



## **Report to the Canadian Renovators' Council**

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### **Alberta Renovation Environment**

Renovation activity in Alberta this spring has been slow which is attributed to a long winter and may lead to some pent-up demand. Forecasts for the latter part of the year range from good in the south to very good in the north. Edmonton north is anticipating effects from recent announcements of renewed oil sands activity. Renovators who have been investing in marketing and working to earn consumer confidence report very good prospects for the year while others are seeing less of an increase.

### **Government Incentives and Policies**

**Permanent GST Rebate for Renovation and the Eco Energy Rebates** - Renovators across the province still strongly support these initiatives. They report a very high level of interest, especially by seniors, after the announcement of the renewal of the ecoENERGY rebates in the defeated federal budget.

**Part 9 Code Changes for Energy Efficiency** – Renovators in Alberta have begun to discuss the implications to the industry of the proposed changes to Part 9 for energy efficiency. Of particular interest to them is the evolving discussion around EnerGuide ratings and air leakage targets as this would be difficult to meet in many renovations.

### **Consumer Activities**

Renovators continue to see the best returns from good websites and home shows. Some renovators who have won industry awards have seen an increase in their business. They note that often media around the awards results in an increase in good quality leads. Larger renovators in Alberta spend approximately 2% of their gross revenues on print and radio advertising.

Some renovators have been holding information sessions or “How to Hire a Contractor” sessions for the public and have seen these generate very high quality leads. One renovator in Edmonton did a charity renovation where he bought a home, partnered with his vendors to renovate it and uses it as an accommodation for family while their loved ones require cancer treatment. Partnership with the trades generates leads, extends marketing dollars and provides free media.

Renovators in Lethbridge have been working hard to raise the bar on what constitutes a good renovator in all of the media and advertising that they do and although this takes some time, they are now seeing people coming to them because of this approach.

## **Renomark in Alberta**

The use and success of Renomark varies across the province. CHBA - Calgary Region requires that renovator members be members of Renomark. CHBA – Calgary Region has produced many resources for their renovation members from Renomark Brochures to signage and advertising for home shows. CHBA-Calgary runs a Renomark tour twice yearly that generates 200-600 people in a 7 hour period.

In CHBA - Edmonton Region; although most members of the Association are Renomark it is not required for membership. The CHBA Regions of Lethbridge and Red Deer have very young renovation groups and are just beginning to utilize Renomark. They are looking for ideas and materials that other areas are willing to share.

## **Professional Development**

The Professional Home Builders Institute in Alberta offers business courses for renovators, but technical training is done in house or through industry seminars. Two renovators in Alberta report in-house training as part of their weekly staff and trade meetings. One of the Lethbridge renovators has a small-scale building in their shop that they use as a training tool.

## **Technical Challenges**

**Attic Condensation** - One renovator in the Calgary Region experienced attic moisture issues that resulted in interior leaks after a whole-house renovation. This highlights the potential pitfalls as renovators change the house “system”.

**Spray Foam Insulation** – Renovators report a vast increase in the amount of spray foam versus batt insulation that they are now using. This material tends to help them air-seal areas.