

# homes |

*building solutions*



**Karen Secord** | IMPACT, Special Feature

**Believing better building practices  
equals a healthier environment,  
more energy efficient tomorrow**

# Homesol

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Ross Elliott is a successful business owner with a clear message, “We can change the world by changing the buildings we live in.”

It is that simple. And that difficult.

But Elliott’s Homesol Building Solutions – founded in 2000 and now one of the top residential energy evaluation companies in the province – has taken up the challenge.

“Buildings in general are responsible for half of all green house emissions in the world, but are by far the easiest carbon emitting sector of the economy to change,” he asserts. “We can live in more comfortable homes that are more economical to own, and reduce global warming.”

It’s a win-win-win message that Elliott, his wife Kathryn, and Homesol’s five full-time certified energy evaluators promote every day.

Put bluntly, buildings are big energy “pigs”. And since energy translates into money, they suck warmth out of your house and big bucks out of your wallet.

Homesol teaches new home builders and renovators how better building processes and resource management can save them money. They work with builders to construct greener homes that are more energy efficient, and with existing homeowners to create a more comfortable, sustainable and economically viable living environment.

The goal? To move building practices past 1980’s levels and towards net-zero energy consumption. To inform, educate and train home owners, builders and designers so that they recognize the value in change – both personally and globally. To save money, protect the environment and safeguard our health.

“The average family spends more on heating/energy for their home than they do on gas for their car,” says Elliott.



“You can actually get a net-zero energy house or “net-zero ready” building envelope quite easily. There is absolutely no reason for the average home not being more energy efficient.”

According to Elliott, it is wrong to assume that building “green” costs more, because any additional costs are offset by energy savings. Indeed, he says, it is often cheaper to build a more energy efficient house than a traditional one.

Elliott would know. He was an energy evaluator before the advent of personal computers. A carpenter by trade, he began his green building career in 1979, studying energy efficient construction in the United States and apprenticing with Callender & Associates of Perth, Ontario. By the time he founded Homesol he had already amassed two decades of hands-on construction and energy modelling experience.

Energy Evaluator of the Year in 2007 – an award for outstanding service and leadership – Elliott’s resume is impressive and leaves little doubt that his message is based on a thor-

ough understanding of the issues, both practically and theoretically.

Most recently, Homesol Building Solutions won the 2008/2009 Ontario Construction Report Readers’ Choice Award for Outstanding Commitment to Sustainable Development.

He is co-founder of the Canadian Residential Energy Services Network (CRESNET), a Director on the EnerQuality Corp. Board, and an EnerQuality trainer. He has also taught an energy efficient renovations course at Algonquin College.

Elliott is a Natural

Resources Canada (NRCan) licensed service provider, evaluator and trainer for the ecoEnergy Retrofit Program, currently certifying over 500 homes annually. He was also a certified energy evaluator for the EnerGuide for Homes Program, labelling over 2,000 homes since

1999. ecoEnergy is a federal program designed to make existing buildings more energy efficient. It involves measuring air leakage, checking insulation levels, windows, doors, heating, hot water and ventilation systems. The evaluator provides a report and offers

## Having an Effect

Congratulation Ross Elliott and Homesol Building Solutions on certifying over 2,500 ENERGY STAR® qualified, R-2000 certified and EnerGuide rated homes in the Ottawa area since 1999.

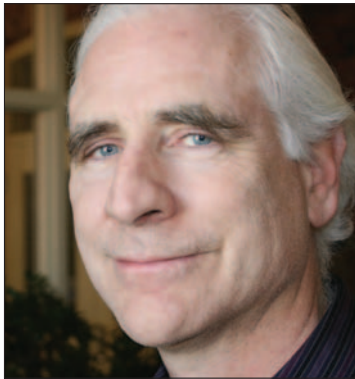
On behalf of EnerQuality and our partners, we proudly recognize Homesol’s accomplishments and their dedication to helping transform Ontario’s housing market to one of the most sustainable in the world!

homesol  
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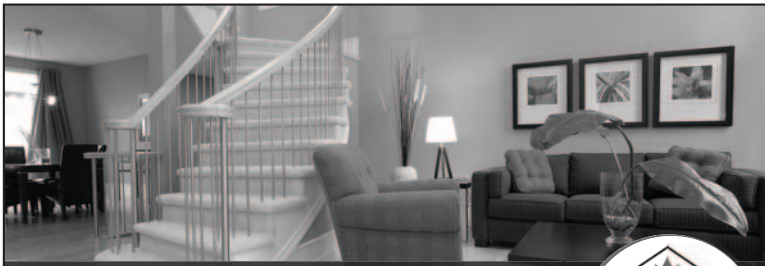
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# Homesol

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information on both federal and provincial grants, returning within 18 months later to



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verify the upgrades and make a submission for the grant payout of up to \$10,000.

Elliott is not shy about his commitment to provide opportunities for the homeowner to reduce energy bills, protect themselves from rising energy costs, and add value to their home, while being good stewards of the environment.

"All existing housing stock should be brought up to 2009 code and all new

houses should be net-zero," he suggests. "The best eco-stimulus package is to upgrade, then money not spent on energy can be spent on something else."

To-date the Homesol team has completed well over 4,000 energy evaluations. In fact, Homesol certified the first Energy Star home in Canada with Metric Homes.

"Ross Elliott and Homesol Building Solutions are a powerful force for change in Ottawa's new construction and renovation market," says Corey McBurney, president of the Ontario Home Builders' Association-owned EnerQuality. "Well respected in the industry, Ross is a true asset to any builder he works with."

Homesol has energy evaluation services contracts with more than 30 of the Energy Star and R-2000 builders in the Ottawa to Kingston corridor including Monarch Construction, Braebury Homes, Dharma Developments, Holitzner Homes, RND Construction, Tartan Homes and Urbandale Construction.

At home, in McDonald's Corners, the Elliott's practice what they preach. Located on their rural property is a 700 sq.-ft. strawbale, green-roofed home office/design studio. They also have a 2,000 sq.-ft. solar greenhouse, which is

insulated and shaded with R-30 soap bubbles. An innovation that was nominated for an agriculture innovation award, it demonstrate that even "in the cold climates of Canada a greenhouse would not have to be a carbon dioxide producer like the traditional greenhouses around the world." (<http://www.tdc.ca/bubblegreenhouse.htm>)

Currently, they are designing and building a new 2,800sq.-ft. LEED Platinum home and environmental demonstration project that is scheduled for completion next year. It will be heated with geothermal and powered by the sun.

With a new branch office in Almonte at Thoburn Mill Homesol is poised to respond to an anticipated explosion of interest in their services

More and more attention is being paid to the effect unhealthy homes have on our lives, both among homebuyers and within the house building industry. And Homesol Building Solutions has the knowledge and experience to respond, with a solid track record for promoting green building and environmental technologies.

Just watch as Homesol leads the way into the 21st Century.

**Congratulations to Homesol Building Solutions.**

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