

The hottest trend in new home construction is solar power

(NC)—As more and more Canadians become aware of the environment and look for ways to reduce their ecological footprint, the benefits of incorporating renewable energy into new homes is irrefutable. If you are planning to build a new home in the coming months, some recent developments may help you with your research.

Solar power, for example, is the hottest trend in new home construction these days; in fact, Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN)'s Office of Energy Efficiency (OEE), responsible for licensing builders to construct energy-efficient homes, has completed an 18-month pilot project in Ontario to fund the construction of 100 new "SolarReady" homes.

The project was a huge success and now the OEE is encouraging all Canadians to incorporate Solar Ready features into their building plans.

Basically, a Solar Ready home is equipped for the future use of solar power for necessities such as hot water or electricity. When you choose the Solar Ready option, your builder or contractor will design cost-effective adjustments for your home so you can install solar equipment in the future.

Solar power is a cost-effective upgrade you can choose for your new home – an upgrade

that could help you make big savings in energy costs and put you in line for environmentalist of the year on your block.

A Solar Ready home must meet five basic requirements for the installation of solar energy systems:

- A roof location of suitable size, pitch and orientation;
- Labeled conduits from the mechanical room to the attic;
- Extra plumbing valves and fittings on the water heater;
- An electrical outlet at the planned solar tank location;
- Construction plans that indicate the future component locations.

It's a good idea to read up on the federal government's Solar Ready technical guidelines, programs and research on solar power and other renewable energy sources. You can find all the latest information at the OEE website at www.newhomes.nrcan.gc.ca.

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Study shows majority of homebuyers will choose energy efficiency for next home

(NC)—A new trend is emerging among those Canadians thinking of buying or building 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 under-

stand the available initiatives so take note.

The ERS determines the home's level of energy efficiency on a scale 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.

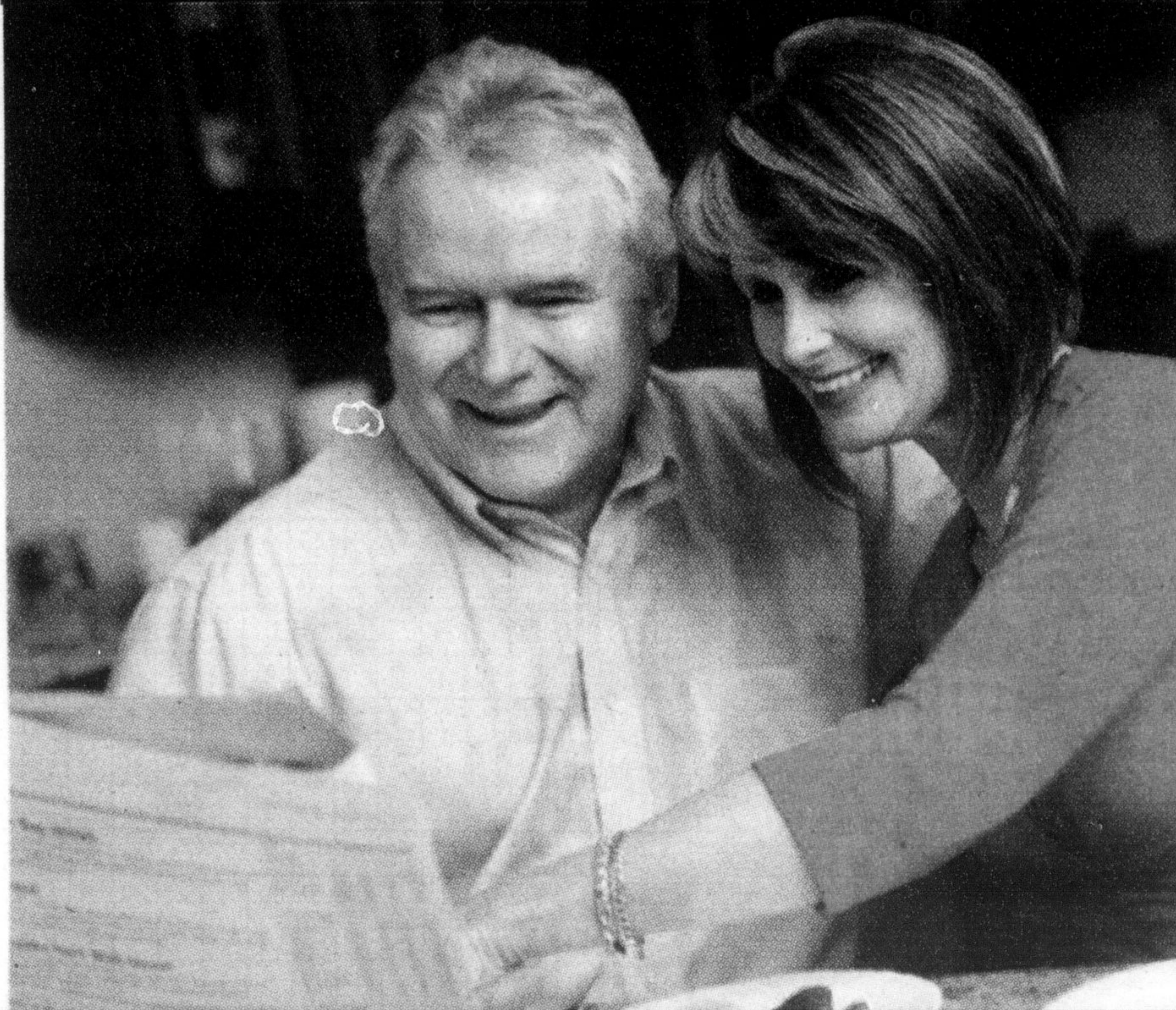
The R-2000 standard reflects the best in technology development by the federal government and the homebuilding industry. Homes built to the R-2000 standard achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of 80 on the EnerGuide scale. This translates to a home that uses approximately 30 percent less energy than an average newly built home. In addition, there is a series of technical requirements for ventilation, airtightness, 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 www.newhomes.nrcan.gc.ca.

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