

## The 2016 General Assembly Session

### Bills pass that will help housing

The following bills supported by the Rhode Island Builders Association passed both the state Senate and House of Representatives and, as this magazine went to press, they were awaiting Gov. Gina Raimondo's signature.

**Land Fairness Act:** Subtracting wetland buffers from yield calculations has often drastically reduced the number of units that are buildable and has driven up costs. The "land fairness act" (House bill 7651 and Senate bill 2591) provides that:

"Wetland buffers, as defined in §2-1-20, shall be included in the calculation of a minimum lot area and in the total number of square feet or acres of a tract or parcel of land before calculating the maximum potential number of units or lots for development;

provided, however, that this shall not apply to lots directly abutting surface reservoirs with direct withdrawals used for public drinking water.

Nothing herein changes the definition and applicability of a buildable lot as set forth under §45-23-60(a)(4); and nothing herein permits the disturbance of wetlands or wetland buffers or otherwise alters the provisions of the fresh water wetlands act, §2-1-18, et seq. 1"

If signed by Gov. Raimondo, the law would take effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Warwick) sponsored the bill in the House of Representatives, and Sens. Michael J. McCaffrey (D-Warwick) and Frank S.

see **LEGISLATION**...page 23

### FEATURED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR AUGUST

*Center Section*

### RIBA Golf Classic is Sept. 12

The Rhode Island Builders Association's 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Classic takes place at Warwick Country Club. Watch your mail for more information. To become a sponsor, contact Elizabeth Carpenter at (401) 438-7400 or [ecarpenter@ribuilders.org](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org).

### Summit points up housing shortage in R.I.

The keynote speaker at the Power of Place Summit says there is not enough residential construction in the state to meet future housing needs.

*Page 3*

### Jobs Bank matching workers with employers

Need workers? The Residential Construction Workforce Partnership and the Rhode Island Builders Association continue to meet the need with the online Jobs Bank.

*Page 10*

## It's clambake time!



The Rhode Island Builders Association's 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Clambake takes place on Friday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, at Francis Farm in Rehoboth, Mass. Enjoy a full day of fun for only \$35 per person! Details on page 2.

## The Clambake is here!

# Get your low-priced tickets while they last

*A whole day of food and fun for only \$35,  
benefit by being a sponsor!*

**WHEN:** Friday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, noon to 8 p.m.

**WHERE:** Francis Farm, 27 Francis Farm Rd., Rehoboth, MA 02769

**COST:** \$35 per person while they last, \$70 per person after that

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** July 29<sup>th</sup>

**FOR INFORMATION, FOR SPONSORSHIPS AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Elizabeth Carpenter at [ecarpenter@ribuilders.org](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400.

There's still time to get in on the low-priced tickets for the Rhode Island Builders Association's 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Clambake! Over 400 people are expected to attend, and tickets are only \$35 for a whole day of fun, food, drink, contests and networking, for as long as the sponsorships keep coming.

The more sponsors who sign on this year, the longer the lower price can be offered, and the more people will be able to enjoy a fabulous day of fun, contests, events, prizes, food and drink. Each ticket includes two free beers.

As always, great food will be featured throughout the day. There will be clamcakes and chowder, hot dogs, and little necks on the half shell. The traditional clambake will include steamers, barbecued chicken, brown bread, fish and all the fixings, followed by ice cream. Steak and lobster will be available for an extra charge. Soda, beer and assorted drinks will be available all day.

Enjoy volleyball, horseshoes, basketball, the football toss, insulation toss, the RIBA-invented sport of plywood throwing, and more! And, at the end of the day, enjoy awards and many door prizes. Consider making this great event, a RIBA tradition since 1950, your company's annual outing, as so many companies do, and please consider a sponsorship!



The Rhode Island Builders Association's  
66th Annual Clambake, August 5, Francis Farm, Rehoboth, Mass.

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**Presenting: \$5,000 • Premier: \$1,000 • Supporter: \$500 • Patron: \$300 • Friend: \$75**

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**Presenting Sponsor:** This is a custom package that includes giveaways, custom signs, full exposure and a dominant presence at the Clambake. It also includes 10 complimentary tickets, signs at event stations, a banner at dinner, a Rhode Island Builder Report story, a shirt and hat giveaway, and a vendor/exhibit table at clambake.

**Premier:** Includes five complimentary tickets, a sign at every event station, a banner at dinner, mention in The Rhode Island Builder Report, and a vendor/exhibit table at clambake.

**Supporter:** Includes two complimentary tickets, a banner at dinner, mention in The Rhode Island Builder Report, and a vendor/exhibit table at clambake.

**Patron:** Includes a banner at dinner and mention in The Rhode Island Builder Report.

**Friend:** Includes mention in The Rhode Island Builder Report.

Contact Elizabeth Carpenter at the RIBA office,  
[ecarpenter@ribuilders.org](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org) or at (401) 438-7400.

## The Rhode Island Builder

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Rhode Island Builders Association  
since 1951

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**The Rhode Island Builder Report**  
Publishing Director..... John Marcantonio  
Editor ..... Paul F. Eno

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## In the News

# Power of Place Summit highlights need for more home construction



*During the Power of Place Summit at the Rhode Island Convention Center on June 21<sup>st</sup>, Jonathan Smoke, chief economist for Realtor.com, explains why there are too few residential housing units being built in Rhode Island.*

By Paul F. Eno Editor

While the general economy and the jobs picture in Rhode Island are slowly improving, construction starts are so few that the expected housing demand in coming years will create "ridiculous" spikes in prices and rents.

That was the word from Jonathan Smoke, chief economist for Realtor.com and keynote speaker at the Power of Place Summit on June 21<sup>st</sup>. The semi-annual event, sponsored by Grow Smart Rhode Island and its partners, brought together nearly 400 planners, regulators and developers, along with corporate and political leaders, at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence.

While projecting an improving national housing market over-

*see SUMMIT...page 25*

### **DEADLINES FOR THE SEPT. ISSUE**

**All copy, ads and photos must be to us by**

## **Friday, July 29**

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## LOOKING AHEAD!

