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TRC concerned over sprinkler issue

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NS-HBA Polls Seniors on Renovation

The Renovation Council of Nova Scotia HBA, in co-operation with CMHC, the Nova Scotia Department of Housing and Consumer Affairs, and the Seniors Citizens' Secretariat, has launched a detailed consumer survey of seniors and renovation as part of an overall program.

A questionnaire sent out to seniors across the province is meant to help prevent seniors from falling prey to unscrupulous businesses operating in the home renovation field. The program will also provide seniors with better information on making renovation and repair decisions.

The 15-question survey includes questions on how a contractor is hired, what problems seniors have encountered with renovation work and how seniors feel professional renovators could improve service.

Participating seniors are also provided with information on hiring contractors, a copy of a standard contract with a written guarantee and appeal process and a list of contractors participating in the program.

EnviroHomes Being Built in Saint John and Edmonton

Ground has been broken for two EnviroHome projects, sponsored by CHBA and Canada Trust. EnviroHome is a CHBA-sponsored event showcasing today's healthy, environmentally-improved new homes.

"The Ponds of Castledown," a single-family subdivision by Challenger Homes in Edmonton, broke ground May 6 with Edmonton Mayor Jan Reimer in attendance. Project manager is Lewis Nakatsui. The official grand opening of the EnviroHome, which will include preservation of existing wetlands, is scheduled for early September.

"Village Estates," a condominium townhouse project by Wayne Moore Contracting in Saint John, New Brunswick, is also under construction and planned for completion in late summer.

Each development features a show home open for public viewing for a number of months. The homes are built to R-2000 standards and include many environmental features to minimize air pollutants, conserve resources and reduce water and energy use.

Canada Trust, one of the largest mortgage lenders in the country, sponsors the EnviroHomes as part of its national, ongoing environmental activities.

Renovation Month Gears Up

Planning is well underway to make Renovation Month in October a great and profitable promotion. Packages have been sent to all CHBA Locals, and renovator members of the CHBA are urged to participate in this campaign, which is sponsored by American Standard, Bank of Montreal and Westroc Industries Limited. Full details are available from your CHBA Local Association Executive Officer.

Renovators' Council Advances Training Programs

Frances Belle, chairman of the Canadian Renovators' Council of the CHBA, notes that, with CMHC's help, the development of a comprehensive series of training courses for professional renovators is nearly complete. The participant's manual and a trainer's manual will be validated shortly and the marketing and implementation plans are being consolidated and sent to CMHC. "We anticipate that the renovator training and education courses will be available this fall," Belle said.

TRC Concerned over Sprinkler Issue

The Technical Research Committee has expressed concern about changes requiring residential sprinklers in Part Three of the National Building Code.

Richard Lind, TRC chairman, reports that a joint study done by CMHC and the Institute for Research in Construction clearly shows that the sprinkler requirements are not cost-effective. "However, it would appear that this work was not properly considered by the Standing Committees responsible for Part Three," Lind says. The TRC has repeatedly voiced concerns about the code development process, which permitted a wide-ranging series of new sprinkler requirements to be developed and sent out for public comment without proper cost-benefit analysis, Lind adds. "We are not going to back off on this issue because we feel that this and other shortcomings of the code development process have undermined its credibility, which is unacceptable to the industry."

The sprinkler issue is among a number of building code concerns detailed in TRC's draft position paper, which is meant to provide guidance to the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes on the future of the National Building Code.

Martin Replies to CHBA Concerns on the Deficit

Finance Minister Paul Martin has assured the CHBA that the government is committed to bringing the federal deficit to three per cent of GDP in three years. Martin, replying to pre-budget submissions from the CHBA, said such a deficit level has not been achieved in 20 years.

"We are projecting to reduce the deficit from \$45.7 billion in 1993-94 to \$39.7 billion in 1994-95 and \$32.7 billion in 1995-96," Martin noted. The Finance Minister said that net savings from spending cuts will reach \$17 billion over the next three years.

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"The importance of Canadian standards in relation to housing quality is a genuine concern." Roy Ralph.
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