

GREEN LIVING

Durham Custom Homes has adopted the GreenHouse standard at its Kingsway Forest site.

Builder goes for GreenHouse

Affordable program promises lower energy bills, superior air

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Oshawa builder Durham Custom Homes will be the first builder in Canada to adopt the new GreenHouse standard at its Kingsway Forest site.

The program aims to bring a certified “green” program that is affordable and practical for mainstream builders. Its four components include energy efficiency, indoor air quality, resource management and water conservation.

GreenHouse-certified homes will offer homeowners energy bill savings of about 30 per cent over homes built to Ontario Building Code standards, produce three less tonnes of greenhouse gases annually, produce significantly less construction waste and use 15 per cent less raw materials.

“We’re already doing energy conservation and savings, so it made a lot of sense to do the rest of it,” says Victor Fiume, manager of Durham Custom Homes. Durham was one of the first builders in the GTA to build Energy Star homes and won a 2007 Excellence in Technical Innovation Award from the Durham Region Home Builders Association for its construction techniques.

“We’re already building well beyond Energy Star standard, so it won’t cost us any more. It’s going to be affordable for the average consumer. I’m really excited about this.”

The Kingsway Forest homes, which are detached on lots ranging from 30- to 45-feet, are priced from \$265,000 to \$375,000 and GreenHouse certification is included as standard.

Durham had been offering Energy Star as a standard and its homes already incorporate features like heat recovery ventilators

(HRVs), extra insulation, low E argon windows, energy-efficient light bulbs and high-efficiency gas furnaces.

Because Durham already includes HRV units (which was an option under Energy Star but is mandatory with GreenHouse) and uses high-quality furnace filters, its homes already offered excellent indoor air quality.

Fiume says under GreenHouse, his company will be striving to reduce lumber use by 10 per cent, using materials with high recycled content such as fibreglass insulation, overhead garage doors, shingles and underpad, and Boomerang paint (which is also low in Volatile Organic Compounds so it doesn’t emit toxic fumes). They will also be separating and recycling construction waste such as masonry, drywall, vinyl, metal, lumber and more. The homes will also have water-conserving dual flush toilets, aerators and low-flow shower heads.

“One of the great things that’s happened is manufacturers of things like shower heads and aerators have really got on board and made products that still deliver good performance,” says Fiume.

“The reality of the marketplace is none of this works if people have to change their lifestyle. We’re doing things to enhance people’s lifestyle, not asking them to accept a lifestyle that’s anything less.”

He says the GreenHouse program challenges builders to examine their practices and see if they can improve them.

“For instance, we’ve been framing houses the same way for 30 years, even though we know there are likely better ways.

“It takes a program like GreenHouse to make us look at new and improved ways of doing things,” says Fiume, a former president of the Ontario Home Builders’ Association.

For information on Kingsway Forest and the GreenHouse program, to to kingswayforest.ca.