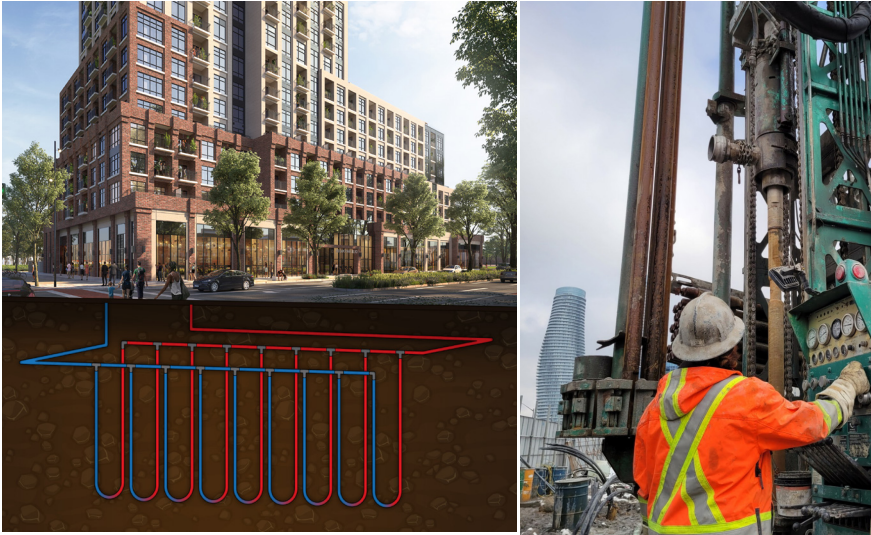
IESO's Director of Resource Planning David Devereaux considers moving into storage as being a game changer, "because until now Ontario has produced electricity almost entirely at the moment it's needed," CBC News reported last month.

It's another example of how augmenting the electrical grid, and in some cases avoiding it altogether, will become an increasingly attractive option for developers—not merely for the practical purpose of energy access, but for both environmental and budgetary reasons as well. In that respect, geothermal systems, which can save up to 60% on heating costs and up to 50% on cooling costs compared to conventional heating and cooling systems, are gaining ground.

Operating with minimal noise, with equipment located underground, geothermal is a clean, renewable energy that harnesses the consistent temperature of the earth just a few metres below ground by using a loop of underground pipes to exchange heat between the ground and homes/buildings—helping to keep homes warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

Enbridge Sustain, with its new energy-as-a-service line of business, is employing the technology in helping to guide builders through the energy solution process.

"Developers, builders and building owners often face challenges in implementing low-to-no carbon solutions, including high capital costs, obtaining design expertise and operating/maintenance concerns," says Derek Hickson, Sustainable Energy Consultant with Enbridge Sustain. "As an unregulated 'energy-as-a-service' line of business that's distinct from Enbridge Gas's regulated utility services, we help address these challenges and the transition. We work with trusted partners to manage



Clockwise from top left: A mockup of Ballantry Homes' Villages of Oak Park in Oakville showcases a Diverso geothermal system; a Diverso drill rig works on a borehole; a standard below-grade geothermal mechanical room; and Caivan Communities' Saw Whet Condos in Oakville will also embrace a Diverso geothermal project.



end-to-end delivery, including design, installation, maintenance and energy reporting, with no upfront cost to builders and developers. Homeowners just pay an affordable monthly fee over a contracted period that varies based on the technology.”

With Enbridge Sustain, client energy options have been diversified beyond natural gas. Hybrid heating systems with smart controls provide buyers with the option to heat with natural gas or electric heat more affordably, with electric air-source heat pumps heating when electricity prices are low, and a condensing natural gas furnace stepping in when temperatures drop or when electricity prices peak. Solar power, meanwhile, allows customers to feed energy back to the grid when more is produced than is used. But

geothermal is drawing new interest.

