

Host of 'This Old House'

Norm Abram backs R.I. campaign to recruit new labor



Norman L. "Norm" Abram, a native of Woonsocket and host of the hit PBS television show This Old House, attends a December 19th meeting of career and technical education (CTE) supporters, organized by the Rhode Island Builders Association, at the New England Institute of Technology. He made clear his commitment to actively support the work of recruiting new labor for the residential construction industry, in Rhode Island and nationally. Story on page 2.

Barriers to Building, Part 2

Permitting, inspections: slow and fickle

By Paul F. Eno Editor

Once a builder/developer has managed to navigate the treacherous (and expensive) salt-marsh wilderness of approvals, he or she must row the boat ashore, then plunge into the unpredictable forests of the permitting and inspection process.

In Rhode Island, that process can vary wildly, in fees and wait times, from one community to another. But

the longer the wait and the higher the fee, the more the home buyer will have to pay.

"During the construction phase of the operation, regulation on average accounts for 14.5 percent of construction costs," said Paul Emrath, chief economist for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). "Of this, 5.3 percent is the actual hard cost of fees paid by the builder. The remaining 9.2 percent is the cost of

see **BARRIERS** ...page 28

FEATURED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY

Center Section

Online courses debut at RIBA

Courses that fulfill the state-mandated requirements for contractor education will be available at www.RIBAEduates.com in February.

Page 19

Take advantage of a spectacular, expanded show

There's time to reserve exhibit space at the 67th Rhode Island Home Show, which now includes the Rhode Island Garden & Flower Show, set to attract thousands of new visitors.

Page 6

Meet the future of the industry at YouthBuild

The young career and tech students from YouthBuild Providence set the tone for our future workforce.

Page 8

Students build playhouse for child with cancer

Woonsocket students give up vacation time to build a playhouse for 8 year-old North Smithfield girl. Local suppliers pitch in too.

Page 11

Over 100 gather at NEIT to act on workforce development

By Paul F. Eno Editor

"Whether you're a builder, a remodeler or a supplier, we all have the same problem. We can't find help."

So said Louis Cotoia, secretary of the Rhode Island Builders Association and RIBA's main man for its day-to-day outreach to the state's career and technical (CTE) education programs and those who support it.

The occasion was a mass meeting of CTE teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, contractors, suppliers, code officials, real estate professionals, lenders, dignitaries and several students on December 19th at the New England Institute of Technology, East Greenwich. The meet-

see **WORKFORCE** ...page 27



At the New England Institute of Technology on December 19th, Rhode Island Builders Association President David A. Caldwell Jr. (above) addresses the assembly as meeting moderator Louis Cotoia looks on. At top, the audience listens to Norm Abram of This Old House.

The Rhode Island Builder

Official publication of the
Rhode Island Builders Association
since 1951

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The Rhode Island Builder Report

Publishing Director..... John Marcantonio
Editor Paul F. Eno

The Rhode Island Builder Report is published monthly by the R.I. Builders Association, 450 Veterans Memorial Pkwy. #301, East Providence, RI 02914, tel. (401) 438-7400, fax (401) 438-7446, e-mail INFO@RIBUILDERS.ORG. Advertising information is available on the Internet at www.RIBUILDERS.org or from New River Press at (888) 273-1941 (ext. 1). Claims and representations made in advertising are the sole responsibility of the advertiser. The Rhode Island Builder Report and the R.I. Builders Association neither endorse nor guarantee advertiser claims. Readers may submit articles and photographs of interest to the residential building and remodeling industries in Rhode Island, but the publishing director and editor may reject any submission or advertisement. While designed to provide accurate and authoritative information on the subjects covered, The Rhode Island Builder Report and the Rhode Island Builders Association are not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional or technical advice or product support. Accordingly, RIBA cannot warrant the accuracy of all legal or technical information contained herein and disclaims any and all liability which may result from publication or reliance on the information provided. Unless otherwise noted, articles may not be reprinted without the written permission of the publishing director. The Rhode Island Builder Report is edited, designed and produced by New River Press, 645 Fairmount St., Woonsocket, RI 02895, tel. (401) 250-5760 (ext. 1), fax (401) 356-0913, e-mail builder@newriverpress.com.

DEADLINES FOR THE MARCH ISSUE

All copy, ads and photos must be to us by

Friday, February 3

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see MEMBERS ...page 29

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Details on page 19.

