

Ecologically Friendly, Economically Smart – Green is the New Gold Standard for Outfitting a Home

Royal LePage Eco Home Survey finds 88 per cent of Canadians want green qualities in their home

TORONTO, October 30, 2007 – Green friendly home improvements will likely yield a solid return on investment come selling time as almost three quarters of Canadians (72%) say they will look for a green-improved property in their next home purchase, and 63 per cent will be willing to pay more for an environmentally friendly home, according to the Royal LePage Eco Home Survey released today.

The Royal LePage Eco Home Survey, which examines the attitudes and opinions of Canadians with respect to green living, found that Canadians are willing to pony up cash for greener home features. In fact, of the majority of Canadians who are willing to pay more for an eco home, 62 per cent are willing to pay between \$5,000 and under \$20,000, for green features, while eight per cent (8%) of respondents are willing to spend \$20,000 or more on a home deemed green.

"The mood of Canadian homebuyers and sellers is changing with the times - environmental concerns are impacting the decisions people are making about their dwellings. From simple energy conservation efforts to the more elaborate use of organic building materials, the environmentally conscious mindset that our agents are seeing in clients is not a passing trend," said Phil Soper, president and CEO, Royal LePage Real Estate Services. "To service this growing segment of the real estate market, we are pleased to launch our partnership with the National Association of Green Agents and Brokers (NAGAB) as well as the green accreditation program. This program will educate and empower our REALTORS® and brokers, as well as consumers on how to make eco-friendly decisions when it comes to the home."

Through various education courses funded in part by the Ministry of Energy, Royal LePage real estate agents will be trained by the National Association of Green Agents and Brokers to assess environmental elements within a home and identify properties that adhere to green standards. Royal LePage members who take the National Association of Green Agents and Brokers training will be easily identifiable through a special designation logo.

"Few people realize that residential, commercial and institutional buildings represent more than 33 per cent of our total greenhouse gas emissions," said Elden Freeman, National Association of Green Agents and Brokers founder and executive director. "While it is unreasonable to completely reduce carbon dioxide created by homes, there are various practices homeowners can implement, such as installing high-energy efficient windows, doors and insulation, high efficiency furnaces and appliances, and water-conserving fixtures such as showerheads and toilets that will significantly reduce negative effects on the environment."

While positive changes are occurring in the general population there is much work to be done. More than half (51%) of all survey respondents say they are very concerned about the environment and think we are in dire need of change some are not as quick to implement changes. When asked, "What is preventing you from making your home more green?" over half (54%) of respondents said it was too expensive to do, while 15 per cent said they have no idea where to start.

Added Soper: "Canadians need to know that going green can certainly be within their means and within their reach. There are many simple and affordable measures that can lead to big gains for the environment, and many of the practices can actually save homeowners money."

Small Steps for Big Change

When it comes to describing how green their current lifestyle is, 72 per cent of Canadians say they engage in traditional recycling practices. Making a difference can be as simple as implementing small environmentally friendly practices. The most popular green modifications that poll respondents already implement in their homes include switching from regular light bulbs to CFL light

bulbs (74%), adding window and door sealers to prevent heat loss (61%) and switching to high efficiency washers and dryers and using low flow water fixtures (54%).

Some homeowners are taking bigger leaps. Caryn Thompson, a Toronto-based health promoter and owner of an eco-friendly home, is among those Canadians that took on green modifications when she and her husband decided to renovate their home. To create their eco enclave they opted for highly energy efficient windows made with low-e glass that decreases heat gain in the summer and keeps the house warm in the winter, installed central air that uses puron, and have painted with low or no VOC (Volatile organic compounds) products.

"When we decided to renovate our home, we wanted to make choices that would have the least impact on the environment and create a healthy indoor space for us," said Caryn Thompson.

Motivating Forces of Nature

When asked, "What is the most influential factor for making your home more or completely green?" 35 per cent of respondents cited they are doing it for their children so they inherit a healthy planet; 32 per cent are doing it for the cost savings; and one quarter (25%) are doing it for their health and to have peace of mind they are living the best they can.

Mature Canadians edge out the younger set when it comes to recycling. Respondents aged 55+ (77%) are more likely than those aged 18 to 34 years (67%) to engage in traditional recycling practices.

More women (31%) than men (18%) are going green for their health. Conversely, more men (41%) than women (23%) cite cost savings as the most influential factor for making a change.

Additional Poll Highlights

- Atlantic (72%) residents are the most likely to pay more, whereas Ontario residents (60%) are the least likely to pay more for an eco-friendly dwelling.
- Fourteen per cent (14%) of homeowners are already living in an eco-friendly abode.
- The survey found that 16 per cent of respondents say they exercise their green side from time to time, when it is convenient, and only nine per cent (9%) claim to be at one with Mother Earth, and live a very green lifestyle.
- Seventy-eight (78%) believe there is a direct link between the unseasonably warm temperatures and decades of the world's lack of awareness about the environment. Albertans are the most reticent about such a link, with 68 per cent of respondents from Alberta claiming to see a link, whereas 82 per cent of people in Quebec believe the two elements are related.

Poll Methodology

Angus Reid Strategies conducted poll portion of the Royal LePage Eco Home Survey, with fieldwork completed on Tuesday, October 16, 2007. The poll was conducted on-line with a national representative sample of 1,266 Canadians survey respondents aged 18 year and older. The results have a maximum margin of error +/- 2.75% 19 times out of 20.

About Royal LePage

Royal LePage is Canada's leading provider of franchise services to residential real estate brokerages, with a network of over 13,000 agents and sales representatives in 600 locations across Canada operating under the Royal LePage, Johnston & Daniel, and Realty World brand names. Royal LePage manages the Royal LePage Franchise Services Fund, a TSX listed income trust, trading under the symbol "RSF.UN." For more information visit www.royallepage.ca.

About National Association of Green Agents and Brokers The National Association of Green Agents and Brokers (NAGAB) is Canada's largest non-profit association of real estate agents committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The association's Greenrealestate™ curriculum provides an education and certification program for real estate agents. Through the association's innovative offerings, real estate agents promote the benefits of energy conservation to their buyers and

sellers. The National Association of Green Agents and Brokers has over 15,000 affiliate members coast-to-coast and boasts support from major corporate and government sponsors. For more information visit www.nagab.org.

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