♦ **August 1<sup>st</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>: 5-Hour CRLB Pre-Registration Course** - RIBA headquarters, East Providence, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. This course is required by the Rhode Island Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board for new contractors before they register. This course is not required if you have been registered within the previous 10 years. Cost: \$250. You must pre-register for this class. No admittance without pre-registration and payment. To register, contact Sheila McCarthy, [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 12.*

♦ **August 5<sup>th</sup>: 66<sup>th</sup> Annual RIBA Clambake** - Noon to dusk at Francis Farm, Rehoboth, Mass. Watch for more information. To become a sponsor, contact Elizabeth Carpenter at (401) 438-7400 or [ecarpenter@ribuilders.org](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org). Premier Sponsors will have exhibit space at the Clambake. *Details on page 2.*

♦ **August 9<sup>th</sup>: OSHA 3-Hour Refresher** - 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. This class will inform you about the most recent updates to OSHA regulations. FREE for members, with a \$10 materials charge. \$75 for non-members, with a \$10 materials charge. To register, contact Sheila McCarthy, [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 12.*

♦ **August 16<sup>th</sup>: 4-Hour Lead-Safe Refresher Class** - RIBA headquarters, East Providence, 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. FREE for members and their employees, with a \$40 materials/registration fee. \$75 for non-members, with a \$40 materials/registration fee. You must pre-register for this class. No admittance without pre-registration and payment. To register, contact Sheila McCarthy, [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 17.*

♦ **August 22<sup>nd</sup>: Hydraulic Forklift Pre-Licensing Class** - RIBA headquarters, East Providence, 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. FREE for members and their employees, with a \$40 materials/registration fee. \$110 for non-members, with a \$40 materials/registration fee. You must pre-register for this class. No admittance without pre-registration and payment. To register, contact Sheila McCarthy, [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 17.*

♦ **September 12<sup>th</sup>: 26<sup>th</sup> Annual RIBA Golf Classic** - Warwick Country Club. Watch for more information. To become a sponsor, contact Elizabeth Carpenter at (401) 438-7400 or [ecarpenter@ribuilders.org](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org).

♦ **September 14<sup>th</sup>: 5-Hour CRLB Pre-Registration Course** - RIBA headquarters, East Providence, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. This course is required by the Rhode Island Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board for new contractors before they register. This course is not required if you have been registered within the previous 10 years. Cost: \$250. You must pre-register for this class. No admittance without pre-registration and payment. To register, contact Sheila McCarthy, [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 12.*

♦ **September 15<sup>th</sup>: RIBA Breakfast, New Member Orientation, Open House and Networking Event, sponsored by Davitt Design Build** - RIBA headquarters, East Providence, between 7 and 10 a.m. Participants may stay longer if they wish. This FREE event is for new and current members who want to learn more about their member benefits and to meet the RIBA team. RSVPs are requested. To RSVP or if you or your company would like to sponsor a breakfast, please contact Cheryl Boyd at (401) 438-7400 or [cboyd@ribuilders.org](mailto:cboyd@ribuilders.org). *Information on Page 6.*

**More information, registration and payment for most  
RIBA events is available at [RIBUILDERS.org](http://RIBUILDERS.org).**

♦ Indicates a RIBA-sponsored event.



Designates a course eligible for Rhode Island state-mandated continuing education credits. Contact RIBA for confirmation.

S Class will be taught in Spanish.



# President's Message



Roland J. Fiore

## Legislative action comes at a good time for R.I. economy

As we can see from the front page of this issue, our industry has had a very busy year supporting some important bills in the General Assembly, with several measures passing that are significant for the state's housing market. And we know that the housing market is one of the linchpins of our economy.

This legislative action comes at a good time, because it was made clear by a nationally recognized economist at the Power of Place Summit in Providence on June 21<sup>st</sup> (*story on page 3*) that Rhode Island needs three times the housing production it currently has in order to meet the projected housing needs of the next 10 years. And as much of this housing as possible must be affordable for low- and middle-income people.

According to Jonathan Smoke, chief economist of Realtor.com, an arm of the National Association of Realtors®, if our housing production doesn't increase in this way, the Rhode Island and Bristol County, Mass., housing market could see home prices and rents like those in San Francisco or Manhattan.

Fortunately, state lawmakers and regulators see the need too. Sensible laws and regulations that streamline housing construction in appropriate growth areas will not only help us provide the housing needed, but will lower the cost of construction as well.

The beneficiaries will be the people who need housing most and cannot afford it under the current conditions. So "well done" to all those who are helping us all reach the goal!



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Governor addresses RIBA board

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# NeighborWorks honored at Summit



Joseph F. Garlick Jr., executive director of NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley (center), receives an Outstanding Smart Growth Leader Award during the Power of Place Summit in Providence on June 21<sup>st</sup> (Story on page 3). With Mr. Garlick are Grow Smart Rhode Island Executive Director Scott Wolf, left, and Chairman Howard Kilguss. NeighborWorks, now in its 30<sup>th</sup> year, has been a force for neighborhood revitalization in northern Rhode Island, developing nearly 400 affordable apartments and homes for low-income families, 16,500 square feet of community facilities and 34,200 square feet of commercial space, using smart-growth principles.

## Networking Breakfasts at RIBA resume in September *Sponsored by Davitt Design Build*

**WHEN:** Thursday September 15<sup>th</sup>, 7 to 10 a.m.

**WHERE:** Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pky #301, East Providence 02914

**COST:** FREE for members and non-members.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** September 12<sup>th</sup>

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Cheryl Boyd at cboyd@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

The Breakfast, New Member Orientation, Open House and Networking Events at Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters will resume on September 15<sup>th</sup> with an event generously sponsored by Davitt Design Build.

The breakfast will begin at 7 a.m., making it more convenient for contractors who get an early start at the jobsite.

The breakfast, FREE for members and non-members, is an opportunity to visit the RIBA offices, meet the RIBA team and find out more about the many benefits you receive as a member.

Bring your non-member subcontractors, suppliers and other industry colleagues so they can find out about the benefits of membership. The hot buffet includes eggs, bacon, home fries, fruit, coffee and more. RSVPs are requested by September 12<sup>th</sup>.

If your company would like to sponsor a monthly Breakfast, and be entitled to a display table at the event, contact Cheryl Boyd at (401) 438-7400 or cboyd@ribuilders.org.

## LOPCO Contracting wins 'Best in R.I.' Award



Thomas and Ayana Lopatosky display the award for "Rhode Island's Best Painting Contractor," received on June 16<sup>th</sup> in ceremonies at the Venus di Milo, Swansea, Mass.

LOPCO Contracting has been honored as "Rhode Island's Finest Painting Contracting Company 2016" by *ShopInRI* magazine. The award was presented in ceremonies at the Venus di Milo, Swansea, Mass., on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

"It was truly awesome, and we were very appreciative of a number of our supporters and colleagues who attended the event and helped us celebrate," said owner Thomas J. Lopatosky.



## Member Profile: Steve Elliott of Elco Painting Inc.

# From a little old lady to Taylor Swift

By Paul F. Eno Editor

Never underestimate the influence of a little old lady. Steve Elliott of ELCO Painting will be the first to tell you that.

"I was the lawn-watering boy at Wethersfield Commons in Warwick. There was a little old lady who lived there, and I used to help her with groceries and small chores. One day she asked me to paint her garage floor. I looked into it, bought products from Sherwin-Williams®, and went to work," Steve recalls.

The little old lady liked what Steve did.

"Her next-door neighbor liked it too, and she hired me to do her garage floor as well."

Then came the garage walls, "and it became contagious," Steve says. Before he knew it, he was painting the insides of condos on nights and weekends.

"Many people think you can just hire a kid and they can just slap paint on a surface. There's much more to it," states the first-generation painting contractor. "There was a lot of self-education on my part."

Steve found a great deal of help from the local Sherwin-Williams Co. representative, then-Maintenance Sales Representative George Dupont, who was headquartered in Warwick.

"George helped me a lot," says Steve. "He and I worked together on many projects. He'd come with me to look at the job, and we'd design a paint system. We always found the right product for the right application."

