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**P**RINCE GEORGE - Jody Tindill has a big vision: she wants to create a niche market converting the impractical to the practical in older homes. Prince George has a lot of them and instead of sending the building materials to the dump and starting from scratch, she wants to create something beautiful, functional and better than new.

"This city has infill space to grow," she said, and it's why the realtor, designer, renovator and business owner said she and partner Dave Eddy, of **Belledune Homes Ltd** are looking to help their clients give homes a new look and new lease on life.

"Most of the homes have good bones, they just need updating."

Tindill, who's been in the construction industry since she landed her first job at **AWG Windows and Doors** at the age of 19, has an eye for design.

"I worked for AWG for 13 years and really enjoyed it," she said adding that Eddy also worked at the shop as an installer.

"He was a journeyman carpenter and our primary installer. He would sometimes need to make modifications to a client's home and was obviously very talented. At the time, he was raising his daughter and liked the flexibility that job provided."

Eddy's broad skillset came from his background on the family farm owned by his grandparents just outside Regina, Saskatchewan. Out of necessity he learned to fix things, everything. The ability to repair rather than replace is a constant and vital skill on any farm, not just for time savings but also because the money to buy new equipment isn't always guaranteed. Eddy enjoyed the lessons and took



**Jody Tindill builds practicality into every space**

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them with him when he learned carpentry and eventually to his job at the door and window shop.

For Tindill, working at AWG provided her with plenty of time and opportunity to explore her own gifts.

"I'd always tinkered with design, but working with door and window sales and manufacturing I was able to learn other aspects, like drawing, construction methods, and most importantly what worked in a home and what didn't."

Working at AWG, Tindill saw possibilities in entrepreneurship, not just for herself but also through combining talents with Eddy. She went back to school to earn a business degree. Halfway through, chance knocked on the door, and she landed a job at the

Canada Revenue Agency. Ultimately, while working for CRA she did finish her degree, and moved on to managing the facilities and finances at the local library.

In 2005, Eddy, with Tindill's encouragement, created his own company, **Dave Eddy Construction**.

"He put a crew together and focused on framing, interior finishing and siding installations. He built a reputation for quality construction and worked with many of the local home builders. But framing is hard to make profitable so, in 2009, we looked at what would be the best direction for our combined talents."

"In 2010, we incorporated under the Belledune Homes

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**Jody and Dave have a big vision of creating a niche market converting the impractical to the practical in older homes.**

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The Belledune crew have worked with Dave Eddy for many years and are highly skilled in custom home building

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Belledune purchased parcels of land on a stretch of a street that had older mobiles on leased lots

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name. Our original business plan was to build one spec home at a time, but the thing with spec homes as a small startup is that you have to have cash, in those days it was \$300,000-\$400,000. If you're cash challenged it's a real catch 22."

"My parents ended up helping us out with the financing because banks don't like lending money for what they deem high risk, and in particular, spec homes. If you have one completed and one started you can run out of money fast."

Once they got started however, the ball was rolling, with heavy doses of more learning gathered along the way.

"We realized that to keep a contracting business going you need consistent cash flow and not just for when you are building spec homes. In this business, you don't always have that cash flow, especially when we started in 2010 just after the market collapsed and it only just began its

recovery."

Fortunately, the company quickly landed a contract for the company's first custom home that would not only start that all-important word-of-mouth referral system, but would also give both Eddy and Tindill a look at a unique and specialized market.

"We managed to make a deal

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In 2010 when Belledune Homes was first incorporated the plan was to build and sell spec homes

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The company's first custom home netted them the beginning of word-of-mouth referrals

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on parcels of land on one stretch of a street that had older mobiles on leased lots. Once we had a few done and got to show them off with open houses, our business snowballed a little more quickly from there. Now we are booked

into the spring of 2018. That's a great feeling."

It doesn't take long to pick up from Tindill that she and Eddy are passionate about building homes for their clients. She's honest and forthright about

their struggle to create a business that showcased their talents and the obstacles they met along the way.

"In this industry, there are many challenges that are out of our control. If 2008 hadn't happened, we wouldn't have seen things slow down across the province. Also, it isn't always easy to find good people, but when you do, you hang onto them. We now have a crew of five employees and we take that very seriously, that's five households to feed. That's a big responsibility."

She added that Belledune's crew is very loyal. They've worked with Dave in the past and like how they are treated.

"Dave is very patient and calm. He has a system that works really well and has 25 years of experience behind him in project management. He's very good at what he does and we get complemented on it by our clients, crew and subcontractors."

The rising costs of materials has also been a challenge for Belledune as well as anyone else in the industry.

"The US dollar has risen and that puts the costs of certain items way up. Plus, the building code has changed and that has increased costs by about 20 per cent in the last two years. Making the business profitable has been hard, because we also want to build quality, affordable homes first."

Although initially Belledune built spec homes, it also built the odd custom home and did renovations, but as Tindill explained, over the past two years, as the housing market has taken off, it has been building mostly custom homes and renovations.

"When I design a home, I build in practicality. That is what we are known for, our functional designs and layouts."

