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# Ottawa's energy leaders named best in Ontario

ANITA MURRAY, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN 02.23.2012 |



Ross Elliott was named the province's energy evaluator of the year for the second time in five years. *Ji OTTAWA CITIZEN*

Ottawa's Mr. Energy has done it again.

Energy consultant Ross Elliott has been chosen the province's top evaluator for the second time in five years. A longtime leader in Ontario's green building industry, the founder of Homesol Building Solutions was honoured earlier this month for his continuing efforts to help area builders improve the energy efficiency of their homes to Energy Star levels and beyond. The award, given out by

the province's EnerQuality Corp., is determined by recommendations from builders.

"It recognizes what we've been doing for all these years," Elliott says. "What we have to do, really, is know more than the builders about how to make their buildings more energy-efficient in a way that people can afford."

Elliott, 54, is a leading provider of energy design consulting services for contractors and homeowners. An energy auditor for more than 30 years, he acts as a mentor to new evaluators (he's qualified to certify R-2000, Energy Star, LEED and passive houses) and has been instrumental in the success of the Energy Star Program in Canada.

Last year, he certified Canada's first passive house and Ontario's first multi-unit residential building to meet a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) platinum standard for environmental and energy-efficient design (the highest level under the LEED program). Both Ottawa projects, the passive house was built by Vert Design's Chris Straka and the multi-unit building is The Hamptons, a nine-unit urban infill executive townhouse development by RGB Group on Montauk Private near Carleton University.

"We work with the builders from the very beginning at the design stages," says Elliott, who has a reputation for going above and beyond the job of an evaluator to educate builders. "They need to know before they even put a shovel in the ground what that finished house is going to cost them to build."

Also coming up as a big winner at this year's awards was Minto Communities, which captured top honours for the first time as both the green builder of the year and leader of the year. The forward-thinking company has long had a commitment to building energy-efficient homes, but has now upped the ante with the

decision to have all of its communities, or pockets in emerging communities, meet certified LEED standards.

And EnerQuality recognized the pioneering efforts of Ottawa architect Bruce Gough, considered the father of the Energy Star Program in Canada, by posthumously giving him the Hall of Fame award. The 62-year-old Gough died in July following a short battle with colon cancer.

“His passion, dedication and commitment to the residential construction industry will have a lasting impact in energy-efficient housing in the province,” EnerQuality said in a release.

EnerQuality is a partnership between the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance and the Ontario Home Builders’ Association with the aim of building energy-efficient and sustainable homes in a way that is both affordable to home buyers and practical for home builders.

What does it mean?

Having trouble figuring out green building terms? Here are some definitions:

**Energy Star:** A federal government energy-efficiency certification program under which a home must be tested by a third party and reach an EnerGuide rating of 80. Energy Star will be upgraded later this year, requiring homes to reach a rating of 83. The new target will mean a 20-per-cent improvement.

**Passive house:** A German standard for energy efficiency. It uses efficient building shape, solar exposure, superior insulation, advanced windows, leading-edge ventilation and other features to create structures that require little or no energy from conventional heating or cooling systems.

**LEED:** Stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a U.S. rating system that encourages sustainable green building

and development practices through the use of a set of tools and performance criteria. LEED is a third-party certification program that recognizes performance in the areas of sustainable site development, water efficiency, energy efficiency, materials selection, indoor environmental quality and the importance of transportation access, open space and physical activity outdoors. Certification is granted at four levels: certified, silver, gold and platinum.

R-2000: A voluntary industry-endorsed technical performance standard for energy efficiency, indoor air tightness quality, and environmental responsibility in home construction, verified by a third party. Administered by Natural Resources Canada and developed in partnership with Canada's residential construction industry, it aims to promote the use of cost-effective, energy-efficient building practices and technologies. Houses built to the R-2000 standard typically exceed the energy performance requirements of current building codes and meet a high standard of environmental responsibility. The standard is continually upgraded to include new technologies.

For more information on green building, visit [ottawacitizen.com/goinggree](http://ottawacitizen.com/goinggree) (<http://ottawacitizen.com/goinggree>)  
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