Meanwhile: "I was a station-wagon painter for a while, with my brother-in-law working for me part-time. As we got busier, he came on full-time."

The work just grew until it gave birth to the Elliott Family business in 1980. Steve started with two garages in Cranston, which he rented from his brother. After more growth and a great deal of hard work, Elco Painting was an up-and-running business by 1989.



Steve Elliott at a recent RIBA Home Show

From the confidence and encouragement of that first customer at Wethersfield Commons, the Elliotts have built a respected company, with 36 painters on the road and five family members on the staff. Along with Steve, family members include his wife, Mary, sons Steve Jr. and Kenny, and a daughter-in-law.

Based in North Kingstown for the last 12 years, Elco has 19 vehicles and covers all of Rhode Island, though most work is in South County. Services include anything a residential, commercial or industrial client would want from a painting contractor, along with carpentry.

Elco Painting has some interesting customers. In one well-circulated online photo of singer Taylor Swift's \$18 million, seven-bedroom home in Watch Hill, an Elco truck is parked prominently in front.

"We work there on a regular basis, for the Westerly management firm that takes

care of the property," Steve says.

The pop superstar didn't own the house when Elco started working there, though.

"I was watching the 6 o'clock news one morning, and they said that Taylor Swift had just bought the place. I had a crew headed there that day!"

Steve hasn't met the singer, but Steve Jr., has.

Well before he became a painting contractor to the stars, however, Steve learned that trade associations can be a contractor's best friend, especially when it comes to education and business skills such as estimating. He discovered organizations like the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America and, of course, the Rhode Island Builders Association. He is active in both.

Elco has been a fixture at the Rhode Island Home Show for many years, and Steve and Mary Elliott are familiar faces there.

"We never miss the Home Show. It's always good for us and generates a variety of business, from small jobs to complete homes and commercial work."

Steve also takes advantage of RIBA's other networking and marketing opportunities, and certainly the education program, with free tuition for members and their employees. These include first aid/CPR, the lead classes, and the OSHA 10 course.

What does the future hold for Steve Elliott and Elco Painting? "The course we've been on has brought success, so we'll maintain that course," Steve declares. "It's been an interesting ride for me, and I've been on the mountaintop and in the ditch! But I have no plans to retire in near future."

Find out more at [www.ELCOPAINTING.com](http://www.ELCOPAINTING.com).

### ***Elco Painting Inc.***

***President: Steven Elliott***

***RIBA member since: 1996***

***Focus: Residential, commercial, industrial painting and carpentry.***

***Serves: Rhode Island***

***Founded: 1980***

***Based: North Kingstown, Rhode Island***

## RIBA supporting CTE students, instructors on many fronts

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

School may be out for the summer, but the Rhode Island Builders Association's support for the state's career and technical education (CTE) programs goes on year-round.

Many people from RIBA work tirelessly with and for Rhode Island's dedicated CTE instructors and students so the residential construction industry will have the skilled labor we need for the challenges of the future. Among the many involved RIBA staffers and members are Executive Director John Marcantonio, Membership and Education Director Cheryl Boyd, board members Robert J. Baldwin, John Bentz, Louis Cotoia and many others.

The success of these CTE programs is manifest this summer with so many of the



**Louis Cotoia, second from right, a member of the Rhode Island Builders Association's Board of Directors and one of RIBA's point men on CTE, participates in a recent panel at the Providence Career and Technical Academy.**

students working in internships and planning their futures in our industry.

In lieu of our monthly CTE program profile, let's take a look at the school that

inspired Rhode Island's 2014 CTE reform law. Worcester Technical High School, just north of our border, remains a national

see **WORKFORCE**...next page



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## ***WORKFORCE...from previous page***

model.

"In the 1996-1998 period, our predecessor school, Worcester Vocational High School, one of the oldest CTE schools in the United States, almost closed, but the community rallied," said Sheila M. Harrity, former principal of WTHS and a Providence College graduate.

In 2006, the result was the new WTHS, a \$90-million, 400,000 square-foot complex that sits on Skyline Drive, one of the highest hills in Worcester, the second largest city in New England. Today there are over 1,400 students in 24 technical programs. The students, 51 percent of whom are female, have exceeded the national benchmarks in English, mathematics and every sub-group in five out of the past six years. School Planning and Management magazine has rated WTHS "The #1 Public Education Facility in the Nation."

### ***Making it work***

In making WTHS such a success, however, several very large stereotypes had to be pulled inside-out, according to Dr. Harrity.

"It isn't just the facility that creates the success, we had to convince people that CTE isn't a dumping ground for students who can't make it in college courses. That was the prevailing attitude, and still is in many areas of the country," she said.

Among the steps she and other WTHS leaders took:

- Setting high expectations for students. These include rigorous academic standards, many advanced-placement (AP) courses, and demanding criteria for success in the technical programs.

- Establishing a positive, highly motivational environment to encourage hard work and perseverance.

- Maintaining direct connections with national and local businesses for mutual benefit. Several of the school's technical programs operate under standards and certifications by companies like Cisco Systems, Microsoft, Toyota and others. As a result, Students can earn industrial certifications at WTHS and many walk right into high-paying jobs after graduation.

Locally, over 350 businesses are associated with the school as donors, sponsors and



***Representatives of the Rhode Island Builders Association and other industry groups, along with state officials, visit Worcester Technical High School (WTHS) in February 2014. Leading a tour of the carpentry facility is, at right, Kyle J. Brenner, now principal of WTHS. Participating are, from left, RIBA Executive Director John Marcantonio, state Senate policy staffer Robert Kalaskowski, John Bentz of RIBA, then-WTHS Principal Sheila M. Harrity, state Senate policy staffer Paula S. Dominguez, Gary S. Ezovsky of the SBA Region One Small Business Regulatory Fairness Board, past RIBA President Robert J. Baldwin, and then-R.I. Commissioner of Education Deborah A. Gist. The tour helped spur Rhode Island's 2014 CTE reform legislation.***

providers of internships.

- Maintaining direct connections with the community. Students in many programs work directly with low-income residents in the Worcester area, repairing cars or renovating dwelling units. WTHS even has an on-campus "Main Street." Open to the public, this mall-like facility includes a 125-seat restaurant and bakery, a branch of the Worcester Credit Union, a beauty salon and a gift shop, all run by students.

- Maintaining direct connections with other academic institutions. WTHS has integrated academic and technical curricula with other schools, such as Becker College, Johnson & Wales University, Massachusetts Bay Community College, Mt. Wachusett Community College, New England Institute of Technology, and Quinsigamond Community College. Students can earn college credit in many WTHS courses.

When public money began to dry up, Dr. Harrity and her staff formed the Skyline Technical Fund, a non-profit, 501 C3 organization that brings in corporate and private donations to help support the school.

In 2014, a delegation from Rhode Island, including two state legislative staffers and five members of RIBA, toured the school with WTHS then-Director of Career and Technical Education Kyle J. Brenner, who is now principal.