 ♦ **February 10th: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors/Five Credit Hours:** Topics are confined spaces, asbestos awareness and mold awareness. 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., RIBA Headquarters, East Providence. Course is FREE for members with a \$15 materials/registration fee, \$150 for non-members with a \$15 materials/registration fee. No admittance without pre-registration and payment. To register, contact Sheila McCarthy, smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 22.*

♦ **February 13th (Snow date February 16th): FREE Radon Seminar** - 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., RIBA Headquarters, East Providence. Seminar is FREE for members and non-members. *Details on page 20.*

February 17th: 7th Building Officials Annual Expo & Education Fair - 9 a.m. at the New England Institute of Technology, East Greenwich Campus, One New England Tech Boulevard, East Greenwich. Sponsored by the Rhode Island Building Officials Association. There is no charge for contractors to attend or to take classes. Some courses may qualify for continuing-education credits from the Contractors Registration and Licensing Board (CRLB) for registration renewals only. For information, contact Wayne Pimental (401) 886-8617 or wpimental@eastgreenwichri.com. *Details on page 26.*

♦ **March 9th: 4-Hour Lead-Safe Refresher Class** - RIBA headquarters, East Providence, 7:30 a.m. to 1 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, or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 22.*

 ♦ **March 16th: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors/Five Credit Hours:** Topics are confined spaces, asbestos awareness and mold awareness. 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., RIBA Headquarters, East Providence. Course is FREE for members with a \$15 materials/registration fee, \$150 for non-members with a \$15 materials/registration fee. No admittance without pre-registration and payment. To register, contact Sheila McCarthy, smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 22.*

♦ **March 30th-April 2nd: 67th Rhode Island Home Show** - Sponsored by the Rhode Island Builders Association. Exhibit space on sale now. *Details on page 6.*

♦ **June 15th: Fourth Annual Networking Barbecue** - 4-7 p.m. at RIBA headquarters. Sponsored by Douglas Lumber, Kitchens, Home Center. FREE for members and non-members thanks to Douglas, but registration is required. For information and to register, contact Elise Geddes at (401) 438-7400 or egeddes@ribuilders.org. *Watch for details.*

**More information, registration and payment for most
RIBA events is available at 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.



David A. Caldwell Jr.

President's Message

Rhode Island's \$1 billion solution

annual board meeting at the International Builders Show (IBS) in Orlando, Florida. For those who have never had the opportunity to attend IBS, I highly recommend making the trip, it is an almost overwhelming display of the latest products, technology, and information.

More importantly, though, it offers the chance to meet NAHB members from around the country and to discuss the state of the industry.

The great majority of NAHB members, though, having experienced hardship during the Great Recession, appear to have largely rebounded in many areas of the country. It is a clear reminder that the construction industry is a major component of the national economy and the gross domestic product (GDP).

Areas of the country experiencing greater economic growth and prosperity are where the greatest amount of construction activity is taking place. There is undeniably a strong correlation between the health of the construction industry and the health of the economy, and construction is a key driver in creating jobs and leading an economy out of recession.

Our industry in Rhode Island, however, has largely not rebounded. According to a study published by Bryant University

Professor Dr. Edinaldo Tebaldi, "The direct contribution of the construction industry to the state's GDP fell from 6 percent in 1998 to 5.7 percent in 2011, and to 3.9 percent in 2012."

In real-dollar terms, roughly speaking, this equates to a loss of about \$1 billion in construction activity in the state's GDP.

Some other key notes from Dr. Tebaldi's study:

- \$10 million of construction output supports 146 direct and induced jobs in the state.

- Each 100 jobs created in the construction industry supports 83 jobs in other sectors via induced economic activity.

So to sum things up:

A return to a more normal level of construction activity in Rhode Island would add an additional \$1 billion to the GDP, along with 14,600 good, middle-class jobs to the state. Certainly political problems for our elected officials are a dime a dozen. Obtainable, billion-dollar solutions, however, are very rare.

Building Our Way Out

As we move forward in 2017 with the theme of "Building Our Way Out" of the economic malaise that our state has been unable to shake, it is incumbent upon RIBA, and our members, to continually remind our elected leaders how vital our industry is to the health of our state with some of these very basic facts, and how it is incumbent upon our leaders to join us in breaking down the barriers to building that are holding our state back from reaching its potential.

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Governor addresses RIBA board

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Reserve your exhibit space now at the 67th Rhode Island Home Show, now including the R.I. Garden & Flower Show

Show to feature 12-room Designer Show House, Energy Expo,
the Home Technology Experience and more!

WHEN: Thursday-Sunday, March 30th-April 2nd

WHERE: Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO EXHIBIT:

Contact Bob Yoffe at Yoffe Exposition Services, (800) 963-3395.

There's still time to reserve your exhibit space at the most exciting and unusual Rhode Island Home Show in the long history of the event. The 67th Rhode Island Home Show now includes the Rhode Island Garden and Flower Show, and will certainly attract thousands of new visitors, many of whom need your products or services.

New, revamped or expanded attractions will include The Home Technology Experience; the Designers Show House, now with 12 rooms instead of seven; five Landscape Solution Centers; a solar-powered greenhouse, to be donated to schools or community organizations after the show, and even a remarkable "solar flower" (courtesy of Sunwatt Solar) that follows the sun, and a first-time-

ever Kitchen and Bath Showcase. These will draw visitors from all over southeastern New England.

