

# Environment Watch The first 'net-zero' school sets a fine example

(MS) -- Energy efficient construction is celebrating one more milestone. It is now possible to build a facility -- even a home -- that is so energy efficient it produces zero demand on the public electricity supply.

Proving this in the past few months is the opening of the Richardsville Elementary School in Lexington, Kentucky, the first 'net-zero' school in North America. This achievement has utilized features like an innovative wall system -- and the entire building is expected to push the efficiency benchmarks beyond all expectations.

"In addition to rock-solid walls, the rooftop solar panels cover 40,000 square feet providing for all of the school's electricity needs," says Todd Blyth at Nudura, a leading name in construction efficiencies.

Blyth also explained that any construction project today can aim at net-zero, but to achieve it cost efficiently the building envelope must provide maximum insulation.

"This school sets a standard that can be applied to homebuilding too," he continued. "If, at the outset, decisions are made carefully regarding the walls, windows, roofing, water management, ventilation and indoor climate control, you are well on your way to completely offsetting energy consumption."

Here are a few of the net-zero design components of Richardsville Elementary:

- A roof designed with solar panels and electricity grid.
- Geothermal heating and cooling for environmentally responsible efficiency.
- Walls of concrete. The Nudura system is comprised of stay-in-place, pre-assembled blocks, steel reinforced, and then filled with concrete. It replaces traditional building methods. The durability and energy efficiency of



concrete has shown to reduce energy costs up to 70 percent. Better still, the entire structure (www.nudura.com) is reported to be up to nine times stronger, with far more fire protection and with far more sound insulation.

- Ventilation includes a CO2 monitoring system to keep good air quality indoors and allow no more outdoor air than necessary.
- Positioning is north-south, allowing for effective day lighting (without glare) so that all artificial lighting can be off during 70 percent of school hours.
- Computers are wireless. Five carts, each loaded with 30 laptops save energy, wiring and construction of a computer lab. Laptops use a fraction of the energy used to run a typical desktop computer.
- Kitchen staff is trained in energy-efficient food preparation. Typically, kitchens account for 25 percent of a school's energy drain.

## After the holiday flurry, hurry to reconsider home insurance

(NC)—A sparkling new ring, the latest smartphone, a new flat-screen TV -- after the gift-giving excitement of the holidays is over, you may find your home filled with more goodies than before. As you clean up the wrapping paper and pack up the decorations, don't forget to review your home or tenant insurance policy to ensure your new gifts are covered.

Dave Minor, the vice president of TD Insurance, offers his top tips for ensuring your new valuables are protected:

**New Ring? Insure that bling.** The holidays are a popular time to pop the question, but many blissful couples may be unaware that the sparkly new ring may not be covered under their existing home or renter's insurance policy. Speak to your insurance provider to find out how much your household jewellery coverage covers. You may want to consider extended coverage if some new diamonds or even an expensive watch has taken you over this limit.

**Update your inventory of belongings.** Making a list and taking photos of your valuables can help make it easier if you have to make a claim. Don't forget to include serial numbers and the date each item was purchased.

**Consider a security upgrade.** Did you know that installing extra security measures like security alarms may decrease your insurance premium? Deadbolt locks and automatic timers on your lights can also contribute greatly to protecting your home. Talk to your insurance provider for suggestions on how to save money while keeping your valuables even more protected.

**Understand the terms of your coverage.** The terms you agreed to a few years ago may be different than the insurance needs you require today, so ask your insurance provider if you still have adequate coverage.

www.newscanada.com

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**SOLD**  
**SPACIOUS FAMILY HOME ON QUIET CRESCENT!**  
Open-concept home features updated eat-in kitchen w/SS countertops, island w/breakfast bar, dining, living & sep family rm w/cozy gas fireplace, ceramic/hardwood thruout main floor, 3 over-sized bedrooms, master retreat w/en-suite, large 2-tiered deck w/BBQ gas hookup, garage entry, newer insulated garage door ('06), newer hi-eff furnace and A/C ('06). Close to all amenities. **MLS #2050261 \$459,000.**

**NEW LISTING**  
**COUNTRY 10 ACRES, NANNY/INLAW SUITE**  
Lovely Victorian Reproduction with wrap around veranda, separate 3 car coach house style garage, small barn/workshop, ponds & seclusion. This home suits a multi generational family with a large separate living area. There are 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms plus rough in, 3 fireplaces, open concept kitchen/family room, separate living and dining rooms and full unfinished walk out lower level. This property would suit many uses and offers a quick closing. **MLS #2050360 \$845,000.**

**SOLD**  
**BUNGALOW ON THE ESCARPMENT**  
Lovely 3 bedroom bungalow with numerous upgrades and improvements. Hardwood floors, bright eat in kitchen with stainless steel appliances, ensuite bathroom, greenhouse window in living room, 2 fireplaces (wood & propane), walkout to large deck, large finished lower level & oversize 2 car garage. This property is located on the Escarpment within walking distance to Rattlesnake Point and back on to open space. Minutes to the town of Milton. Properties such as this are rarely offered for sale. **MLS #2049048 \$659,000.**

**BROOKVILLE ESTATES**  
Look no further for a LARGE COUNTRY HOME for your family. Estate setting with woods, privacy and backyard oasis (in ground pool & cabana) on 3.5 Acres. Everything about this home is BIG. Separate liv & din rooms, office/den, main floor games room, chef's kitchen with loads of cabinets, pantry, 3 bathrooms, woodburning fireplace, oversize 3 car garage with 2nd staircase to basement. Min to Milton, major highways and great schools. A MUST SEE! **\$925,000.**