"For once, Rhode Island's small size can be a significant advantage here. There's no reason why we can't establish a unified, statewide CTE system on this model," stated Mr. Baldwin, one of those visitors.

The result was House Bill 8204 Sub A, which laid the groundwork for a unified statewide CTE system supported in part by liaisons with national, state and local businesses, and with institutions of higher education.

RIBA supported the bill, the first CTE reform in Rhode Island in 40 years.

Using WTHS as a model for a unified Rhode Island CTE program, the law:

- Created a 15-member Board of Trustees on Career and Technical Education to "be responsible for ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated career and technical

*see CTE...page 22*

## Newest member benefit

# RIBA helps you find good employees

Call to post your job openings on RCWPjobs.com

It's the trend in industry now: Hiring managers are using online job boards to find good employees. And for Rhode Island's residential construction industry, the job board to be part of is the Jobs Bank at RCWPjobs.com.

David Whitney, director of finance at Arnold Lumber Co., agrees.

"Arnold Lumber has been successfully using the RCWP Jobs Bank for the past few months for our hiring needs," Mr. Whitney told *The Rhode Island Builder*.

"The Jobs Bank provides candidates with the experience and industry expertise we look for. Other job sites may require 10-15 applicants to find one quality potential employee, whereas the RIBA job board is



Louis Cotoia and Cheryl Boyd

consistently providing quality applicants. It's a great tool to find quality employees with experience in the building industry."

The online Jobs Bank is part of an ongoing effort by the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP), with the Rhode Island Builders Association at its hub, to match qualified employees with the employers who need them. And if those potential employees need training, RCWP is there to match them with it.

"The Jobs Bank is growing," said RIBA Membership and Education Director Cheryl Boyd, who, along with RIBA board member

Louis Cotoia, is one of the association's spearheads for developing the Jobs Bank and working with the state's career and technical education (CTE) programs.

"Employers and potential employees are signing up for free accounts at RCWPjobs.com. Applicants are building résumés online, and the website is growing. Members and non-members of RIBA are welcome," Ms. Boyd said.

Ms. Boyd urged suppliers and others in the industry, when they host builders, to invite her and Mr. Cotoia as well.

"We will come in and show them how to use the site, and what other great benefits come from RIBA membership."

RCWP's efforts are aided by grants from Gov. Gina Raimondo's Real Jobs Rhode Island program, and it also involves continuing support of the state's CTE programs, with a special emphasis on encouraging those students to stay in Rhode Island and work in the residential construction industry.

"The goal is for our industry to solve its own labor shortage, and that means the employers need to communicate with us," Ms. Boyd added. "Call me if you're looking for skilled workers. And, once again, if you have an event as a contractor or supplier, invite me down to set up a booth so people who need to hear about the RCWP and the Jobs Bank can learn about it."

Ms. Boyd said that she is happy to go to schools and job fairs as well. She also emphasized that each CTE school needs partners in the residential construction industry, and that individual students need industry mentors.

"With the Jobs Bank off to such a great start, it's important now to get the word out," Ms. Boyd said. "We need everyone talking about it, encouraging all employers, along with CTE students and other potential job seekers, to sign up for the free RCWPJobs.com account, then post their job openings and résumés."

In addition, a free e-mail Jobs Bank newsletter is now available via the website. Sign up for this at RCWPJobs.com. Contact Ms. Boyd at (401) 438-7400 or cboyd@ribuilders.org.



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## Our Future Workforce

*Third in a series*

### What to ask a potential employee

*This month: David A. Caldwell Jr.  
of Caldwell and Johnson Inc.*

As the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership continues to match employers with the workers they need, *The Rhode Island Builder* will present suggestions from members of the Rhode Island Builders Association about what you should ask when interviewing a potential employee.

"Our company has never advertised for employment," said David A. Caldwell Jr. of Caldwell and Johnson Inc., who is also vice president of RIBA.

"We are able to be very selective as to whom we hire, and we acquire people through word of mouth. Also, our pay and benefits package is quite a bit better than average," Mr. Caldwell added.

"In an interview with a potential employee, we want to know what they feel their greatest strength is, and their biggest weakness."

There are also some generic questions, but Mr. Caldwell stresses that there are many that can't be asked.

"According to employment law, there is almost nothing you can actually ask these days. Our members should clear any questions with their attorneys."

If you're an employer in the residential construction industry and would like to share your insights on interviewing potential employees, please contact the editor at (401) 527-5345 or at [builder@newriverpress.com](mailto:builder@newriverpress.com).



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## Online courses to debut at RIBA

Online courses, including courses to help contractors meet the state's continuing-education requirement, are coming to the Rhode Island Builders Association's ever-expanding education program by this fall, and they will continue to be free of tuition charge for members and their employees.

That's the news from RIBA Membership and Education Director Cheryl Boyd, who notes that the new website RIBAEDUCATES.com will be up and running soon as well.

"This website will be the online resource for all the courses we offer, both online and offline," Ms. Boyd said. "We'll keep members informed by e-mail and mail."

Both new and traditional courses will be included as the education program broadens.

"Along with the standard classes - lead, OSHA and the rest - we're working on some new offerings, including ergonomics, something that can increase both safety and efficiency on the jobsite," Ms. Boyd said.

### Continuing-education requirements

The Rhode Island Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board (CRLB) approved continuing-education requirements for contractors last year.

**Current contractors:** If you are currently a registered contractor in Rhode Island, you will have two years from your renewal date to take five credit hours of continuing education in CRLB or other third-party vendor approved courses in subject areas related to your business.

Subject areas may include, but are not limited to, land use, development, planning and zoning, resource conservation and estimating.

If you are also licensed by the CRLB as a home inspector, well drilling contractor, underground utility contractor, or any other trade governed by the CRLB, education credits obtained for that license may satisfy the requirements for registration. You must provide proof of completion of these credits upon renewal, and courses must be approved by the CRLB.

**New contractors:** New registrants with the Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board (CRLB) who are performing any residential work must provide the CRLB with proof of completion of five credit hours (one credit hour = 50 minutes) of education prior to obtaining a registration.

The five credit hours must have been completed within 24 months before applying for a registration and must have been completed in person.

Applicants are responsible for payment of any fees or materials associated with the courses taken. Documentation of all five credit hours must be submitted to the CRLB, together with the applicant's application and fee, either electronically from CRLB-approved third-party vendors or in person.

see EDUCATION...page 22

## 5 Hour Pre- Registration Course

August 1<sup>st</sup>, August 12<sup>th</sup>, August 19<sup>th</sup>,  
August 31<sup>st</sup>, September 15<sup>th</sup>

**New contractors only**

**WHEN:** All dates, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**WHERE:** Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pky #301, East Providence 02914

**COST:** \$250

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One week before class

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

The Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board (CRLB) now requires five hours of education for anyone who plans to register as a new contractor in Rhode Island. The course includes: Introduction to Construction Contracts, Introduction to Construction Codes and Standards, Introduction to Construction Regulations and Regulating Agencies, Introduction to Construction Business Principles and Practices, and Workplace Health and Safety. Pre-registration is required for admittance.

