

# HOMES

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M A G A Z I N E

## Saving By Design: Tribute Tips The Scales

### By listening to customers, builder created energy-efficiency program

Tribute Communities is a builder/developer that's making a difference for the industry and Ontario new homebuyers through green initiatives. Just ask Tim Clarke, a software engineering consultant who worked for a company specializing in reducing the water and wastewater demands of residential buildings.

When Clarke bought a home in Tribute's Grandview development in Oshawa, he was interested in upgrade packages that would make the home more energy efficient – not a typical request like hardwood flooring or marble countertops.

“He wanted a better than (Ontario Building) Code home,” said Wally Kunz, options manager at Tribute's decor centre.

Little did any of them know at the time that this request would lead to the launch of Tribute's Innovative Performance Standard, or TIPS.



New homebuyer Tim Clarke's TIPS home is shown at Tribute Communities' Grandview site in Oshawa.

Frank MacPhee, Tribute's vice president of contracts and the man who gave the program the green light, had sensed a better-than-code ask was inevitable. Clarke's request “just pushed it quicker to the forefront of our mandate.”

Clarke received the “comfort package,” consisting of a Lennox two-stage 96 AFUE furnace, a Lifebreath ERV, HVAC balancing, a drainwater recovery unit, greywater rough-in, a Green Whisper Select bath fan and Excel sheathing.

Soon after, TIPS was offered as standard fare at Tribute’s new Ajax community, Quantum Falls. Enbridge then approached Tribute to join Savings by Design, a program that provides builders with a \$2,000 rebate for every home (up to a maximum of 50 houses per community) that is rated 15 per cent better than the 2017 code.



Wally Kunz, options manager at Tribute Communities’ decor centre in Pickering

## **ENERGY BILLS DECREASE**

Meanwhile, with a new home rated 21 per cent better than code, Clarke is already seeing savings in his bills.

For perspective, his old house was 2,500 square feet, 1,000 square feet smaller than his new one. In the new home, monthly hydro bills have dropped from \$150 to \$100 and gas is down from \$170 to just over \$100. That’s about 37.5 per cent savings in utility costs for a home that’s 40 per cent larger.

MacPhee says Clarke’s home is one of more than 30,000 homes across Southern Ontario built by the 2016 Ontario Home Builders’ Association’s Homebuilder of the Year.

He adds that the corporate philosophy of Tribute, a proud member of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario, is, “Build every house as if you were the one moving into it.”