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Buildex Vancouver

Light House seminar teaches contractors to build green

By: Jean Sorensen

Light House Sustainable Building Centre will announce the launch of an on-site building training program, aimed at contractors and superintendents building green structures, at Buildex Vancouver.

"We are going to train the trainers," said Helen Goodland, executive director of Light House, which was formed in 2005 to provide support to the construction industry on green building methods.

This course will deliver the skills and knowledge needed on a site, with the intent that managers pass the information down to other on-site workers.

A booklet will also be available for distribution to work place staff.

Contractors or supervisory staff attending the conference can order book copies. The course will focus on the green building site.

"What they (contractors, superintendents and site workers) need to know and no more. There is going to be the basic essentials such as what is different on a green building site compared to a conventional one," she said, adding that the delegates attending will be briefed on the documents that must be completed for such a site and how to prepare those required documents.

The course, developed with the help of the Vancouver Regional Construction Association, is expected to be ready to implement by the end of March, Goodland said.

Light House's Sarah McRaven, manager of education services, will be the keynote speaker outlining the new training program on the conference panel entitled: "Introduction to Green Building for Contractors" held Feb. 11 from 1-2:30 p.m.

Goodland will moderate a second panel entitled "The Green Advantage: Business Considerations and Market Advantages of Green Builders and Suppliers".

She said this panel session, with speakers from the wood and concrete industries, provides an opportunity to look at how green building demands are impacting the products that suppliers will be bringing forward into communities and what new innovations will be available. It is a session that will appeal to suppliers and trades, as well as contractors. The session featuring representatives from the Canadian Wood Council and the Cement Association of Canada will be held Feb. 12 from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The centre will also participate on a panel presentation on the Baston Residence in West Vancouver, a pilot project for bringing the U.S. LEED standards for homes into Canada.

This project has been accepted by the Canada Green Building Council as a test case for the evolving Canadian LEED rating standard. Light House acted as a sustainability consultant on the project and Eileen Keenen, building project manager will address the panel. Goodland said that this projects raises some interesting questions about when sustainability is placed in a luxury or high-end property.

“Can luxury be tied to green building practices?” she asked, especially when the home is designed to fit into a prestigious neighborhood like the British Properties area. The panel of developer, consultants, and designers will look at these issues.

She said that in the U.S. a LEED single-family residence standard had been developed and in place for the past two years but there has been a “lag” in Canada. It is hoped that the Baston Residence will open the door as the U.S. standards were modified to meet the Canadian requirements.