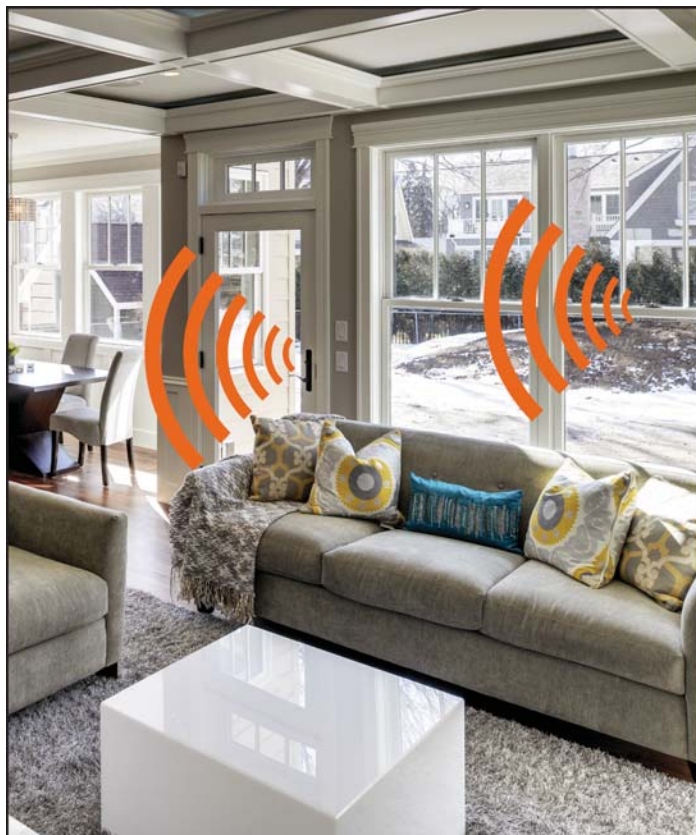
The Rhode Island Builders Association invites every member to be part of this exciting, combined event, which will include the Rhode Island Garden and Flower Show as a separate brand within the Home Show.

As an added bonus, you can meet and greet your future employees. Under the eyes of their instructors and trade professionals, hundreds of career and technical education (CTE) students of all trades will once again engage with the show, according to Home Show Committee Chairman Louis Cotoia.

"National Grid, a major supporter of the show, went to the schools and educated them about solar power, and the electrical students will work during setup, and will work during the show to educate visitors," Mr. Cotoia said.

Construction students will design and build a "Main Street USA" feature, the 12-room Designers Show House and other exhibits.

see HOME SHOW ...page 26



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Board of Directors

Commerce Corp. vows to help small business deal with state agencies

By Paul F. Eno Editor

"We help you with any problems your business is having, and we try to prevent them from happening again."

That was the message from Elizabeth M. Tanner, executive vice president for client services at the Rhode Island Commerce Corp. (RICC), who addressed the Rhode Island Builders Association's Board of Directors on January 3rd.

Ms. Tanner discussed details of RICC programs to assist small businesses, adding that, in 2016, agency staffers "sat down with 2,500 business people to see what they need."

She explained RICC's new Business Navigation Center, a team whose job is to "help you with whatever business questions you have, whether starting up, growing, diversifying or whatever helps your business needs."

Navigation Center staff also will help businesses get through any process they might have with state agencies, according to Ms. Tanner.

"We also report to the state agency when we have complaints about their customer service, and we want to know what they will do to improve it."

She also explained RICC's Statewide Action Team (STAT), which forces state agencies to respond to egregious issues and complaints within a certain time frame. There is even an ombudsman from the Office of Regulatory Reform (ORR) in the RICC office, she said.

"The volume of those calls has gone down dramatically, but we still get those from time to time," Ms. Tanner said. "We also have ACT, 19 different state agencies whose representatives meet monthly to help each get to know what the others do, and they look at scenarios businesses might face."

Nothing is off the table, she indicated.

"We're willing to make regulatory or



Elizabeth M. Tanner, executive vice president for client services at the Rhode Island Commerce Corp., addresses the RIBA Board of Directors on January 3rd.

legislative changes to help business. But often it's just a matter of communication."

Ms. Tanner also updated the board on the status of local e-permitting programs, which are now in place in Providence, Cranston, Pawtucket, West Warwick and North Smithfield. Newport, North Kingstown, North Providence, Warwick, Westerly and Woonsocket are preparing to introduce the system.

Asking those present for their own experiences with e-permitting so far, Ms. Tanner heard mixed reviews.

"It's better that we know this now, so we'll be able to fix the glitches as towns come online," she said.

To use the system, she advised applicants to begin at the state e-permitting portal at www.PERMITS.ri.gov. Users can choose which community or state agency to apply to. As of this writing, state agencies with e-permitting were the State Fire Marshal's Office and the State Building Commission.

For more information on the RICC or any of its programs, contact Ms. Tanner at (401) 278-9100 or elizabeth.tanner@commercerci.com. Also visit www.COM-MERCERI.com.