This course is not required if you have been registered within the previous 10 years.



## OSHA Refresher

August 9<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Tuesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:30-10:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** RIBA headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pkwy. #301, East Providence 02914

**COST:** FREE for members with a \$10 materials charge. \$75 for non-members with a \$10 materials charge.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One week before class

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Sheila McCarthy, smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

This 3-Hour Refresher Class will get you up to date on the most recent changes to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations.

OSHA routinely focuses on high-hazard industries like residential construction for surprise jobsite inspections. Fall protection is especially important.

Ignorance of the regulations is no excuse. Stay on top of changes to avoid costly fines!





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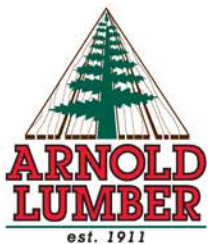


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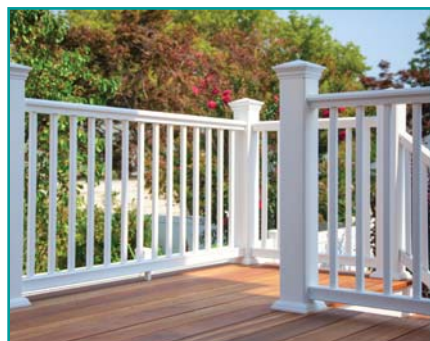




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Receive more information about Transform Railing by RDI at Coventry Lumber, Inc. in Coventry, Rhode Island, or West Haven Lumber, Inc. in West Haven, Connecticut, or visit [www.coventrylumber.com](http://www.coventrylumber.com)

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## Four-hour Lead licensing refresher

August 16<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**WHERE:** Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pky #301, East Providence 02914

**COST:** FREE for members and their employees, with a \$40 materials/registration fee. A \$75 charge for non-members and a \$40 materials/registration fee.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One week before class.

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

This is a four-hour RRP refresher class with Scott Asprey of Risk & Safety Management, for contractors who have their lead renovator/remodeler certification and whose certificate is up for renewal.

The class will review lead-hazard controls and update attendees on any changes to state or federal regulations. You must pre-register for this class. No admittance without pre-registration and payment.



## Hydraulic Forklift Pre-Licensing Class

August 22<sup>nd</sup>

**WHEN:** Wednesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**WHERE:** Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pky #301, East Providence 02914

**COST:** FREE for members and their employees, with a \$40 materials/registration fee. A \$110 charge for non-members and a \$40 materials/registration fee.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One week before class.

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

This all-day class will prepare potential hydraulic forklift operators for the state test for the forklift operators license from the Dept. of Labor and Training.

The class covers the mechanics of the forklift, daily inspections, and fuel/electric storage. Also covered will be ANSI and OSHA standards, safe practices, along with proper care and maintenance.

You must pre-register for this class. No admittance without pre-registration and payment.





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## Legislative action in 2016 session promises boost for housing



**Steven Carlino**

As you can see from the main legislative story in this issue (*see page 1*), it has been a very active and important General Assembly session for the residential construction industry. And when our lawmakers help the industry, they help everyone who needs a home.

The measures that passed were important, but of special significance are the “land fairness act” and the “freeboard bill.”

The land fairness act certainly increases the fairness of land-use decisions, so be sure to read about it in this issue. It will be of great value to many of our members and their customers, and it could make the difference between a new home or no home in many cases.

The freeboard bill remedies a major problem for coastal build-

ers: As flood-insurance requirements have raised buildings higher, local height restrictions kept their roofs at the same height. Thanks to the freeboard bill, houses in the affected areas no longer have to be “squashed.”

We also are pleased to see that the \$40 million Housing Opportunity Bond, part of Gov. Gina Raimondo's fiscal 2017 budget, will be on the ballot in November.

If passed, this bond issue will help solve our very serious shortage of affordable housing, assist many Rhode Islanders in obtaining new homes, and it will provide work for many of our members.

We thank the bill sponsors, especially Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi and Sen. Michael J. McCaffrey, for their hard work, and the many members who worked on behalf of our advocacy as well!



**Robert J. Baldwin**

### RIBA's Legislative Committee

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## OSHA rises fines on Aug. 1

*National Association of Home Builders*

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, monetary penalties issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) for regulation infractions are slated to rise by up to 150 percent, depending on the type of violation.

Last fall, President Barack Obama signed a budget bill that allowed the agency to enact a catch-up adjustment and raise fines annually in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This marks the first time in 25 years that OSHA fines have gone up. Previously, OSHA was one of few federal agencies with civil penalties that do not increase with inflation.

OSHA intends to provide guidance on the implementation of the new penalties by August 1<sup>st</sup>. Additionally, to address the impact they may have on small businesses, the agency plans to continue providing penalty reductions based on employer size and other factors.

States that operate their own Occupational Safety and Health Plans, including Connecticut, Vermont and Maine, are required to adopt maximum penalty levels that are at least as effective as OSHA's.

For more information about the budget deal or OSHA provision, please contact Alex Strong [astrong@nahb.org](mailto:astrong@nahb.org) or Rob Matuga [rmatuga@nahb.org](mailto:rmatuga@nahb.org).



## Smithfield lowers impact fees

In an attempt to stimulate growth, the Smithfield Town Council recently lowered development impact fees in that community.

The impact fee for a single-family unit dropped from \$8,572 to \$6,573. For two- and three-family dwellings, the fee was lowered from \$7,555 to \$5,596. The impact fee for condominiums dropped from \$5,994 to \$5,596. For multi-family housing, the fee dropped from \$5,676 to 5,394.

Smithfield charges no impact fees on low- and moderate-income housing units that are officially recognized as "affordable." There is also no fee if a house is torn down and another built on the same lot, according to Smithfield Building/Zoning Official Peter Scorpio.

"After meeting with different builders and developers, we decided that lowering the impact fees would stimulate building in the town, and it would help us work more easily with the builders," Mr. Scorpio said.

For more information, visit [www.SMITHFIELDRI.com](http://www.SMITHFIELDRI.com).

-Paul Eno

## Solarize R.I. extended to Aug. 19

The Solarize Rhode Island program has been extended to August 19<sup>th</sup>.

The program is being extended to allow participation in the Providence, Bristol and Warren Solarize Rhode Island programs, which seek to connect more homeowners

and business owners with solar power.

For more information on the Solarize Rhode Island program, please contact Shauna Beland of the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources at (401) 574-9111.

-Paul Eno

## NAHB calls for lower flood insurance premiums

*National Association of Home Builders*

Extreme flood insurance rate hikes and inaccurate floodplain maps drive up the cost of homeownership and threaten small businesses, the nation's home builders told Congress on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Over the past few years, flood-insurance premiums, prompted by revised maps from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have shocked many Rhode Island homeowners in coastal and other waterfront areas.

Randy Noel, second vice chairman of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and a home builder from LaPlace, Louisiana, told the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship that NAHB has long supported practical, common-sense changes to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

"However, as Congress works to reauthorize the NFIP program by the September 2017 deadline, it must guard against the exorbitant rate hikes and faulty floodplain delineations that have plagued the program in the past," Mr. Noel said.