“The foundation of Enbridge’s business is customer management,” Hickson notes. “So while the expertise around a specific technology can change, the actual business model in terms of funding, bringing customers on board and going through the operations cycle is very similar. Geothermal is the *most* similar. Instead of owning a pipe asset that delivers gas, we own the geothermal borefield. So in both situations we have a capital outlay, do the design work and provide the energy. And in both cases we recover that cost over a long period of time to make the payments manageable for customers.”

Hickson is particularly familiar with builder needs, having spent more than a decade on the sustainability team with the green-forward Minto Group,

NRCAN SUPPORTS CHBA GREEN-BUILDING EFFORTS

The push toward net-zero and carbon-cutting construction was spurred by National Resources Canada last month with \$1.3 million in funding over five years to the Canadian Home Builders’ Association to continue its energy-saving and green-building forums and workshops through 2025.

CHBA has held “successful” video forums and workshops since 2021, based on NRCan’s successful LEEP (Local Energy Efficiency Partnerships) program, with a total of 961 participants.

The funding will help accelerate the uptake of innovative technologies for both new housing and the retrofit of existing homes.

working on both the Energy Star for New Homes and Net Zero Energy programs. He says Enbridge Sustain’s turnkey solution has been attractive. “It’s a one-stop-shop for designing, procuring the equipment, installing it and paying for it. You’re getting these deep carbon savings, with neither the customer nor developer having to pay more.”

Beyond being environmentally friendly, the geothermal option can also be profitable, Hickson says. “We put the boreholes on a 40-year contract, although they will last longer than that. In the high-rise context, you end up replacing your boilers and chillers, so there’s a cost avoidance for those pieces of equipment. Then there’s also the cost avoidance in the maintenance and eventual replacement of those systems. The fee you



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pay to Enbridge is lower than all those other expenses.

“This is a new practice, so you expect some change management to be required,” Hickson concedes. “There’s integration with product schedules and designers—builders want schedules to stay on track and for costs to be managed. But we’ve positioned ourselves with some of the best in the industry to make that transition seamless.”

Enbridge Sustain’s first project was Sean Mason Homes’ Rainwater at 339 Veterans in Barrie, which is currently under construction. Other developer projects are under contract. “We’re fairly new to the game, but we’ve already partnered with some of the biggest names in the business, including a master service agreement with Aecon and their subsidiaries, as well as some design firms,” Hickson notes. “Our offerings resonate with more green-focused developers and their buyers.”

“Something I really liked about Enbridge Sustain was that they took on the upfront capital costs and therefore we could afford to put in the underground boreholes and other infrastructure and then lease to the customers over time,” says Sean Mason, owner of Sean Mason Homes. “That allows our clients to have those better, healthier homes, while allowing me to do a better job without increasing the cost.”

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER

Another company leading the energy transition from fossil fuels to electric buildings is Diverso Energy. In business since 2014, with bases in Waterloo and Toronto, Diverso has 30 projects contracted over the next three years, with a client list that includes Choice Properties, Daniels and Collecdev.

“We recognize that building owners and developers are facing heightened pressures to meet energy and sustainability targets,” says Diverso co-founder Tim Weber. “Meeting these new standards will



Carleton University President Benoît-Antoine Bacon and mechanical engineering researcher Cynthia Cruickshank enjoy a demonstration of the pressurized spray rack at the CABER facility.

CARLETON'S CABER TO EXPLORE BUILDING ENVELOPES IMPROVING EXISTING HOMES

While smart solutions will continue to make new homes more efficient, tackling the inefficiency of the vast majority of Canada’s remaining homes was the focus of last month’s grand opening of CABER at Carleton University. The 5,700 sq. ft. Centre for Advanced Building Envelope Research (CABER) facility will work with industry, government and academia to investigate innovative materials and design strategies for completing retrofits that prioritize energy conservation and affordability.