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In other matters

RIBA Executive Director John Marcantonio reviewed ongoing efforts to refine the proposed statewide formula for permit fees. The board decided to review the draft in depth and offer recommendations.

The board approved the RIBA business plan for 2017 as presented by Mr. Marcantonio, who also reported on the latest developments with the 2017 Home Show. *Related story page 6.*

Mr. Marcantonio also updated the board on the RIBA education program, which now includes online courses (*Related story on page 19*), and the workforce development program, praising the dedication of Robert J. Baldwin, John Bentz, Louis Cotoia and Education and Membership Director Cheryl Boyd. *Related story on page 2.*

The executive director also reviewed RIBA's legislative agenda for 2017. *Related story on page 23.*

The board approved creation of a "Wall of Fame" at RIBA headquarters. Further details will be forthcoming in subsequent issues.

YouthBuild Providence: Pride, dedication and bootstraps

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

"Comin' up!" shouted Cesar Ramirez as we climbed the stairs to the second floor of a chilly reconstruction on Superior Street in Providence a few days before Christmas.

"This is really a complete rebuild," said Mr. Ramirez, a construction trainer for YouthBuild Providence, as we headed for the attic of the two-story house where three of his students, Matthew Veguilla, Raoul Rivera and Jonathan Munoz, were preparing to restore the floor.

"Deconstruction here involves the kitchen, a bathroom and three bedrooms," explained Mr. Ramirez, himself a 2008 graduate of YouthBuild who has been an instructor there ever since.

"There is a regular contractor working here too, but the students are assisting on every floor of the house. The result will be a two-family house: a first-floor apartment, with another on the second floor and attic."

With the attic floor, students were working through six layers to get to the original hardwood. The developer for the project is West Elmwood Housing, based right around the corner, on Dexter Street. All three students working at the Superior Street site have been with YouthBuild since August, and Mr. Ramirez has been working with them there since October 17th.

At YouthBuild's instructional facility, a few miles away, off Manton Avenue, *The Rhode Island Builder* met up with Joanne Debrah, director of transitional services, along with Chen Chhork, construction manager. Several YouthBuild students were working on projects to practice window replacement and framing. One of these was senior Darin Silvia, a familiar face at many student projects sponsored by the Rhode Island Builders Association, including the Treehouse Rebuild at the Boys and Girls Club of Providence in October and the annual Home Show.

"This is where I got my start and where I'm earning my certifications," Darin said of YouthBuild. He has also worked in HVAC and plans a career in carpentry. And he's made a good start at that: Darin was recently hired by RIBA member Kevin Moran of Moran Home Improvements. *Related story on page 14.*

Another student, learning framing that day, was Des-a-rae Gray, who said she is thinking seriously about a career in construction.

YouthBuild is, in fact, a national network, and YouthBuild Providence is one of 226 programs affiliated with YouthBuild USA. The Providence program, now in its 19th year, also is associated with Americorps, the Providence Plan and the U.S. Dept. of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. The wider network is now expanding internationally.

All YouthBuild Providence students, 24 of them with 10 more on the way, participate in the construction program, according to Ms. Debra, one of 10 instructors, who has been with the program for seven years.



Fresh from a computer class, YouthBuild Providence students are with Director of Transitional Services Joanne Debrah (second from right) at the program's main offices in Providence.

Mr. Chhork, now in his sixth year at YouthBuild, emphasized that students are taught to master the small things first, then work their way up.

"We basically work with half the students at a time," he explained. "Half will be working on their academics and half will be working on construction projects, one week on and one week off."

This is a practice that builders who employ the students like, Mr. Chhork said as he pointed out some decorative boxes lining the walls.

"That's how they start – with hammer and nails. If they make that work, they're off and running! Later, it gets more complex, of course. Sometimes rehab is more difficult than new construction. You're dealing with the old stuff and nothing's ever level."

YouthBuild will once again be involved with the RIBA Home Show in 2017. Ms. Debra and Mr. Chhork both attended the career and technical education (CTE) update meeting, led by RIBA Secretary and Home Show Committee Chairman Louis Cotoia at the New England Institute of Technology on December 19th. *Related story on page 2.*

"Lou gave us a Home Show preview, and there's so much going on to help and promote the students," Ms. Debra commented.

A major concern for the residential construction industry is attracting students willing to make the industry their life.

"I can say that at least five of our students are firmly committed to careers in some aspect of the industry," said Ms. Debra. "And we're looking to expand this program from a community-development stand point and an urban-planning aspect, so that might attract more young people."

Around the corner, at YouthBuild's main office at 66 Chaffee

see YOUTHBUILD ...page 26



Students work to remove five layers of flooring to get back to the original hardwood..



Des-a-rae Gray practices window framing.



Behind Ms. Debrah and Mr. Chhork are some of the decorative boxes with which YouthBuild carpentry students begin to learn the trade.

Ms. Debrah with YouthBuild Assistant Director Robert Nyahkoon.

