



**Report to the Canadian Renovators' Council  
Ottawa, Ontario - October 24, 2009  
Submitted by Blair Foisy – September 15, 2009**

**Infrastructure**

***Is there a Renovators' Council or other distinct forum for addressing the needs and interests of renovators provincially? Locally? If so, what are their priorities?***

- Although there is no provincial Renovator's Council established, each of the 6 local home builder associations in the province have a Renovator's Committee, or, at the very least have renovator representation on their local Technical Committee or Board of Directors. Generally speaking, the main priority is promotion of the RenoMark program with members, non-members, and the public.

***How is staff support provided to renovator issues?***

- Local staff support is provided to renovator issues via follow up on items brought forward at the local committee meetings.

***What plans are there, if any, to change/enhance the support framework for renovators?***

- None.

**Membership Services**

***What events/initiatives have taken place or are planned to support the professional development and interest of renovators? (eg. Educational Seminars)***

- In partnership with the Professional Home Builders Institute of Alberta (PHBIA), an annual series of Builder Breakfast presentations held on a monthly basis around the province and address topics that are pertinent to renovator members and builders. In addition, specific informational and educational sessions are occasionally held by local home builder associations, such as a recent day-long "Health and Safety in the Workplace" forum featuring more than 20 presenters held in Calgary.
- CHBA-Alberta and PHBIA have developed a half-day Building Envelope Forum with topics regarding proper window/door installation and wall assembly details. The forum is to be held on September 23<sup>rd</sup> in Edmonton and September 24<sup>th</sup> in Calgary, and will have leading experts from the Alberta Government, CMHC, NRC and local engineering firms as speakers/presenters on these building envelope subjects.

**Consumer Activities**

***What events have taken place or are planned to market renovator members to the public (e.g. home shows, parades of homes, charity events, RenoMark)***

- Each local home builder association has strong renovator member participation at their various home/reno shows held throughout the year. Notably, CHBA-Calgary Region's annual RenoMark Reno Tour continues to be a draw for public interest in the program and its renovators. To launch Renovations Month, the fall tour will be held in Calgary on October 13<sup>th</sup> and will host a record 12 demonstration projects open to the public reflecting the professional works of CHBA-Calgary's RenoMark members. A number of advertisements promoting the fall tour and the RenoMark program have been secured with local Calgary media.



## **Policy Initiatives**

### ***What initiatives have occurred or are planned to advance the interests of renovators in the governmental / political arena? (Underground, HST, certification)***

- After hearing several complaints from consumers regarding building envelope failures, the Alberta Government undertook the study of homes with moisture damage in 2007 and proceeded to consult with industry stakeholders in 2008 to determine a course of action that would simplify the resolution of consumer complaints regarding moisture control. A government action plan was expected to be released this past summer, but has been delayed for the time being. CHBA-Alberta has been actively involved with the Alberta Government on this initiative and will continue to engage them and report to members on the status.

### ***Have there been any code and/or bylaw changes that will affect renovators?***

- Recent information regarding radon gas requirements in the upcoming National Building Code has sparked concerns from Alberta renovators, as radon gas hasn't been proven to be a widespread concern in our province. Independent testing by some members do not report the existence of radon gas above the 200 becquerel level in newly built homes, however there have been a few reports of moderate levels of radon gas in older homes. The proposed NBC requirement for air-barrier under slab, granular fill and a t-pipe connection is particularly concerning in a renovation project due to the extensive and expensive amount of deconstruction required. CHBA-Alberta members have been asked to participate in the National Research Council's online survey of the proposed radon gas requirements in the 2010 NBC prior to the October 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.
- The Alberta Government is expected to propose changes to the Alberta Building Code (ABC) to require homes be built to an EnerGuide 80 rating in 2011/2012. CHBA-Alberta has concerns that this is a serious deviation from the historic use of the ABC, which is intended to regulate the minimum standard for building safety. CHBA-Alberta is in the process of establishing meetings with the provincial government in an attempt to have collaborative involvement with the development of these "green" codes.
- CHBA-Alberta, Alberta Construction Association (ACA) and Alberta Environment conducted industry focus group sessions around the province in March, April and June to solicit feedback on the provincial governments Construction and Demolition Waste Reduction initiative. Generally speaking, there has been good support for the program from CHBA members, with some necessary tweaks to be made before the regulation goes to Cabinet for approval in Fall 2009. Regulation requirements will most likely come into effect in Fall 2010. CHBA-Alberta and ACA are developing the framework for a Delegated Administrative Organization (DAO) to work at arm's-length from government to administer the program upon the effective date.

## **Membership Recruitment**

- Membership in the RenoMark™ program continues to grow with Alberta with current statistics being: Edmonton – 21 companies, Central Alberta – 17 companies and Calgary – 49 companies.

### **Other business (i.e. anything not covered above that is relevant to the CRC, such as local labour and economic conditions that are affecting renovators)**

- Market Overview - The renovation industry in Alberta is experiencing continued growth and 2009 has shaped up to be another record year. Due to economic uncertainty across the province, there is noticeably more activity in the renovation sector as more consumers are drawing equity out of their existing homes and re-investing it into renovations as opposed to purchasing new. There has been a noticeable increase in sales of pre-owned homes which has also spurred additional renovation activity.
- BuiltGreen for Renovations - BuiltGreen is a successful industry-driven voluntary program that is the recognized standard for "green" residential construction practices in Alberta and British Columbia. It benefits the home builder, the home buyer, the community and the environment, and is an opportunity for everyone to choose a "green" future by using the EnerGuide Rating Scale to accomplish energy efficiency and environmental targets. There have been over 11,500 homes enrolled in the program since BuiltGreen was launched in late 2003. The BuiltGreen program has recently finalized a renovations component that allows renovator members to follow a green checklist during the planning, design and renovation stages of a project. An official launch of the BuiltGreen for Renovations program is being planned for early 2010.