Led by mechanical engineering researcher Cynthia Cruickshank, Carleton CABER researchers will investigate how heat, air and moisture move through materials and highly insulated wall systems, and how these elements contribute to occupant health, comfort and building science risks. They will use their findings to develop new approaches to constructing building envelopes that are thinner and cheaper, as well as new methods for renovating existing buildings with less cost and less disruption.

“The majority (70-90%) of Canadian housing that will exist in 2050 already exists today, with over 70% of the current building stock constructed prior to the development of a building energy code,” says Cruickshank. “Solutions for existing buildings will play the biggest role in meeting Canada’s climate change goals. At CABER, we’re hoping to have a heavy hand in discovering these solutions.”

The CABER facility is equipped with three state-of-the-art pieces of equipment: a two-storey guarded hot box to examine the thermal and moisture performance of retrofit wall assemblies, a two-storey pressurized spray rack to assess moisture resilience and in-situ wall openings to examine the interaction between outdoors and the built environment.

This innovative facility, located on the CanmetEnergy campus in Ottawa’s Bells Corners, is being funded from Natural Resources Canada and the Ontario Research Fund.

have a material impact on construction budgets. What if you could meet these new requirements while lowering your construction budget? During our 25 years in the geothermal industry, we’ve designed and implemented over 200 large-scale projects. Through this experience we recognize the need for a very different approach to geothermal. Quite simply, we design, build, own and operate the geothermal system just like a conventional utility. With this model, we remove all the risk and cost associated with integrating geothermal into a project. It is very different than how geothermal used to

be implemented. Although everyone recognizes it as a low-carbon, green solution, and arguably the most effective solution for eliminating the use of fossil fuels and reducing overall energy consumption, they may also see it as costly, complicated and therefore risky. Because we own and operate the system and provide a performance guarantee, we take on 100% of the operating responsibility and risk, rather than the building owner. And because boilers and cooling towers are eliminated, there’s the potential for increased space or cost savings.”

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Enbridge Sustain's first geothermal project was Sean Mason Homes' Rainwater at 339 Veterans in Barrie.

“Geothermal was once outside of the status quo. It was seen as this complex and risky technology. But once builders work with us, it takes a lot of that stress and burden off their shoulders. They recognize this is actually becoming mainstream.”

and its operation means “that the engineer of record can leverage the benefits and our knowledge to complement their existing design,” Weber says. But architects might be even happier, given “the flexibility offered as a result of eliminating rooftop equipment and reducing or eliminating the mechanical penthouse. This space can now be re-allocated for rooftop amenities or in some cases additional gross foot area (GFA).”

“We have other design-build models that are geared towards rentals, but our Zero-Cost Utility Model is our most popular,” advises Tyler Boone, Sales and Marketing Coordinator at Diverso. “Rather than the owner absorbing the cost of geothermal, Diverso owns the system and provides a monthly off-balance-sheet invoice, which is recovered through sub-metering in each suite. It’s a proven model for condos, and now purpose-built rental owners are seeing the advantages of utilizing the same solution. On the other hand, our design-build

option is favourable for projects where it makes more sense for the owner of the building to capitalize on the geothermal system.”

While comfortably achieving green standards in the GTA—or getting ahead of the curve outside the region—is a primary motivation for many clients, saving money on a builder’s upfront capital costs is also a big deal, Boone says. “Although these savings fluctuate based on project size and density, the green-positive marketing upsides are crystal clear.”

Some of those environmentally friendly numbers include the elimination of 5,020 tons of carbon annually compared to relying on traditional HVAC systems for heating and cooling—the equivalent of taking approximately 1,500 cars off the road, Boone says.

Technical know-how also sways clients, Boone suggests. “The people in our company have 40-plus years of combined experience. We pride ourselves on being the only fully

vertically integrated geothermal company in Canada, which includes engineering, drilling, construction management and now project capital, thanks to DIF Capital Partners’ controlling acquisition.”