In December, The Rhode Island Builder spent some time with students, instructors and administrators from YouthBuild Providence. The first stop was Superior Street in the capital city, where Matthew Veguilla, Raoul Rivera and Jonathan Munoz were working to restore a multi-family home under the supervision of Construction Trainer Cesar Ramirez, second from right.



With the guidance of Construction Manager Chen Chhork, student Darin Silvia practices window installation at YouthBuild's workshop. YouthBuild and Darin are active in RIBA-sponsored activities for construction students, such as the Home Show and the Treehouse Rebuild at the Boys and Girls Club of Providence in October.





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Our Future Workforce

Jobs Bank: 531 employers and counting

The Jobs Bank and its website, www.RCWPJobs.com, have launched boldly into 2017 with numbers that promise to put a real dent in the residential construction industry's labor shortage.

As of January 10th, 531 employers and 184 job candidates (22 in December alone) had signed up for free accounts at www.RCWP-Jobs.com. There were 65 jobs posted and 49 resumes were online.

Since 93 jobs were posted in December, it seems that as many as 28 jobs were filled through the Jobs Bank.

The Jobs Bank is a tool to fulfill the mission of the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP), with the Rhode Island Builders Association as its hub, to help the residential construction industry solve its own labor problems.

"The Jobs Bank is clearly working," said Cheryl Boyd, RIBA's director of membership and education. "But the number of jobs open, compared with the number of candidates available, shows how much we need to concentrate on job training, career and technical education, and to attracting young people to choose our industry for building a career," she added.

Whether you're an employer or a job seeker, sign up for a free account at RCWPJobs.com. For more information, contact Ms. Boyd at (401) 438-7400 or cboyd@ribuilders.org.



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WACTC students give up vacation to build playhouse for child with cancer

By Paul F. Eno Editor

An 8 year-old child with bone cancer, a call to the Rhode Island Builders Association, and a generous teacher and 18 students at the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center (WACTC) have made for a truly inspiring story as 2017 gets under way.



Julia looks at photos of the playhouse taking shape.



Julia's original design

Julia Powers of North Smithfield was diagnosed last year with osteosarcoma, a rare kind of bone cancer. Julia's desire for her own outdoor playhouse found its way to A Wish Come True Inc., a not-for profit organization in Warwick whose purpose is to grant one wish to every child with a life-threatening disease.

On a hunch, Wish Coordinator Beverly Molles called RIBA, which linked her up with Charles Myers and his construction technology students at WACTC. She has since come to refer to them as "Charlie's Angels."

"These students here today are voluntarily giving up much of their Christmas vacation," Mr. Myers told *The Rhode Island Builder* during a December 28th visit to the school.

And this was no ordinary playhouse. Julia's colorfully-drawn plans called for two stories, a double balcony, stairs, an exterior painted in rainbow colors, and even a pulley and bucket system "to get stuff."

"We've done the best we can to get as close to Julia's design as possible," said Mr. Myers, Rhode Island's 2016 Career and Technical Education Teacher of the Year, who personally built a table for the inside of the playhouse.

He and fellow WACTC instructor William Esser spent roughly 25 hours turning Julia's drawings into actual blueprints.

"Actually, things in the house are so small that it was one of the most challenging things we've ever designed," Mr. Myers said.

A special challenge was the "food and toy transport pulley system" Julia requested. "We designed a very safe pulley that's easy for her to operate," Mr. Myers said. "It's all pretty cool!"

It wasn't just the instructors and students who plunged into the project. Suppliers, school personnel and even a restaurant have pitched in.

"Lowe's donated a lot of framing materials, Beauchemin Lumber gave us some lumber. Material Sand and Gravel donated crushed stone for a base, Harvey Industries donated windows,



Eight of the 18 Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center students who participated in the playhouse project for Julia Powers included Ryan Patrie, Joshua Patrie, Austin Macamaux, Wanda Gago, Justin Dugas, Andrew Parke, Samuel Charpentier and Jacob Chevrete. Instructor Charles Myers is at right.

and Home Depot gave us a \$100 credit for anything we needed," said Mr. Myers.

"They all heard about this through RIBA," he added.

In addition, WACTC custodial staff were on deck to support the project, while WACTC Assistant Principal William Webb bought pizza for the student workers. When Little Caesar's Pizza heard about the project, they donated one of the pizzas free.

And what does Julia think?

"She's really excited!" Mr. Myers reported, adding that the target for completing and delivering the playhouse was the end of January.

To find out more about Julia and her journey, visit her special Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/JuliasJourneyRI> or <http://www.kennyscoalition.org/juliasjourney>.



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Member News

PWB slates networking event

WHEN: Thursday, February 16th, 6 to 8 p.m.