Tindill has noted a real trend, not just in the demographics Belleune serves but also in

what it is looking for in a home. That theme revolves around efficiency, beauty, function and longevity.

"We are seeing both millennials and retirees wanting the same thing. They want something they can afford that will allow them to still travel, have an active lifestyle and come home to a place where they might have a garage for tinkering, space for guests and luxury without being overly fancy."

She said homebuyers are also looking for a house that has a high resale value. That means putting in quality that will last.

"They don't want the headache or frustration of cheap, poor quality that will need to be replaced in five years. Instead, they're looking for long lasting and a home that works. When I design a space, it has to make sense to the homeowner. Dave and I work well with this."

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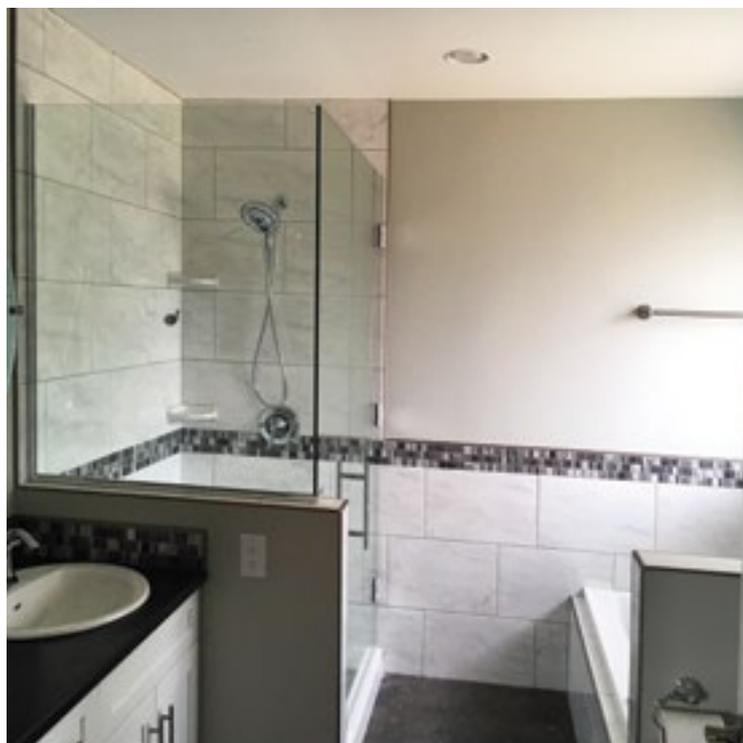
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Dave Eddy, a journeyman carpenter has more than 25 years of experience at fine home finishings

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Belledune believes that a home should not only be beautiful but also have quality and longevity built in

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He knows what is needed and is able to create it. We plan where everything goes, whether its where the heat comes in to positioning of floor joists. And we design around elements that are practical as well as beautiful.”

In 2014, Belledune set itself apart by being the first to be certified **Energy Star Builders** in Northern BC. They even built the first Energy Star home in the region.

“When we heard about the training, we jumped on it. Even though we were already building that way because of its practical nature, we knew that the certification would get us better recognition. It provides clients with an added assurance that their builder is creating their home to higher standards than just the Building Code.”

Tindill also emphasized that as energy efficiency and alternative power sources came online

Belledune wanted to be ahead of the game.

“Many of our homes are going to be solar ready starting this year. It gives our clients choices. Now the **Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA)** is bringing in **Net Zero** training, a major step towards builders having the knowhow to create homes that use minimal power. In terms of energy usage, the Energy Star standard gives a homeowner 20 per cent better than the building code. An R2000 gives 50 per cent better, while the Net Zero program uses no power that is not produced on site.”

She explained that a Net Zero Ready home would include much more insulation, is extremely airtight, as passive as possible and the use of power would be minimized and produced on site.

“By 2032 all new homes will have to be Net Zero,” she said. “We’re getting on that early and are aggressively learning all we can to understand everything about indoor health and comfort

in these homes.”

Belledune is also looking to apply that expertise and knowledge to renovations.

“We’re taking an active role in the transformation of older homes, especially from the 1970’s. They’re small and convert easily to something more functional with better esthetics,” she said, adding that not everyone wants to pack up and move an entire household. Giving a typical BC box home a facelift and new life saves resources and money and is the ultimate in practicality.

Recently, Tindill earned her real estate license and is now, in addition to holding a Bachelor of Commerce degree from **University of Northern BC**, a Masters Certificate of Project Management and a PMP designation, a realtor with **Royal LePage Prince George**. She is the current president of the **Canadian Home Builder’s Association of Northern BC**, chair of the education committee for CHBA-NBC and completed a term as an appointed member of the Advisory Committee on Development Design for the **City of Prince George**.

Dave Eddy has been a carpenter and tradesman for 25 years and is a Certified Housing Professional with a Master Residential Builder designation and is an active member of the **Builder Education Committee** with the **Homeowner Protection Office**.

Belledune Homes Ltd. is at [www.belledunehomes.ca](http://www.belledunehomes.ca)

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