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## Twelve energy-related predictions for 2012

Does Canada need more energy supply or more insulation? Clearly, this is a gross simplification, but it is estimated that almost a third of Canada's current energy consumption is used for heating and cooling buildings and homes. This number could be cut in half with proper conservation initiatives.

This is the context for some 2012 Canadian energy conservation predictions – within an insulation context.

1. Rising energy costs will make the payback period for installing insulation even quicker. Despite a slower new home construction market and a slowing of insulation for these applications - it will be a record year for insulation used for home and industrial retrofits to deal not only with new homes but to upgrade the vast amount of under insulated existing homes.

2. More Canadian communities will adopt "solar ready" new home construction regulations like Campbell River, B.C. This will make the future installation of solar hot water appliances, for instance, easier and less expensive.

3. More real estate agents will increasingly educate themselves on energy efficiency. Take the Calgary Real Estate Board who has an on-line directory on its Go Green website listing agents who have passed a series of courses to help inform consumers of choices

and rebates offered by governments.

4. A record year for homes to meet higher energy efficiency standards in Canada than ever before. This is in large part because the new Ontario Building Code, coming into effect January 1, 2012. But we also see across Canada more and more home builders are adopting ever higher standards of green building. One of the easiest ways to meet this standard is through the intelligent application of various cost effective insulation products.

5. As companies faced with flat sales results will be forced to focus more on cost controls, reviews of energy efficiency practices will become more frequent. Expect more utilities and provincial governments to expand incentive programs for the commercial and industrial sectors especially where they can be demonstrated to reduce peak period electricity load.

6. White or reflective roofs and green roofs (which have seen widespread use in warmer climates to reduce cooling costs) will be increasingly embraced across the country to combat summer cooling bills.

7. Adoptions of technologies (the evolution of the programmable thermostat) used to remotely control energy consumption when demand is highest, while at the same time allowing customers to individually manage their electricity costs in real-time. The speed of adoption will

be dependent on smart meter deployment and will be controlled by phone based applications.

8. Banks and financial institutions will see the reduced operating costs for more energy efficient homes and buildings. These incentives will help offset the upfront costs of retrofits and help provide more disposable income for the building or home owner. "Green" mortgages can be expected to proliferate.

9. A rise in small businesses doing customized installations of weatherization, insulation and caulking. An evolution of the local "handyman".

10. Discussions about "energy independence" or "energy security" at the community, provincial and national level will become more prevalent.

11. Building Codes – In 2012, for the first time, we expect the national building code to include energy efficiency measures for homes. This will make it much easier for provinces to adopt a building code that will help reduce operating costs for the home owner.

12. An increased profile for energy conservation in the public policy debate. It will shift from thrift to how conservation can offset demand and reduce the need for investment in new generation and peak consumption.

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