In 2012, with the NFIP facing insolvency, Congress enacted the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act to ensure the program's fiscal soundness. Unintended consequences from the legislation caused significant problems for homeowners and prospective home buyers by triggering an immediate shift to full-risk rates phased in over four years.

For more information on this issue, contact Liz Thompson at (202) 266-8495 or [ethompson@nahb.org](mailto:ethompson@nahb.org).




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# Parag Agrawal

Associate Director, R.I. Division of Planning

*Parag Agrawal has been head of the Rhode Island Division of Planning, part of the Dept. of Administration (DOA), since April 18<sup>th</sup>. Previously he was planning director for the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut, for the past two years. He also has served as senior planner for Montgomery County, Maryland; long-range planner in the Office of Planning and Zoning of Anne Arundel County, Maryland; and assistant historic preservation officer for the City of Columbus, Ohio.*

**THE BUILDER:** What is your overall view of the planning “picture” in Rhode Island as you settle into your new position?

**AGRAWAL:** Rhode Island is unique because it has strong urban centers and very vibrant rural communities. We also have wonderful natural and historical assets. Residents enjoy a high quality of life, and they have good access to education.

Since we are the country’s smallest state in land area, planning, development and conservation of natural and man-made resources is very important to us. The Division of Planning maintains plans for the fiscal and economic development of the state. We play a critical role in carrying the duties of the Statewide Planning Program, which is the only federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in Rhode Island.

One of the primary responsibilities of this MPO is to create a long-range transportation plan and to work on the annual transportation improvement program.

In Rhode Island we have what’s called a reciprocal system of planning, where the state puts together the broad policies through the State Guide Plan. Then the municipalities express the local desires by drafting their own comprehensive plans, which should be consistent with the state guide.

Personally, I see planning as a tool for economic development, for enhancing the quality of life for the state’s residents. It’s a tool for creating and retaining more jobs in the state. We promote sustainable and “smart” growth near our transportation hubs and corridors.

**THE BUILDER:** Can you expand on your own philosophy when it comes to planning in Rhode Island?

**AGRAWAL:** I see statewide planning as a facilitator of that



*Parag Agrawal addresses the Power of Place Summit in Providence on June 21<sup>st</sup>.*

smart and sustainable growth I mentioned. I see us as a resource for our municipal partners, and I’m exploring ways to increase our outreach to the municipal planners.

As the state’s only MPO, I see the necessity for us to work closely with the governor’s office, the Dept. of Transportation and the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) to improve our infrastructure and promote more transportation choices.

Our main charge is to draft and maintain the State Guide Plan. But again, a long-range transportation plan and policies are important. And implementing them is equally important. We are focusing on that implementation in working with our private and public partners.

**THE BUILDER:** You’ve already touched on Rhode Island’s distinctiveness. But there are different opinions on whether the state should do planning just for itself or within the context of southern New England in general and the Greater Boston area in particular.

**For example, the transportation infrastructure is essentially regional. What say you about these two approaches to planning?**

**AGRAWAL:** There’s no question that issues such as transportation and environment are regional, and we do have to work at the regional level. But again, Rhode and Island and Providence should have their unique identity, and we should promote more economic development and job possibilities within the state.

At the same time, we should create better links at a regional level, especially better transportation links to Boston and other major cities in the region so people can have more access to jobs, information and education centers. That will all help promote our state’s economy.

This should also be done at the municipal level. We have 39 cities and towns, and each one should promote its own economic development, but should also have a state and regional viewpoint.

**THE BUILDER:** The residential builders, and housing advocates as well, see the cost of construction in Rhode Island as a serious impediment to housing affordability, especially in view of projected housing needs (roughly 3,000 new housing units per year through 2025). Among the reasons for these

*see INTERVIEW...next page*



## **INTERVIEW...from previous page**

high costs are low-density requirements locally, excessive regulation in general, cumbersome permitting and long wait times, inconsistent code enforcement, and local officials who are sometimes under-informed. Realizing that some of these problems are outside the purview of your division, what can Statewide Planning do to ease at least some of these conditions?

**AGRAWAL:** The Division of Statewide Planning always encourages more housing choices. People should always have a choice between single-family homes, duplexes, town homes or multi-family homes that are strategically located in the state, and consistent with the character of their communities.

As your magazine has reported, the state is expected to grow at a rate of around 3 to 5 percent over the next 10 years, and the number of households is expected to grow by 12 to 13 percent because of decreasing household size.

As reported in a recent study by Rhode Island Housing and HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University, the state will need 35,000 to 40,000 new housing units by 2025. That's roughly 2,500 units a year for the next 10 years. Housing is a key driver of economic development and, as we heard during the Power of Place Summit (*see page 1*), a tool to attract millennials, so we need to focus on what planners call "missing middle housing."\*

This means an emphasis on more town homes, more duplexes, so that younger families don't have to mow their acre of lawn. In 2006, the Division of Planning drafted the Land Use 2025 master plan. This is our essential policy document, and it encourages various densities in the state, depending on the infrastructure level.

Land Use 2025 promotes the concepts of the "urban service boundary"\*\*\* and growth in our existing and designated "growth centers," within our service boundaries and near our transportation hubs. That will help us preserve and enhance the natural character of our towns, and enhance our natural environmental assets.

### **THE BUILDER: How will you educate local planners?**

**AGRAWAL:** As I mentioned, I see us as a resource for the local municipalities, and I'm trying to improve our outreach to city and town planners. We are in the process of scheduling some workshops, and we will discuss some of the pressing issues in the state.

The Division of Planning works very closely with Grow Smart Rhode Island, and through this we do a great deal of outreach to the local planners and the planning boards, and we discuss the major issues. This is one of my key focusses.

I also look forward to working with the Rhode Island Builders Association. I know it's a very active and a very important group for us. I'm sure we will work together on many important projects that will help grow Rhode Island in a sustainable way, and that will help create more jobs.

**THE BUILDER: A basis for everything we've discussed is an adequate drinking-water and sewer infrastructure. Much was made of the water-borne lead hazards in Flint, Michigan, earlier this year, but the same infrastructure in urban and some suburban areas in Rhode Island is just as old. To accom-**

**modate future residential growth, this infrastructure must be upgraded. It also must be expanded into planned growth areas that now rely on septic systems and wells. Would state planners consider a policy that would help communities not just finance but repair old infrastructure and expand existing systems?**

**AGRAWAL:** Sure. I agree that to promote economic development and support sustainable growth, sewer and water infrastructure in the state is very important. In fact, water is our most important natural resource. Water and air, right?

The Division of Planning drafted the Water 2030 Master Plan, adopted in 2012. It focuses on critical policies for drinking water in the state, and it sets the goals and policy foundation for drinking-water management.


Another avenue is our coordination with the municipalities through our Water Supply Systems Management Plans. We also have the Water Resources Board within our division, which works closely with the state's water suppliers and collects information on capital improvement projects.

Apart from this, we should concentrate on expediting the permit process for these projects. The state has made a lot of progress on this through the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) and the Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM). We will try to focus on innovation in creating new systems.

