



Federal Election Day Drawing Closer – With Canadians going to the polls on May 2nd, the CHBA has written this month to the three main federal party leaders seeking support for the CHBA's theme of "*Housing Affordability and Choice for Canadians: Beyond Recovery... into Durable Prosperity.*" CHBA President Vince Laberge told the party leaders that making a successful transition from fragile recovery to durable prosperity is going to require federal government policies and actions just as effective as those that facilitated the housing industry's contribution toward economic recovery over the past eighteen months.

The CHBA made three specific and inter-related recommendations to federal parties and candidates:

- Adopt a single threshold/full rebate approach for the GST New Housing Rebate across Canada, and commit to review and adjust this threshold over time in relation to new housing prices.
- Introduce a permanent 2.5% GST Home Renovation Tax Rebate available to all homeowners.
- Vigorously tackle the underground "cash" economy, both raising government revenues and protecting consumers.

As chair of the CHBA's election campaign, First Vice President Ron Olson has been encouraging local HBAs to raise housing industry issues with all candidates. He has reported an excellent start with Local HBAs using the briefing materials, tool kits, talking points with candidates, sample letters and candidate contact information that was sent to them at the start of the campaign.

National Energy Code for (large) Buildings (NECB) - The CHBA made a presentation to the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes (CCBFC) at its meeting this month regarding the need for further changes to the new Energy Code. The CCBFC accepted the recommendation from the CHBA to eliminate the requirement for heat recovery in apartments with self-contained mechanical systems in the three warmest climate zones, saving approximately \$1,500 per unit in those locations. However, they did not eliminate this requirement for the colder zones (Prairie Provinces). The CCBFC also agreed to revisit the rules affecting the permitted area of windows as a priority in the next Code cycle in response to the CHBA's concerns. The Association was successful at an earlier stage in the development of this new Code to reduce the negative impact of the window requirements in the Prairie Provinces. The NECB will be published later this year.

Relevance of the Red Seal Program – CHBA President Vince Laberge has written this month to the Co-Chairs of the Forum of Labour Market Ministers reiterating the Association's support for the objectives of the Red Seal Program, but pointed to the program's continuing inability to address skill shortages in the residential construction industry. Under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), the provinces and the federal government agreed to work cooperatively to ensure increased labour mobility within Canada. In this regard, the CHBA is seeking a commitment from the federal government to extend eligibility beyond Red Seal trades for apprenticeship-related support for those trades that achieve interprovincial recognition under the terms of the AIT.

April is New Homes Month - 2011's New Homes Month theme is "Your New Home – The Door is Open!" The campaign this year invites consumers to explore what's possible for them in a new home. Thank you to our national sponsors Genworth Financial Canada and the Canadian Home Warranty Council.

Time to Start Thinking SAMs – How would you like to win a 2011 CHBA National SAM Award in Mont-Tremblant next March? Well, it is not too early to get started on putting together your winning entry. All of the material that you need, including entry forms, guidelines and tips, is now available online at www.chba.ca/SAMs. Take advantage of an early start to get some great photos to impress the judges. The deadline for entries is November 4, 2011.

2012 National Conference – Mark your calendar now for the 69th CHBA National Conference from March 16-18, 2012 at the Fairmont Tremblant Resort in Mont-Tremblant, Québec.