WHERE: The Tile Shop, 1400 Bald Hill Rd., Warwick 02886

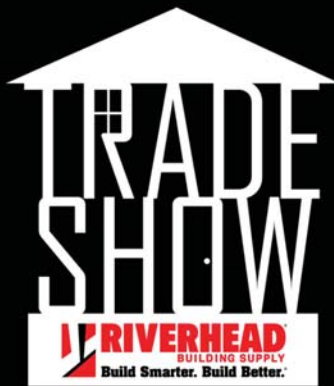
COST: FREE

FOR INFORMATION & TO REGISTER: Contact Tracey Boyajian at 800-860-4996x101 or tboyajian@abcleads.com

The Professional Women in Building Council (PWB) is excited to have a new member of the Rhode Island Builders Association, The Tile Shop, host their next meeting and networking event at their Warwick Showroom.

All RIBA members are invited to network and to help welcome The Tile Shop as a member. In fact, all are invited to come and network at PWB events. Our members play an important role in the residential construction industry as business owners, designers, administrators, attorneys, real estate professionals and more.

PWB offers many networking opportunities in an environment that's both informative and beneficial for women who want to grow professionally. Join us to learn more about PWB and how to become a member. Men are welcome too!



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On December 15th, the Rhode Island Builders Association held its first Christmas Party in many years. Over 100 members and guests gathered at Quidnessett Country Club, North Kingstown, for cocktails, networking, a buffet dinner and dancing. Here are some memories from the evening.



For membership information
contact Cheryl Boyd or Elise Geddes
(401) 438-7400 or
cboyd@ribuilders.org
egeddes@ribuilders.org

Member Profile: Kevin Moran of Moran Home Improvements

Energy and drive are his hallmark!

By Paul F. Eno Editor

If Superman had made a career change and become a residential contractor, his mild-mannered cover might have been Kevin Moran of Moran Home Improvements. In fact, it was high energy and high ideals that spurred Kevin into the business in the first place.

"My father was a carpenter but also a teacher, so he wasn't in construction full time," Kevin recalls. "I got into it because a lot of the people I talked to had bad stories about contractors. This one did a bad job, that one stole my money.... I couldn't stand that, and I wanted to be different."

So he set out to establish truth, justice and a good name for honest contractors.

Kevin, a Providence native, learned carpentry from his dad. All through high school at LaSalle Academy, then Bryant College, he worked on jobsites, mostly kitchen and bathroom remodels. By the age of 18, he was already a registered contractor. After graduating from Bryant at 24, Kevin wasted no time plunging into the contractor's life with his super-energy.

Based in Providence, Moran Home Improvements has about 30 employees. Five of those work in the company's office, located in the former gas company building that Kevin's company renovated.

"We kept the mezzanine for ourselves, and we have a 5,000 square-foot garage behind the Rhode Island Convention Center for our parking," Kevin says.

In addition to Moran Home Improvements, which he officially founded in 1999, Kevin and his super-wife, Stephanie (also a real estate agent, property manager and full-time nurse) were soon buying, rehabbing and selling rental properties, and flipping houses. At the same time, Kevin was working for his brother-in-law, commercial developer David Corsetti, as a project manager.

About 12 years ago, Kevin joined David in their own company,



Kevin Moran

Premier Land Development. Through this, they do commercial remodeling, including mill rehabilitation and retail-space remodeling. They also buy and sell properties.

"We do try to stay fairly busy," Kevin quips.

One day not long ago, Louis Cotoia of P.S.I. Property Maintenance/Arnold Lumber Co., a superhero in his own right, especially when it comes to supporting career and technical education (CTE), caught up with Kevin.

Kevin remembers the conversation.

"Lou said, 'Kevin, you've always got something going on and you're looking for help. I have this student....'"

The adult student turned out to be Darin Silvia, a hard-working young man from YouthBuild Providence. *Related story on page 8.*

"Darin, or 'D' as we call him, turned out to be a great kid," says Kevin. "I put him with one of the older carpenters and he was great. He's still going to school to get his GED, so on the jobsite he's a week on and a week off."

Recruited by the equally energetic Lou Cotoia, Moran Home Improvements joined the Rhode Island Builders Association in 2015.

"I liked the idea of the tuition-free education classes for members most of all, and that's a service I've used on multiple occasions," Kevin declares.

True to form, Kevin immediately became an active member. In fact, he was elected to the RIBA Board of Directors at the 2016 Annual Meeting in November.

So keep an eye out for Kevin at RIBA's events. He might just swoop down from the clouds.