Also, our focus should be on regionalization of water supply and sewer services, creating regional water districts and sewer districts.

**THE BUILDER: Traditionally, much of the funding for sewer and water has come from municipalities, which seldom have the resources to do so anymore. How do you see the state assisting with funding?**

**AGRAWAL:** Municipalities can receive funds from a no-interest revolving fund, and that has financed many projects in the state through the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. So there is already some funding available through the state.

The state also coordinates with municipalities through the comprehensive planning review process. Components of a comprehensive plan always include facilities for water and sewer. That's not a funding source, but it is a springboard for coordination. 

*\*"Missing middle housing" consists of multi-unit housing such as duplexes, fourplexes, bungalow courts and larger apartments that are not bigger than a large house. They are integrated throughout most walkable, pre-1940s neighborhoods, often in blocks with primarily single-family homes. These housing types have become much less common today (hence the "missing"). The term was coined by architect and urban planner Daniel Parolek, principal and founder of Opticos Design Inc. (Wikipedia.com)*

*\*\*\*Urban service boundaries are a planning tool designated to prevent sprawl. In urban service areas, governments provide public services, such as water and sewer systems. The boundary is designed to direct city-sized developments, including subdivisions, shopping centers and office parks, into urban areas. Areas outside the boundary are intended for rural projects that need fewer services and depend heavily on septic systems.*

## EDUCATION...from page 12

The applicant must complete:

- One credit hour of CRLB or third-party vendor approved courses covering Construction Codes and Standards;
- One credit hour of CRLB or third-party vendor approved courses covering Contracts;
- One credit hour of CRLB or third-party vendor approved courses covering Workplace Safety;
- One credit hour of CRLB or third-party vendor approved courses covering Business Principles and Practices; and
- One credit hour of CRLB or third-party vendor approved courses related to the practice of construction or other topics related to the applicant's business, including but not limited to: land use, development, planning and zoning, resource conservation or estimating.

A listing of CRLB or other third-party approved courses is available online at [www.CRB.ri.gov](http://www.CRB.ri.gov).

### CTE grads

An applicant who has graduated from an accredited career and technical (CTE) high school or college program within the previous 24 months may submit evidence to the CRLB that courses completed are sufficient to satisfy the pre-registration education requirements.

The applicant must submit a transcript listing related construction courses completed, details regarding the school's accreditation information, and contact information for the school registrar.

It is within the CRLB's discretion whether to allow the prior schooling to qualify as pre-registration education credits.

**RIBA Members:** How does the state's continuing-education mandate affect you if you belong to the Rhode Island Builders Association?

While contractors may seek required instruction through any CRLB-approved provider, RIBA will keep its members informed about what they need, will offer the classes, will keep education records for members, and will provide the written proof that they took the classes.

For the last two years, the association has offered industry-related classes, seminars and workshops free of tuition charge for members and their employees. And the state-mandated instruction will be no exception.

Accordingly, the association's education program is expanding to accommodate any subject area the state requires, including the five mandated subject areas outlined in the "New Contractors" section on this page.

These won't be the only new courses RIBA will offer, and Executive Director John Marcantonio reports that several grants will be coming RIBA's way to further expand the education program.

Need more information, have a course you'd like to see RIBA offer, or are you interested in teaching a course?

Contact Mr. Marcantonio at (401) 438-7400.

If you'd like to register for classes, visit [RIBUILDERS.org](http://RIBUILDERS.org) and use your member login, or call Sheila McCarthy at RIBA, (401) 438-7400.

For details on upcoming classes, see pages 4, 12 and 17.





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### CTE...from page 9

system...." This board assumed all duties of the current Advisory Council on Vocational Education.

- Declared that this board will conduct the conversion from the state's nine current CTE programs to a single system by 2016. That goal is still a work in progress.

- Established the Rhode Island Career and Technical Education Trust as a permanent, not-for-profit corporation to help fund the program through partnerships with private and corporate sources. The trust also creates partnerships with employers for internships, apprenticeship programs, voluntary work relationships and other arrangements to facilitate education.

More recently, in 2015, the cause of a skilled future workforce was furthered by creation of the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP).

Funded by grants from Gov. Gina Raimondo's Real Jobs Rhode Island program and with RIBA at its hub, RCWP is bringing potential employees and employers together, and facilitating job training where needed.

One result has been RCWP's busy Jobs Bank. *Story on page 10.*

For more information about WTHS and its methods, visit <http://worcestertechnicalhigh.com>.





## LEGISLATION...from page 1

Lombardi (D-Cranston) sponsored the Senate version.

**Unified Review Bill:** The time it takes for multiple plan reviews by municipal officials can create serious problems for builders and developers alike. The “unified review” legislation (House 7833 and Senate 2829) enables towns to create processes for simultaneous development reviews by local planning and zoning boards or commissions for major or minor land developments or subdivisions. In effect, it permits one-stop local applications.

If signed by the governor, the law would take effect immediately.

Reps. Shekarchi, Gregory J. Costantino (D- Lincoln, Smithfield and Johnston), Anastasia P. Williams (D-Providence) and Christopher R. Blazejewski (D-Providence) sponsored the House bill. Sen. Maryellen Goodwin (D-Providence) sponsored the Senate version.

**Freeboard Bill:** “Freeboard” is a code requirement now used in coastal areas and other special flood zones. Measured in feet, freeboard compensates for flood heights and wave action by raising a building, usually on concrete piers. As the freeboard height requirements have increased in recent years, builders have found local height restrictions a problem, in effect “squashing” the building.

The “freeboard bill” (House 7695 and Senate 2561) takes into account freeboard when determining the local height-restriction calculation.

If signed by the governor, this law would take effect immediately.

Rep. Shekarchi sponsored the House version. Sens. McCaffrey and Lombardi sponsored the Senate bill.

**Fire Chaser Bill:** After a fire, homeowners are often approached immediately by contractors, restoration companies and insurance adjusters.

Understandably upset by the events, homeowners often rashly agree to bad deals. The “fire chaser bill” (House 7279 and Senate 2213) empowers fire responders and investigators to prevent inspection of, or solicitation at, the fire scene by third parties for 24 hours after the scene is secured, unless they are accompanied by, and have the specific permission of, the property owner.

If signed by the governor, this law would take effect immediately.

Reps. Thomas Winfield (D-Smithfield, Gloucester), Stephen R. Ucci (D-Johnston, Cranston) and Kenneth A. Marshall (D-Bristol, Warren) sponsored the House bill. The Senate version was sponsored by Sens. Paul W. Fogarty (D-Burrillville, Gloucester, North Smithfield), McCaffrey, Lombardi, Hanna M. Gallo (D-Cranston) and Harold M. Metts (D-Providence).

**Town Permit Tolling Bill:** With the housing-market slowdown and permitting wait times that are often long, approved applications for one or another level of a project can expire. The “tolling bill” (House 7215 and Senate 3046) extends the expiration dates for municipal approvals and permits in effect on Nov. 9, 2009, and those issued between that date and June 30, 2017. It does not revive any expired approval or permit.



