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## Canada's housing expertise: hard-earned

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## Canada's Housing Expertise: Hard-Earned

This August, the Institute for Research in Construction, part of the National Research Council in Ottawa, celebrates its 50th anniversary. *Home BUILDER* takes this opportunity to recognize the enormous contribution the IRC has made to Canada's housing industry—a contribution that has become global in its significance.

Established in 1947 as the Division of Building Research, the IRC has conducted world class research in building science, developed Canada's National Building Code and remains at the cutting edge of construction technology. It was the IRC which set the guidelines which led to cost-effective roof trusses; conducted the first serious studies into efficient heating systems and provided the initial data on home construction costs, among other important topics. Today, the IRC is far from senile in older age. This year, one of its leading researchers took *Popular Science Magazine's* top award for innovation in home technology and IRC research labs range from the Antarctic to cyberspace.

The IRC has worked closely with the home building industry, most notably with the CHBA, in assuring that Canadians are among the best housed people in the world. The close links between home builders and IRC research was underlined recently when Bruce Clemmensen, former CHBA president, was named chair of the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes, the volunteer body that prepares the National Building Code.

A half-century of housing related research has paid off, not only in better homes for Canadians—it has also helped earn international recognition for Canada's home builders.

This point was driven home this spring when delegates from a dozen countries met in Winnipeg for the first Canada Export Housing'97 Conference. Buyers from Korea, Japan and South America were on hand to see the best in pre-fabricated houses and delegates from the Ukraine and Russia came to learn about building in cold climates. Germans and other Europeans expressed interest in Canadian-made doors and windows. Yet it was a comment from New Zealand home builder and importer Richard Leary that really drove home the difference between Canadian housing and that in most of the world. "Canadian home builders," he said, "build a machine for living."

Again, it is the IRC that is helping to promote Canadian housing globally. Recently, through IRC's Canadian Construction Materials Centre and its Japanese counterpart, technical barriers to selling Canadian-made building products to Japan were reduced. As well, CCMC has joined with groups from 14 other countries to help reduce the red tape and barriers to building product exports.

The IRC is largely invisible to today's home builder or consumer. But it is safe to say that any Canadian who has built or even lives in a house has been touched by the internationally respected work of the IRC.

### INSIDE

Our busy mid-summer edition of *Home BUILDER* explores the products—and the controversy—related to leaky basements, takes a look at new kitchen cabinet trends, boots up information on estimating software and turns to an expert for advice on selling roofing packages in the renovation market. And lots more.

Welcome Aboard!

Frank O'Brien

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