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## Building the future: CaraCo thrives on commitment to sustainability, choice and customer service

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A short drive around town reveals that a lot of new homes are being built in Kingston. CaraCo Development Corporation is a major player in this industry thanks to their commitment to important factors like energy efficiency and choice, says designer and project manager Ken Dantzer.

Currently, CaraCo is focused on building homes in several local subdivisions; a total of 20-25 houses are in construction at the moment.

So where do all these new home customers come from? All walks of life, according to Dantzer.

"There are new people moving into Kingston. There are people transferring in and out of CFB Kingston and there are people growing up here that are buying houses. There are people that are retiring from their larger home and downsizing to a more efficient home. Our purchasers really are quite broad."

While there are many benefits to this wide customer base, the variety also comes with its own set of challenges.

"It's actually a challenging marketing plan because you're advertising to so many different types of people and speaking to all those various groups," Dantzer notes.

Still, he adds that there are certain things pretty much everyone looks for, and even expects, in a new home.

"I think they expect energy efficiency, which is a good thing. We have a strong corporate policy and corporate direction on all of our products [to make sure they're] sustainable. We have been very aggressively seeking and renewing our environmental policies because technology changes very quickly, so we've taken on new and unique

projects every year to ensure that we're moving forward."

This has included working on several LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified homes, as well as some original experimental housing CaraCo calls Performance 2020, meaning that the home is designed to meet the building codes that are projected to be in place by the year 2020.

"Keeping those things moving forward is essential because if you stagnate your competitors all move ahead of you," Dantzer says. "So we're trying to lead the way as opposed to wait for things to come to us."

He explains that today's customers also expect choice when purchasing a new home.

"We're there to suit the needs of the customer. We do have pre-determined plans, but we take all customer input and do exactly as the customer wishes within some parameters because we don't want a customer to feel like they have to take the sample design exactly as it's drawn. It's a good starting point to start the conversation of square footage and rough layout of the house."

Making sure homes stays affordable is also key, says Dantzer. CaraCo homes start at under \$300,000, and the sky is pretty much the limit as to how much people want to spend.

"We have some product in between \$300,000 and \$400,000. The stuff that we do above \$400,000, that's not a very broad audience. The type of person that wants to buy a half-million dollar home is usually more of a custom customer."

Of course, quality and service are also essential, and Dantzer says that CaraCo not only produces top-of-the-line homes, but also stands by them post-production.

"The product is done right, on time and on budget every time. We pride ourselves on award winning service post-construction and



Above: CaraCo designer and project manager Ken Dantzer. Right: The exterior of one of CaraCo's homes.

we stand behind our product. Our [workers] all live in and amongst our own customers, so obviously we have our own selfish interests for why we want to make sure that our customers are happy, because they are our neighbours at the same time."

In addition to the home construction business, CaraCo also owns CJM Property Management and Access Storage. In total, the company employs over 80 people, and CaraCo itself between 20 and 30.

For more information, visit [www.caraco.net](http://www.caraco.net).