Rep. K. Joseph Shekarchi and Sen. Michael J. McCaffrey

The law took effect without the governor’s signature.

Reps. Shekarchi, Mia A. Ackerman (D-Cumberland, Lincoln), Carol Hagan McEntee (D-South Kingstown, Narragansett), Brian Patrick Kennedy (D-Hopkinton, Westerly) and Marshall sponsored the House bill. Sens. McCaffrey, William A. Walaska (D-Warwick), Stephen R. Archambault (D-Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston), Lombardi and John A. Pagliarini Jr. (R-Portsmouth, Bristol, Tiverton).

**In-Law Bill:** The difficulty of obtaining local zoning approvals for “in-law apartments” has been a long-running problem for homeowners. The “in-law bill” (House 7456 and Senate 2297) allows an “accessory family dwelling unit” by right in an owner-occupied, single-family residence “as a reasonable accommodation” for family members who are 62 years of age or older.

If signed by the governor, this law will take effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

The House version was sponsored by Reps. Winfield, Marshall, Williams, Costantino and Robert E. Craven Sr. (D-North Kingstown). Sen. Roger A. Picard (D-Woonsocket, Cumberland) sponsored the Senate version.

Several energy-related bills were passed as well. Look for more information on these in our next issue.

## Fee formula, wetland rules delayed

In other matters, lawmakers delayed the adoption of a new statewide formula for local permit fees until July 2017 to give the Office of Regulatory Reform more time to study it. The legislature also extended the adoption of statewide standards for wetlands buffers and setbacks until January.

## Thanks to the bill sponsors!

The Rhode Island Builders Association thanks all the sponsors of these important bills and their continued support and recognition that housing plays a vital role in the local economy. We give particular thanks to Rep. Shekarchi and Sen. McCaffrey, who have been steadfast in their support of housing affordability and the need to lower the cost of construction.

For more information on any of these matters, contact RIBA Executive Director John Marcantonio at (401) 438-7400 or [jmarcantonio@ribuilders.org](mailto:jmarcantonio@ribuilders.org).



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## Catherine A. Pearson, 80

Catherine A. Pearson, mother of Tracey L. Boyajian, past president of the Rhode Island Builders Association's Professional Women in Building Council, died June 17<sup>th</sup>. She was 80.

Mrs. Pearson, wife of the late William M. Pearson III, was a hospice volunteer,

a graduate of the Stephen Ministries of Brown University, a longtime volunteer for the Kent County Hospital Auxiliary, a member of the Buttonwoods Beach Garden Club and a 48-year member of the East Greenwich Yacht Club.

Along with Ms. Boyajian, she is sur-

vived by three other children: William M. Pearson IV, Diana Pearson Butzbach, and Christopher Pearson, and six grandchildren.

Donations in Mrs. Pearson's memory may be made to Beacon Hospice, 1130 Ten Rod Rd., Suite C104, North Kingstown, RI 02852.

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## SUMMIT...from page 3

all, Mr. Smoke echoed many concerns of the state's residential construction industry: Home prices and rents fueled by a lack of supply will spike during a time when there will be more and smaller households.

"A more negative side to the housing picture is the lack of new construction in Rhode Island," Mr. Smoke said, noting that there were fewer than 1,000 housing starts in the state last year.

"Even with a 40 percent increase in housing starts expected this year, that would be 1,300 for 2016. You need two to three times that to keep up with what's forecast for population and households."

He called the lack of housing starts "warning number one."

"If you don't have growth in new construction, and I would argue targeted growth at the affordable end of the spectrum in both rental and owner units, home prices and rents will continue to escalate at a ridiculous pace," Mr. Smoke stated.

"It's not a stretch to say that you will very soon look like San Francisco or Manhattan. That will be a factor in destroying the quality of life in this market."

Given this scenario, Mr. Smoke cited the \$40 million Housing Opportunity Bond, passed by the General Assembly in June, as "a no-brainer." The bond referendum goes before voters in November.

At the same time, Mr. Smoke explained why Realtor.com, a division of the National Association of Realtors®, named the Metro Providence market (which includes all of Rhode Island and Bristol County, Massachusetts) as "the number one (real estate) market in the country to watch in 2016."

"Our decision was data-driven. We looked at the 100 largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in the country," Mr. Smoke explained. "Growth in our model, based on what will happen with home prices and home sales this year, was the best of any major market in the country."

Mr. Smoke cited April statistics from the Rhode Island Association of Realtors, showing single-family median home prices up 21 percent, and single-family home sales up 35 percent from the previous year.

"This is despite media reports that the housing market here is struggling," he added. "That might have been true a year ago. But the question now is: Is the current growth sustainable, especially in terms of affordable housing?"

Nationally 2015 was the best year for housing since 2007, according to Mr. Smoke. But, he noted, "ultimately, all housing is local."

Charts Mr. Smoke used in his presentation to reflect Rhode Island statistics may be found at [www.REALTOR.com/local](http://www.REALTOR.com/local).

## Cost of construction an issue

One workshop at the Power of Place Summit, "Housing's Role in Revitalizing Mixed-Use Centers, Restoring Vitality, Preventing Displacement," was moderated by Barbara Fields, executive director of Rhode Island Housing. Panelists, including Frank Shea of Urban Edge CDC, Frank Mahady of FXM Associates and North Kingstown Director of Planning and Development Nicole LaFontaine, went into detail on some of the points Mr. Smoke had mentioned.



**Gov. Gina Raimondo addresses the opening session of the Power of Place Summit on June 21<sup>st</sup>.**



**Rhode Island Housing Executive Director Barbara Fields moderates a panel on "Housing's Role in Revitalizing Mixed-Use Centers, Restoring Vitality, Preventing Displacement." Panelists included Frank Shea of Urban Edge CDC, Frank Mahady of FXM Associates and North Kingstown Director of Planning and Development Nicole LaFontaine**

"Our recently released study (*Projecting Future Housing Needs* – see the May *Rhode Island Builder Report*) pretty much reflects what Jonathan was talking about," Ms. Fields said.

"We know the demand is there. My question is about the range of people being able to afford housing," she added. "It simply costs too much to build in this state to serve lower- and middle-income people."

The workshop examined "success stories" for the revitalization of urban centers as residential growth areas. Olneyville and the Post Road area of North Kingstown were used as examples.

The overall theme of the Power of Place Summit was "Revitalization Strategies with Economic Staying Power." Other workshops, panels and seminars dealt with the importance of transit, the maritime economy, jobs, local food production, climate change, urban landscapes, and other factors in a unified approach to Rhode Island's economic future.

For more information, visit [www.GROWSMARTRI.org](http://www.GROWSMARTRI.org).

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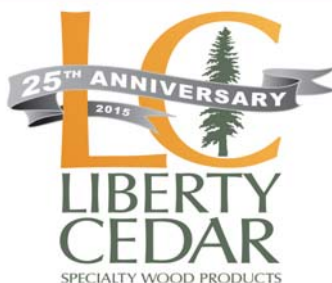
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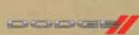
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