

Building to last

Foundations for the future

Thousands of homes will be built in the GTA this year — innovative developers are working to guarantee high quality and sustainability for 21st-century living

As the building industry keeps up with the GTA's demand for new housing, adapting new technologies and practices is essential to prolonging a building's lifespan, says Ali Haj-Shafiei, a professor at George Brown College's School of Construction Management and Trades.

George Brown collaborates closely with the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) and the Ontario Home Builders' Association to develop curriculum and training for the next generation of community builders based on local residential needs and the latest innovations.

"The construction industry [in the GTA] is a dynamic one and it's changing every day," notes Haj-Shafiei. "We can bring visionary ideas from the trades and developers and bring them into the school. Sustainability is about thinking ahead at an early stage."

One of the most common challenges is finding ways to save energy, says Haj-Shafiei. The solution: innovative features and building practices that reduce energy consumption and environmental impact, such as prefabricated and modular structural elements, green roofs, insulated concrete foams, energy recovery units using fresh air to heat the building, and solar-powered fibre-optic lighting systems.

This year, more than 40,000 new homes — over half of them will be high-rise units — will be under construction in the GTA. Nearly all of them will have energy-efficient features that wouldn't have been available even just five years ago.

The GTA's home builders, developers and architects have been on the cutting edge of implementing such features into residential housing and the complete communities they build across the GTA and the province.

Through government consultations, BILD brings industry leaders to the table to ensure that the best of these innovations are included in the Ontario Building Code, which is updated every five years. In 2012 amendments were made to the code to make standards even more energy-efficient.

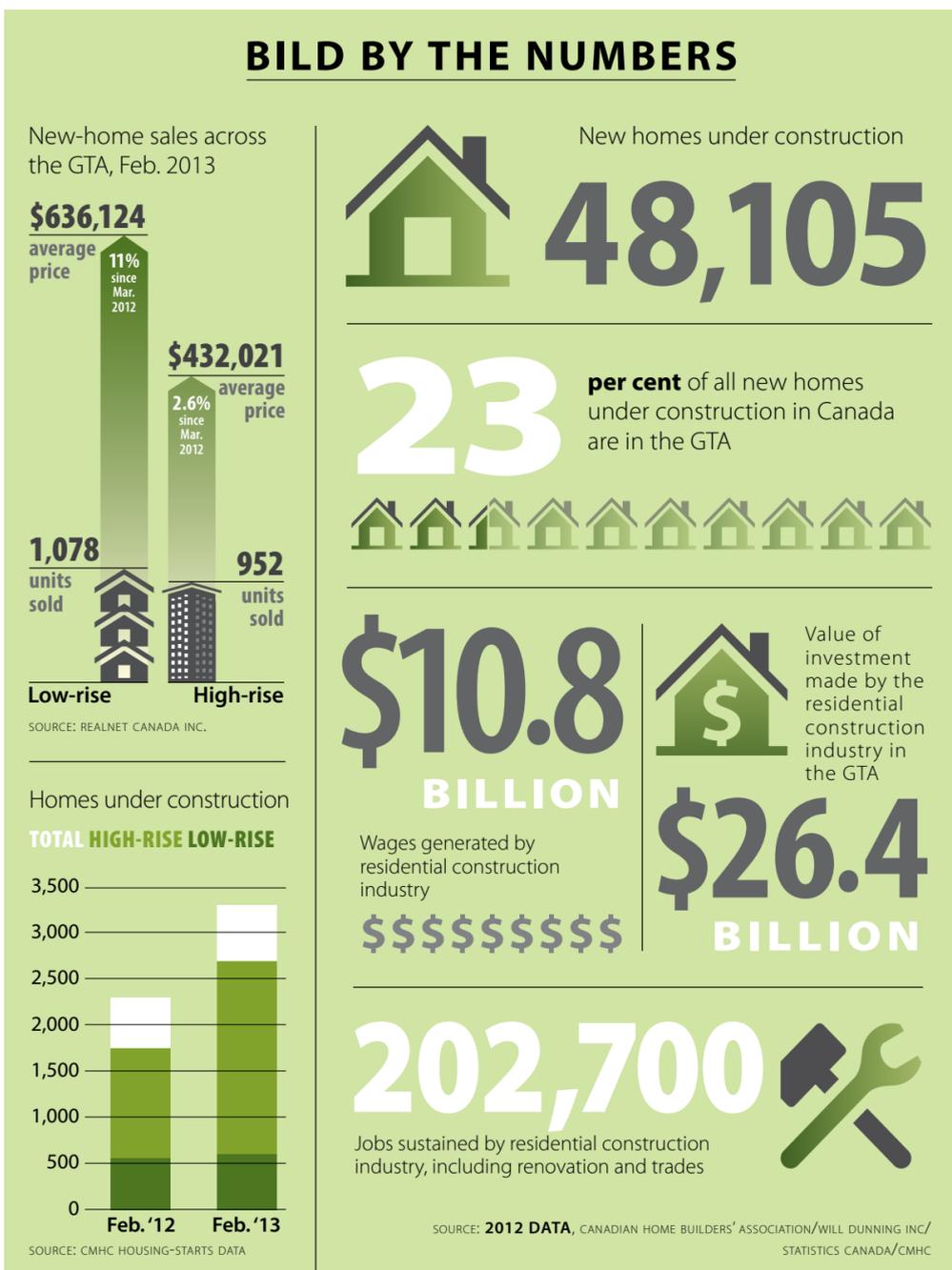
Bryan Tuckey, BILD president and CEO, says the quality of new homes in the GTA is among the best in the world.

