

COLUMN HEADING: "CSA STANDARDIZES HOME INSPECTION CERTIFICATION"

A milestone for Canadian home buyers was announced in Ottawa yesterday at a meeting for Home Inspectors. The home inspection industry, after years without a common national standard for training, education and third party verification of a home inspector's abilities to professionally complete a home and property inspection, will now have a much needed certification model. This has come about through a partnership between The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and The National Home Inspector Certification Council (NHICC).

The CSA has quietly monitored the development of the NHICC certification model for many months. For multiple reasons, the National Certification Program model, administered by the NHICC, has now been chosen as the benchmark for home inspectors in Canada. Other certification programs were assessed as part of CSA's effort, but were found lacking in many areas.

During the meeting, NHICC Chairman, Claude Lawrenson, covered the history of the NHICC and the new affiliation with the CSA. He outlined the need for an independent Canadian certification and how pleased they were to partner with the CSA.

Director of External Affairs for the NHICC, Bill Mullen, a Sarnia, Ontario home inspector, helped lead the group that saw this NHICC program evolve from the former CMHC supported National Program. For nearly 15 years, Mullen, Lawrenson and George Webb, Chair of the National Admissions Board, along with a dedicated core of home inspectors from coast to coast, have worked diligently toward this week's outcome.

Like earning a trade license or an education degree, the CSA-NHICC project will be an independent certification program. To become a National Home Inspector (NHI), the candidate must write a qualification exam with a passing grade of 80%. Following that is a background review by the National Admissions Board, who advise the candidate of what, if any, further education is required. He/she will, as well, be subject to a review of completed home inspections and possible supervised field work. Mentoring is recommended and, once these qualifications are attained, the "Test Inspection and Peer Review" is next. This intensive, in-depth inspection is monitored by senior NHICC examiners. Finally, a peer review by these examiners is conducted. With successful completion of these education and experience steps, the coveted "NHI" designation is granted.

“This certification process is the most inclusive, responsible and independent model available in North America,” stated, Mullen proudly, and went on to say, “Once the real estate, legal, insurance and banking communities see the CSA recognition of the NHICC program, it will only be a short period of time before the NHI designation becomes the recognized standard for home inspectors from coast to coast.” Mullen further commented that, “The confusion is being removed about choosing a qualified home inspector.” In conclusion, he stated, “While this has been a long battle, the final results are like stepping out of a crowded plane...the path ahead for all home inspectors is now clear.”

Currently, nearly 500 inspectors hold the NHI certification in Canada and many more are in the certification stream. NHICC inspectors are listed at:

www.nationalhomeinspectors.org under “contacts.” On the next page, go to “National Home Inspectors.” A complete list, both alphabetical and by city, will facilitate Canadian home buyers in selecting an NHI for their inspection.

Home buyers in Canada can thank this dedicated group of individuals. Their efforts have been rewarded by one of the most recognized standardization organizations in the world.....the CSA

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Read Cam’s column “Ask the Inspector” every week in the Kingston Whig-Standard