

# NEWHOMES

## As the climate changes, so too will new home construction



MARTIN SLOFSTRA  
EDITOR'S  
NOTE

It's a topic so huge that we now hear about it on a daily basis but consider it only a matter of time before climate change trickles down and has what will be a profound effect on the new home building industry.

My eyes were opened to this by Colin Travis, president of Travis and Associates, an urban planning consulting firm based in Collingwood, Ont. in comments made at a fireside chat organized by Trimart Corp.

These days, Travis spends a lot of time thinking about how climate change will not only effect new home builders but new home buyers and the community in general.

Says Travis: "Grey County (where he resides) is already changing and will continue to change. We can expect that there will be more frequent snow squalls, more extreme rain and flooding events, and warm summer temperatures. We must take action to adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate."

Travis points to the real world example of a new condo in Collingwood that has been launched and will soon start construction. Extra thought had to be given to where the units are built and will be dictated also by wind patterns and waterfront levels. Seems it's no longer just a simple matter of putting in a condo with the best view of the waterfront.

No doubt, climate change is only getting more attention. Travis says there were 18 panels and seminars on Climate Change at the Ontario Professional Planners Institute



Not so long ago, green homes and energy conservation seemed to be a trendy topic, now it's front and centre.

(OPPI) Conference held in October, putting it on equal footing with ongoing urban planning topics such as land use, transportation and housing in general.

In the bigger picture, climate experts are also serving notice, having witnessed a noticeable increase in roof failures resulting from "microbursts" — where wind speeds exceeded those specified in the current building codes by over 35%. Those experts have observed a sharp increase in the collapse of walls and roofs during construction, where walls and roofs were not properly braced.

Granted, some of the examples of the effects of climate change given here are more extreme, but Travis says urban planners want to be prepared — Grey County is now working towards creating a Climate Change Action Plan to mitigate the effects of climate change in its communities.

Some of the steps taken will be to increase the tree canopy and forested areas, as well as upgrading the infrastructure for water treatment and storm water manage-

ment, and greater reuse of older and existing building materials.

As you can tell, this is a huge topic with all kinds of implications, Travis advises is that "perspective and rationality are needed and not panic." He fears the public and those who advocate for the environment "are not addressing the science of it."

"Any action taken has got to be rational, it's got to be well-thought out," he says.

Expect also changes in the Ontario Building Code as many buildings in Ontario are problematic with respect to emissions and pollution. This is because they were built in an era when energy efficiency and climate change were not issues.

Progress is being made — a newly built house in 2017 is reported to consume 50% less energy than the same house in 2005 — but the sense is so much more can be done in terms of reducing gas emissions.

But even that comes with a word of warning. Says Travis, expect to pay more for new homes when these changes are implemented.

## Paving the way for women in the trades

### Let's create next generation of Kate Campbell in the skilled trades



RICHARD LYALL  
RESCON

As Kate Campbell spoke about her passion for the trades, a room of 300 girls was transfixed on her every move.

"I'm so passionate about my job," said the tradeswoman, entrepreneur and TV star. "I make good money doing a job that I love and I love speaking about the job that I do."

Campbell, who has starred on HGTV shows such as *Holmes On Homes*, *Handyman Superstar Challenge*, *Custom Built and Home to Win*, was in top form as she told her success story to the crowd of Grade 7 and 8 students bussed to Durham College's Whitby campus.

About 600 girls attended the inspiring two-day event called *Expand the Possibilities: Young Women in Science, Technology and Trades*, which RESCON sponsored.

We believe that we need more women in the trades and that the industry must be involved in finding ways to make it easier to get women entry into trades programs.

Campbell is living proof that women can find success in the trades — so is the Job Talks construction series (jobtalksconstruction.ca), which features several women in construction jobs.

However, women face barriers to entering the skilled trades. In order to get more women involved, we need an open, transparent admissions process for trades, training and apprenticeship.

Campbell got a foothold in the trades from the Women in Skilled Trades (WIST) program at the Centre for Skills Development in Burlington. RESCON provides two bursaries for this program. Camp-

bell said she had a lot of support from her parents to choose her career path.

"Right from the beginning, I was told that I should do whatever I want, no matter what. I didn't know what kind of career I wanted. But I knew that I wanted to be active and constantly challenged.

"That's why I chose the skilled trades, where women represent only 4% of the industry."

Campbell, an entrepreneur and the principal of renovation company KateBuilds Inc., was no slouch at school — graduating with a 93-per-cent average. But this didn't mean that she wanted to be funnelled down the university stream. After backpacking in Australia and New Zealand, her mother told her about the WIST program. She applied and was one of 20 selected out of 200 applicants.

"I picked up a circular saw for the first time, and I had never been happier in my life. We were learning about electrical and plumbing and building code, and I was building things that were tangible and I was really excited about going in every day."

She had to find a placement at the end of the course — and applied successfully to Canada's most famous renovator, Mike Holmes. Her career took off from there, as she has appeared on several shows over 14 years. Now she is turning her attention to encouraging others to enter the trades — her initiative "Build Women Up" funds scholarships for women pursuing trades careers.

"When I first got into the trades and I took my skilled trades course, I had a hard time and was very intimidated by reading a tape measure ... Now, I'm really proud that I can go to work, strap on the toolbelt, put on my work boots and get the job done."



HGTV star Kate Campbell poses with, from left, RESCON's Richard Lyall, Ontario Minister of Colleges and Universities Ross Romano and Durham College president Don Loviso at the college's second annual conference, *Expand the Possibilities: Young Women in Science, Technology and Trades*. **DURHAM COLLEGE**

Campbell's tips to the students if they're considering pursuing a skilled trade:

1. Talk to teachers, guidance counsellors, parents and mentors.
2. Consider an apprenticeship.
3. Look into OYAP.
4. Prepare to encounter and conquer roadblocks in your career and in life — these include fear, failure and the hard work required.
5. There's not always a straight road to success.
6. Life is short: pursue your passion.
7. Everyone encounters points in life where they feel like giving up; determination is key.
8. In career and life, something might not be easy, but it will be worth it.

— Courtesy of Durham College

Kate Campbell, you're an inspiration and a trailblazer! We can't wait to see the next generation of women in the trades who joined thanks to your inspirational words.

**Richard Lyall, president of RESCON, has represented the building industry in Ontario since 1991. Contact him @RESCONprez.**