



# Tomorrow's Housing Today:

Meeting the Housing Challenges of the New Millennium.

## ***Sustainable Housing for the New Millennium***

The Alberta Sustainable Home/Office is a model of healthy alternative living for the average Canadian family. The house, located in a Calgary suburb, is sustainable in many different ways.

It is self-sufficient in that it has no gas, water or sewer lines. Instead, rainwater is captured and filtered for drinking and hygienic use and the house relies on renewable energy sources, such as solar and wood heating. Energy is conserved through well insulated, airtight construction and high performance windows.

Because the house is not dependent on traditional utilities, it is protected from infrastructure failures caused by natural disasters, such as an ice storm or flood. "Self-sufficiency implies greater freedom from infrastructure breakdowns due to climate change," said Mr. Jorg Ostrowski, Partner, A.S.H. - Autonomous & Sustainable Housing Inc.

The house has been designed with people's health and well being in mind. It optimizes daylight through the use of skylights and solar tubes or sun pipes and offers better air quality with fresh air and improved ventilation. It boasts non-toxic materials and finishes and minimal petroleum products, reducing exposure to contaminants. Many spaces in the house are barrier-free/wheelchair accessible.

The project also tries to attain self-sufficiency and sustainability by optimizing the use of land to grow food for the table. An indoor greenhouse is supplemented by outdoor gardens on every side of the house. These gardens grow both edible and medicinal products. "Our personal gardens give us greater control of the safety and nutritional value of our food," said Mr. Ostrowski. "We are using the land wisely."

Ostrowski's team made a special effort to ensure that the alternative and quality-enhancing features of the house did not translate into higher costs. On the contrary, the house was designed to generate revenue. In addition to income through renting office space within the house, there are utility savings annually. These savings are expected to increase significantly this year due to an increase in natural gas, electrical and water prices.

Since its completion in 1994, this innovative project has gained attention on a global stage. It has welcomed over 40,000 visitors from around the world.

The Alberta Sustainable Home/Office is a finalist in the Concept and Design category of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Housing Awards Program, whose theme this year is **Tomorrow's Housing Today: Meeting the Housing Challenges of the New Millennium**. The Housing Awards Program was created in 1988 as a national forum to share innovations and best practices dedicated to improving the choice, quality and affordability of housing in Canada. The awards recognize individuals, companies and organizations that have made significant contributions to the advancement of Canadian housing.

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