Moran Home Improvements

President: Kevin Moran

RIBA member since: 2015

Focus: Residential building and remodeling

Serves: Southeastern New England

Founded: Original company - 1999

Based: Providence, Rhode Island

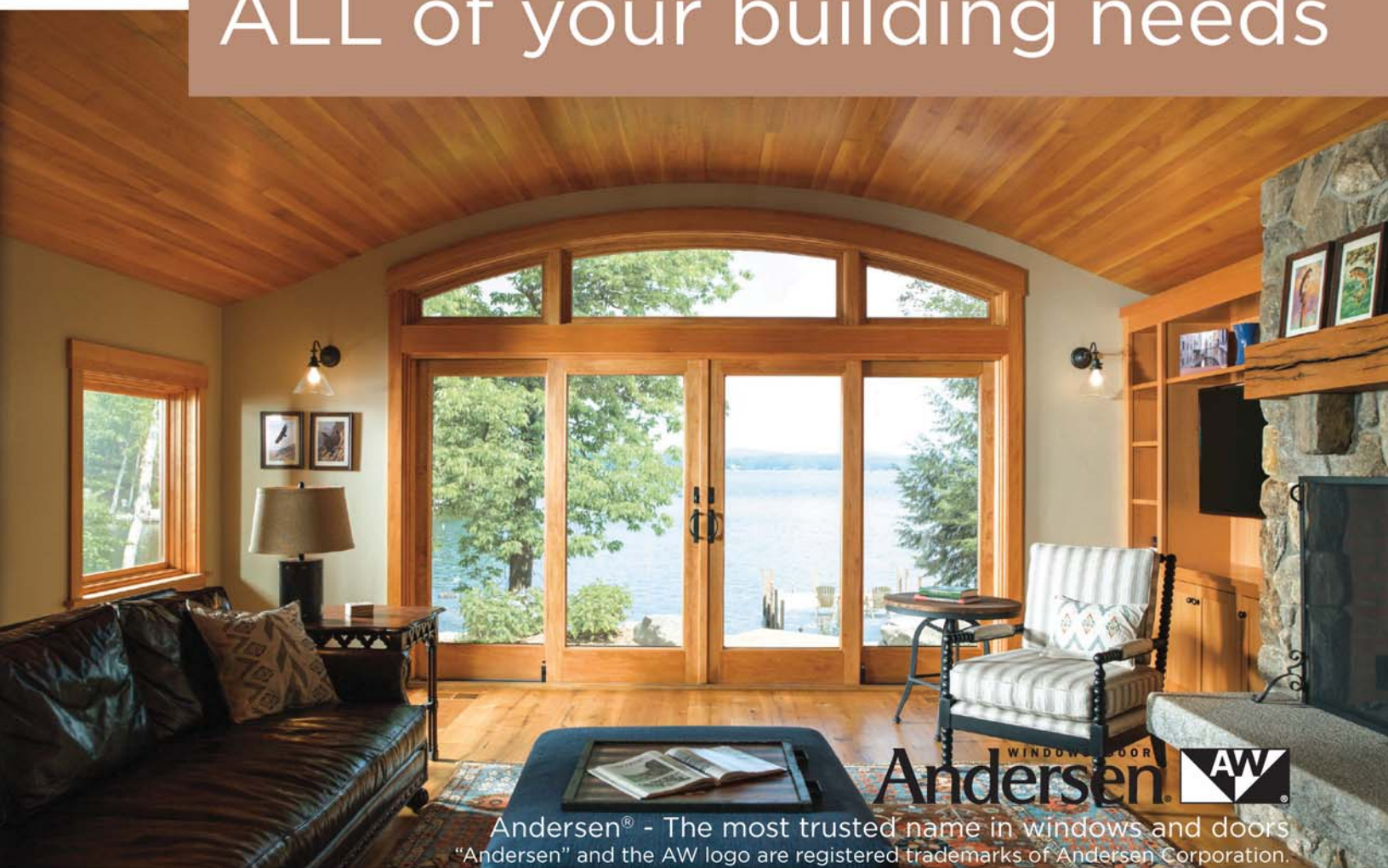
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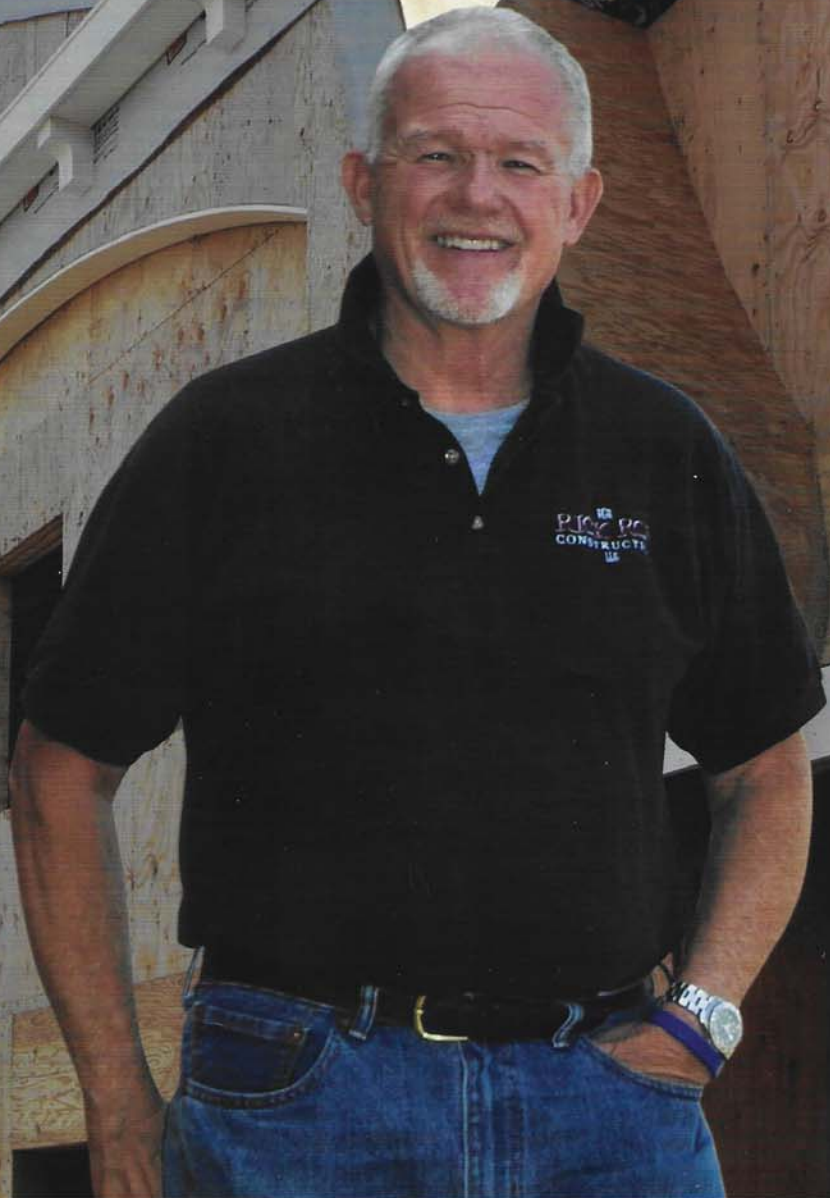
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Online courses debut in February

