



# Area builders are now going green

BY ELLY TAKAKI

**T**he global green building movement is slowly gaining momentum in Essex County. "We have been the hotbed here for green schools and we've led the way with our green roofs," said Joseph Passa, owner of Windsor-based architectural firm, **Passa Associates Inc. Architect**. "We've been to trade shows and pictures of our schools are up on the walls."

In 2002, when Canada was ratifying the Kyoto Protocol, Passa was pitching his green school idea to the **Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board**. "At that time it was a real hard push to get people excited about this," Passa said. "Now the newer Catholic schools in this area are among the most energy efficient in the country."

The new schools are 40 to 65 percent more efficient than a standard design structure, saving tens of thousands of dollars a year in energy costs. "That's not doing anything renewable, just saving energy," said Passa. The Dr. David Suzuki Public School will be so energy efficient, it is expected to qualify for LEED Platinum.

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a



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green building rating system managed by the **Canada Green Building Council**. Local companies **Rosati Construction** and **Oscar Construction** were among the first in the area to achieve LEED certification, and other companies are seeking certification in Energy Star and R-2000.

Ben Klundert, owner of **BK Cornerstone Design Build**, said: "I want builders to be Energy Star certified because it lends credibility to the whole process. I want to see us build better quality homes." In 2006, BK Cornerstone built Essex County's first EnviroHome, and all of its new homes are Energy Star certified.

Mike Dinchik of the **Greater**

**Windsor Home Builders' Association** said the green building movement is a "very slow-growing trend," in Windsor, with commercial green building growing faster than residential. "Not enough people are demanding enough of those features to accelerate things," he said, citing "price pressures" as the cause.

"Solar is still exotic in this area," said Klaus Dohring, owner of Windsor-based company **Green Sun Rising**, which sells solar panels and biomass boilers. "Although renewable technologies typically have a high initial capital investment, the benefit comes from the very low cost of running. What you need to ask is: 'What is my lifetime return, or lifetime cost of ownership?' And this is where these systems start to shine."

Both Dohring and Passa see the potential for Windsor's manufacturing industry to benefit from the green movement. "We're doing okay, but what we need to do is start making things," said Passa. "We've got a well-educated, specialized workforce that should be plugging into how we can make green products," said Passa. "Slowly, people are really picking up on it. Commercially, it makes a lot of sense."

**WB**