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Majority of buyers will choose energy efficiency for next home

A new trend is emerging among those Canadians thinking of buying a new home. According to a survey by EnerQuality Corporation, a home energy training and consulting firm licensed to deliver Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan's) Office of Energy Efficiency (OEE's) new housing initiatives, nine out of 10 buyers will be looking for energy efficiency features in their next home. A full 90 per cent of respondents also said they were willing to spend more for homes that deliver better indoor air quality and are more energy efficient.

The findings could help explain the explosion in the number of homebuilders lining up to become licensed in delivering OEE's new housing programs EnerGuide Rating System (ERS), ENERGY STAR for New Homes and R-2000. The homebuilding industry is undergoing one of its most significant transformations in recent years as it responds to higher consumer demand for greener homes and more energy-efficient building practices.

In order to satisfy the demand, homebuilders are implementing a number of federal and regional programs across Canada designed to provide a consistent, cohesive approach to building energy-efficient homes. It's important to understand the available initiatives so take note.

The ERS determines the home's level of energy efficiency on a scaled from 0-100. Tools such as the ERS and R-2000 Standard are used in support of regional energy-efficiency initiatives such as ENERGY STAR for New Homes, Power Smart New Homes, Built Green, Yukon GreenHome and Novoclimat.

The R-2000 standard reflects the best in technology development by the federal government and the homebuilding industry. Homes built to the R-2000 standard achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of 80 on the EnerGuide scale. This translates to a home that uses approximately 30 per cent less energy than an average newly built home. In addition, there is a series of technical requirements for ventilation, air tightness, insulation, choice of materials, water use and other factors...

If you plan to build or buy a home in the coming months, you should brush up on the latest trends, terminology and technology, and look into R-2000 and other regional housing energy efficiency initiatives at newhomes.nrcan.gc.ca.