A testament to Diverso’s expertise is Edenshaw Developments’ Alba Condos in Mississauga. Situated beneath eight levels of parking, it’s the deepest under-parking drilling exercise that has even been undertaken. Another example is Camrost Felcorp’s Exchange District in Mississauga, which, at 66 storeys, will be the tallest geothermal building in North America.

Not that geothermal is for everyone—or everywhere—reminds Kevin Brousseau, a Kitchener-based Senior Associate of Community Development at development consultant Stantec. “Different municipalities mean different things (geologically),” Brousseau explains. “Here in the Waterloo region, for example, we are highly dependent on our groundwater system, so therefore there’s no appetite for entertaining vertical geothermal systems. In other areas of the province, you can drill a well straight down and you’re good to go, whereas because of the groundwater challenges here, the geothermal loop would have to be horizontal, just below the frost line, which would totally contradict the (idea of a low footprint) and the cost-benefit due to the price of land these days. So geothermal may be a solution for certain municipalities, but not all.”

Regardless, developers are not as anxious about the technology as used to be the case, Boone says—particularly in a packaged deal such as this. “Geothermal was once outside of the status quo. It was seen as this complex and risky technology. But once developers work with us and see that we’re owning and operating it and ensuring its performance over 30 years, it takes a lot of that stress and burden off their shoulders. They recognize that this is actually becoming mainstream, and a simple solution to what seems like a complex problem.” **OHB**



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PLANTING SEEDS

How to keep climate change in mind for landscaping projects

IN RESPONSE TO growing public awareness about climate change and extended periods of drought, some builders are examining a process of gardening and landscaping traditionally reserved for arid regions. It's called xeriscaping, and its aim is to reduce or eliminate the need for irrigation.

A properly designed outdoor xeriscape not only reduces water usage by 20-50% but also cuts chemical usage, requires little maintenance and creates a unique aesthetic. It further allows for a wide range of trees, shrubs and flowering perennials, while removing the need for the constant mowing of a traditional lawn.

The organization of a xeriscape takes into consideration the creation of water-use zones, or hydrozoning, to add efficiency to watering and reduce waste. Plants should be clustered together into zones that require frequent watering, occasional watering, or no watering at all to avoid over- or under-watering certain species. These zones should then be correlated with the sun. Zones that require lots of watering should be kept out of high sun exposure to reduce evaporation from the soil.

Conversely, plants with lower water requirements should be placed in areas with more sunlight.

High-water-use zones should be limited in size and, if possible, be placed in highly visible areas such as entranceways due to the fact that these plants tend to be more aesthetically pleasing and lush.

The other consideration for a garden is the topography and subsequent drainage patterns. Slopes that cause excessive runoff should be terraced to allow rainfall to seep into the ground for plant use, while low spots that drain poorly should either be avoided or designed to aid in their drainage. High-water-use plants can be planted in low spots, provided it is not *too wet* for the vegetation. By regarding the water drainage patterns within the yard, it's possible to customize the area with backfill and redirect the water to locations where it's most needed.

The low-water-demand garden is a highlight of Ross Street House in Madison, Wisconsin, the state's first home to with a LEED Platinum rating. In collaboration with her mechanical engineer husband, architect Carol Richard of Richard Wittschiebe Hand

provided detailed specifications for the planting of xeriscape gardens in both the front and rear yards of her three-storey, 2,700 sq. ft. home. The landscape was transformed into an edible yet extremely water-efficient garden. Plants such as wild strawberries, western sunflowers and herbs are just a few examples. Native perennials requiring little maintenance were included.

To complement the exterior of neighbouring houses and their proportions, the exterior walls are clad with 6" tongue-and-groove cedar siding.

The three storeys are connected by a central staircase that lets natural light flow through. The private living room and bedrooms sit on the third floor, while the below-grade basement accommodates guests, mechanical hardware, storage and even a Belgian-style beer brewing room! The living, kitchen and dining spaces are on the main level, with plenty of windows looking out over the outdoor vegetation.

Could this mark the beginning of our parting ways with sod? **OHB**

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