"Across the GTA, the industry is creating new complete communities and revitalizing existing neighbourhoods through high-quality design and construction, mixed-use development and support for essential public infrastructure."

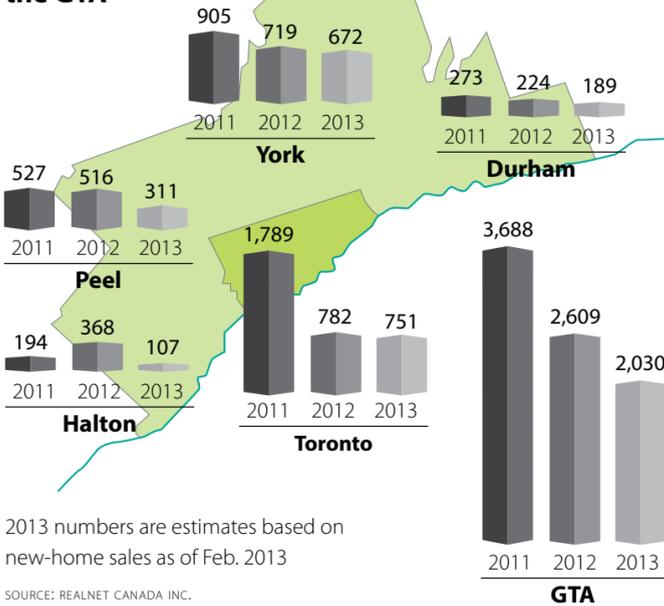
The GTA's population is forecast to grow by up to 100,000 for the next 25 years and BILD members aim to meet the challenge of building approximately 40,000 new homes every year, as well as provide new employment space for about 50,000 people.

These complete communities, where people can live, work and play, require new or upgraded infrastructure and the industry is doing its fair share, says Tuckey.

BILD estimates that in 2012, the industry and new-home buyers contributed \$1 billion for the construction of infrastructure, such as transit, roads and sewers in the GTA through development charges paid to municipalities.



Regional breakdown of sales throughout the GTA



In addition to innovative advancements in the construction of single-family, semi-detached and townhomes, innovation is also occurring in the high-rise and non-residential sectors. High-density complete communities are recognized by the Ontario government in its provincial growth plan, *Places to Grow*, as a sustainable form of building that concentrates on making use of land and infrastructure.

"The industry has built — and continues to build — well-planned, well-designed complete communities that will stand the test of time," says Steve Upton, BILD chair and vice president of planning and development at Tridel.

"Building quality, sustainable homes and places for businesses to call home is a top priority for this industry," he adds.

BILD members — which also include home renovators, designers, suppliers and manufacturers — participate in educational seminars to stay on top of the latest building technologies and practices.

They also have access to courses related to Ontario Building Code certification, forums on a range of topics from building science to sales and marketing, as well as sustainability and energy-efficiency seminars with EnerQuality Corporation.

BILD also promotes high-quality construction among its 1,400 member companies through three annual awards programs: BILD Awards, Associate Awards and the Renovation and Custom Home Awards.

Last year, GTA communities won 15 awards at an international home building, sales and marketing competition presented by the Washington, D.C.-based U.S. National Association of Home Builders.

Awards celebrate the best in the biz

Every year, the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) recognizes members who have achieved excellence in their fields by giving out awards in 47 categories. This year, the BILD Awards event took place April 26.

Here are three of the winners in 2013.

Home Builder of the Year: Tridel Corporation

Tridel's core values are honesty, integrity, reliability, respect, professionalism and teamwork. Demonstrated in all aspects of the company's work culture, these values focus on quality, superior customer service, innovation and commitment to green building, industry leadership and partnerships, and contributions to the community.

Green Builder of the Year, Low-Rise: The Minto Group

Minto believes in the power of collaboration, in continuous improvement and in making the world a better place. Its environmental policy states: "Minto believes that it has a corporate responsibility to the environment and that actively pursuing green initiatives is compatible with growth and prosperity."

People's Choice Award, Project of the Year: Lifetime Developments and CentreCourt Developments, IBI Group, Blackjet Inc., Brandon Communications, Cecconi Simone, Baker Real Estate, INDX Condos

Located in the heart of the financial district, INDX is a 54-storey glass and limestone tower that will be home to urban young professionals who "work hard and play hard." The project was by far the most successful sales launch of the year with all of its 798 units sold within nine months. Less than a year following the launch, the condos are now under construction and on target to meet the tentative occupancy dates offered to purchasers.

To view the full list of 2013 BILD Award winners, visit bildawards.com

This is the first in a four-part series sponsored by BILD. Look for the next one on Sat., May 4.



BUILDING TO LAST

Across the GTA, the industry is creating new complete communities and revitalizing existing neighbourhoods through high-quality design and construction, mixed-use development and support for essential public infrastructure. To learn more, visit www.bildgta.ca.