



Give more thought to going green

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TREB PRESIDENT'S COLUMN AS IT APPEARS IN THE TORONTO SUN

November 12, 2010

As we all stretch our household budgets a little farther to make ends meet these days, weighing the benefits of our expenditures seems to pervade every aspect of our lives, from deciding on the renovations we undertake, to choosing new appliances and home electronics.

Fortunately, one aspect of our lives that requires no advance assessment is the choice to live green, since from an altruistic perspective, the benefit of making environmentally conscious decisions can far outweigh the cost.

In addition to benefiting the wellbeing of our planet though, there are a number of other advantages to be gained by making environmentally conscious decisions. There are for example, compelling financial reasons to make green choices.

By choosing Energy Star rated appliances, which are designed with improved motors, components, sensors, and insulation, you can save hundreds of dollars in energy costs each year. While they may not be as appealing as shiny new appliances, upgrades like new windows, roofing and added insulation also result in greatly improved energy efficiency.

Similarly, green upgrades like a new air conditioner or replacement furnace can result in significant savings and can offer health benefits by improving your indoor air quality.

Even if you are not ready to upgrade to a whole new system, you can improve your indoor air quality and allow your furnace to operate more efficiently by having it professionally tuned up on an annual basis and changing its filter at least once every three months.

Other seemingly minor choices like low flow toilets and showerheads, compact fluorescent light bulbs and landscaping that enhances shade in summer and

sunlight in winter can add up to big savings in the long term as well.

Giving thought to your home's energy efficiency translates into well-maintained operating systems, which can result in sizable gains when it comes time to sell, since buyers with busy lifestyles have a preference for high quality housing stock in which few improvements are required.

You may even want to take your energy conscious efforts a step further by obtaining a home energy audit, in which a certified professional will assess your home's operating systems and offer suggestions for efficiency improvements. This type of forthright and objective overview of your home can serve as a marketing feature in itself and can contribute to a smooth transaction.

Reducing consumption in all aspects of our lives is the most effective way to live green and realize its many benefits. With this in mind, you might want to consider talking to a REALTOR® about whether your current home is sized according to your needs. Your REALTOR® can help you analyze your lifestyle requirements and optimize them through the most appropriate housing choices.

For more information on the Greater Toronto Area resale housing market visit www.TorontoRealEstateBoard.com where you will find the latest market statistics, neighbourhood profiles, open house listings and more.

Bill Johnston is President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 30,000 REALTORS® in the Greater Toronto Area.

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