



**SUPERIOR HOME IMPROVEMENTS'** Jeff Andrew (left) and Art Lussier decided to go into business for themselves, with each other.



Photo by Nicole Nadeau

**RENOVATOR PROFILE**

# Superior Home Improvements

**For these two independent subs, joining forces was a superior idea**

**After decades of working for other people's home improvement companies,**

too many winters spent perched at the top of a ladder trying to cap a window frame with frozen fingers, and one too many of those ladders slipping out from underneath them, Art Lussier and Jeff Andrew decided to go into business for themselves, with each other.

"I remember the day,"

says Andrew of his epiphany. "I was working for a company where the owner was younger than me. I was actually working on his house and it just struck me: Why am I doing this for somebody else?"

Lussier is more succinct about it: "It was all the bullshit," he says. Specifically, while always proud of the effort he put into his work, Lussier found that far too often the



people he was working for and with were only interested in making a buck, and the customers often ended up angry and disillusioned with the experience.

So, in 1999, the two joined forces under the name Superior Home Improvements, and set up shop in a 20,000-sq.ft. showroom and warehouse in an industrial unit in north-east Scarborough, Ont., and haven't looked back since.

While both had fairly diverse renovation experiences in the past – once

upon a time, Lussier was a foreman in the steelworkers' union, and Andrew's done everything from hang storm doors to building decks – the bulk of their careers were spent installing windows and exterior doors, so that's what their focus is.

Right from the beginning, they developed a workflow system that tapped into each individual's skills. Lussier manages the installation crews and still regularly straps on the toolbelt: he rechecks all

the sales guys' measurements, handles most of the service, and even helps out on the odd job when work orders are starting to pile up. Andrew covers the admin side, taking care of the ordering, scheduling, and myriad other paperwork tasks required to

customers to be able to claim their rebate." (We'll delve deeper into the issue of how to combat – and compete with – the underground economy in an upcoming issue of *Renovation Contractor*.) And, though there can be the occasional butting

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keep to keep two installation crews and two salesmen busy.

If there's one thing that keeps them from being as busy as they'd like, it's the underground economy. "Ever since HST came in, the guys who'll take cash have been killing us," says Andrew. To Lussier, one of the obvious solutions is to reinstate programs like the now cancelled federal ecoEnergy Retrofit rebates. "That really helped because you had to be above ground for

of heads – "Being in a partnership is a bit like being in a marriage," is how Andrew puts it – both agree they couldn't be happier working for themselves. And, with a dozen years at the helm, they've got the confidence to keep going. As Andrew says, "we can handle anything that comes our way because we have done it before."

**Interested in joining our advisory board? Contact managing editor Allan Britnell: [allan@renocontractor.ca](mailto:allan@renocontractor.ca).**

## FAST FACTS

- Company name:** Superior Home Improvements
- Location(s):** Scarborough, Ont.
- Year founded:** 1999
- Specializing in:** Exterior window and door installations
- Number of employees:** Two
- Gross revenues (2010):** \$1.2 million

# JULY/AUGUST

## CALENDAR COUNTDOWN



**When you're not toiling away through the dog days of summer, relax with a cold one (or six) and take in some of these events.**

**RBC Canadian Open, Vancouver**  
July 21-24

The Shaughnessy Golf & Country Club hosts 156 golfers trying to claim the 107<sup>th</sup> Canadian Open championship.

**AUGUST**  
**The August Long Weekend**  
August 1

Sure it's got a bunch of different names (Civic Holiday, Heritage Day, and Natal Day, among others), and we don't all get the day off (sorry Quebecers, Newfoundlanders, and Yukoners), but for those that do, the mid-summer long weekend is a welcome break.

**Labour Force Survey**  
August 5

Statistics Canada releases its latest Labour Force Survey detailing employment figures for July. Did you have to hire – or fire – somebody last month? July's Consumer

Price Index report (telling us how much gasoline went up, among other things) comes out two weeks later.

**Toronto's Festival of Beer**  
Aug. 5-7

It's a festival. Celebrating beer. Enough said.

**Rogers Cup Tennis Tournament (Montreal)**  
Aug. 8-14

In the immortal words of Daffy Duck: Tenni-th anyone?

**NASCAR 200 Montreal**  
Aug. 19-20



**Champ Car Grand Prix of Montreal**  
Aug. 26-28

It's back-to-back racing weekends on Montreal's Circuit Gilles Villeneuve. First up are the NASCAR Nationwide Series drivers, followed by the Champ Car World Series.

