

THE ENERGY STAR PROGRAM

In 2010 Geranium Homes made a commitment to build ENERGY STAR®-qualified homes in all future communities. Already building to standards above Ontario Building Code, we retained the expert services of A&J Energy Consultants, Al Schmidt and Jack Zhou (ajenergyconsultants.com) to assist us in our transition to ENERGY STAR. A&J's staff are Certified Energy Evaluators by Natural Resources Canada through the service organization EnerQuality Corporation. The A&J Team provide Geranium with cost analysis, expert computer modeling, on-site training for our construction team and continue to work with us on each of our communities.

To be labelled under the strict requirements of the ENERGY STAR program, homes are both performance-tested and third-party-verified. Al Schmidt describes the benefits of becoming an ENERGY STAR builder. "ENERGY STAR-qualified homes represent the top 20 per cent of low-rise construction in Ontario. It is one of the most recognized brands in the world, and has become synonymous with



energy efficiency and best in class. Any builder desiring to provide their customers with a superior product for a competitive price, should consider building to the ENERGY STAR standard," he says.

Owners of ENERGY STAR homes will benefit from lower heating and cooling costs (approximately 20 per cent less than comparable non-ENERGY STAR homes); a higher indoor air quality; and peace of mind that the home is third-party verified to ensure it meets the minimum ENERGY STAR® for New Homes standard. In Schmidt's experience, "licensed ENERGY STAR builder

A Geranium Site Super explains the company's construction methods



participants are committed not only to energy efficiency, but also to quality construction."

Al explains another advantage of ENERGY STAR-qualified homes is that they produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions, reducing contributing factors to global warming, and support the main principles of environmental sustainability. "We find that builders who have committed to ENERGY STAR also have a corporate philosophy that supports both environmental and social responsibility. Many builders go on to use water-conserving plumbing fixtures; start tracking and reducing waste; and replace excess lumber with energy-saving insulation in their homes."

ENERGY STAR was introduced to Ontario by Natural Resources Canada and EnerQuality Corporation as a pilot program in 2005. In 2012, it has been rolled out in its fifth version as a national program with both Ontario and Saskatchewan adopting the program for voluntary certification. Currently, Ontario has the most participants and has over 35,000 labelled homes in seven years.

Schmidt concludes that when the house is ENERGY STAR-qualified; the homeowner can expect a better built home. At Geranium, we believe this to be true, and we are proud to be the builder to register in Ontario the first homes under 2012 ENERGY STAR for our The Village at Sally Creek building program. ■

Boaz Feiner is President, Housing Division for Geranium Corporation.

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