

Business

GOING GREEN



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OSHAWA -- Victor Fiume is the general manager of Kingsway Forest by Durham Custom Homes. The builder was named Green Builder of the Year by the Ontario Home Builders' Association.

Durham Custom Homes greens the region

Homebuilder recognized for corporate switch to environmentally-friendly building

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DURHAM -- Just because you're building green homes doesn't mean it's going to be an easy sell.

"We have to demonstrate features and benefits to the buyer," said Victor Fiume, general manager of Durham Custom Homes, which just won the Ontario Home Builders' Association's 2009 Green Builder of the Year award.

It's the company's goal to educate potential home buyers on what buying a green house means and how it will save them money right from the day they move in, he said.

Every home Mr. Fiume's company builds meets the standards of GreenHouse Certified Construction. These standards were introduced in 2008 by Enerquality Corporation and focus on natural resource management, water conservation, air quality and waste diversion. Compared to houses built to meet Ontario

Building Code, GreenHouse homes produce three tonnes less greenhouse gases each year, have about 30-per cent lower energy consumption, use 15 per cent fewer raw materials and produce significantly less construction waste, according to a release from Durham Custom Homes.

Standard in every house the company builds are tankless water heaters, that only produce hot water on demand, so homeowners are not paying to constantly heat water in a tank. It saves homeowners 30 to 40 per cent on their water bill, Mr. Fiume said.

There's a dedicated return air system which brings air from different areas of the house back to the furnace where it is mixed together, heated or cooled and redistributed throughout the home. The standard carpet in a Durham Custom Home is made of recycled material and is recyclable when it is discarded. The interior paint is 100-per cent recycled. A minimum of 25 per cent of the content in roof shingles is recycled.

"It's about balancing features people want in a home with the environmentally friendly aspects of building the house."

Which is why, Mr. Fiume said, the company incorporates features buyers are looking for: high ceilings, good layout and storage space, while still keeping the home green.

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All of these initiatives garnered the company the recent provincial accolades.

And the application process to become Ontario Home Builders' Association Green Builder of the year is not an easy one, Dave Henderson from the association said.

Builders have to tell the association why they believe they are green and show how they have been a leader in environmentally friendly home building,

"We are not just looking for someone who simply builds one energy-efficient home, we are looking for a builder that leads the pack in terms of corporate responsibility," Mr. Henderson said.