Online courses that fulfill the state-mandated continuing-education requirements for contractors were scheduled to be up and running at www.RIBAeducates.com in February.

That's the word from Cheryl Boyd, the Rhode Island Builders Association's director of membership and education.

Courses will include: Fall Protection, Scaffold Safety, Workplace Safety, Confined Spaces, and Ladder Safety. Courses will be FREE for RIBA members and their employees, \$30 per class hour for non-members. Visit www.RIBAeducates.com for further details or contact Ms. Boyd at (401) 438-7400 or cboyd@ribuilders.org.

"Why wait? Take these courses as soon as they're available and be ready for your next contractor registration renewal date," Ms. Boyd said. "One of the most powerful tools you have is your professional knowledge."

"Many contractors are very good at their trade, but they might not have the knowledge they need to build a healthy business, comply with OSHA requirements or other important aspects of the industry. RIBA's educational program can help them correct this."

RIBA continues to offer on-site courses at the association's East Providence headquarters as well, also free of tuition charge for members and their employees. See pages 4, 12, 17 and 18 for information.

Throughout the fall and early winter, the online courses have been in the final stages of composition and testing. All will fulfill part of the state-mandated requirement for contractors to have earned five education credits before registration renewal.

Credits must be earned within 24 months of your registration renewal date. See additional details on this page. For information, visit www.RIBAeducates.com or contact Ms. Boyd at (401) 438-7400 or cboyd@ribuilders.org. 



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8 Hour Lead-Safe Remodeler Course

February 1st

WHEN: Wednesday, February 1st, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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

COST: FREE for members and their employees, with \$40 materials/registration fee. \$110 for non-members, with \$40 materials/registration fee. Lunch is included.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: One week before class. No admittance without pre-registration and payment.

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

This course is required to obtain or renew a Lead Safe Remodelers/Renovator license, necessary for work in all pre-1978 buildings. This course covers the EPA's Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) requirements in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

A written exam is given at the end of the course. A passing grade allows attendees to apply for licensing through the Rhode Island Dept. of Health and the EPA. Pre-registration and a photo are required for your certificate. This must be a head shot only. E-mail it to smccarthy@ribuilders.org at least five days before the class.

No admittance without pre-registration and the photo. Payment is due upon registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free. 

***RIBA reserves the right to
limit the number of attendees
from a single company at
courses taught on-site.***

***For all courses, employees
must provide proof of
employment with a member
company upon registration for
class to be
free of tuition charges.***

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The Education Pages

Free Seminar on Radon

February 13th

WHEN: Monday, February 13th, 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Snow date is Thursday, February 16th.

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

COST: FREE for members and non-members.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: One week before class

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

More than 20,000 die from cancer caused by radon every year. In fact, the U.S. Government names radon as the second most common cause of lung cancer today.

Learn how radon enters homes, how it is measured and what to do to protect against the harmful effects of radon exposure. Find out about airborne and waterborne radon, and the mitigation and reduction methods.

Instructor is Michael J Weydt, industrial hygienist/radon control coordinator for the R.I. Dept. of Health.



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Continuing Education for Contractors Five Credit Hours

February 10th and March 16th

Topics: Confined spaces, asbestos awareness and mold awareness

WHEN: Friday, February 10th and Thursday, March 16th, 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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

COST: FREE for members and their employees, with \$15 materials/registration fee. \$150 for non-members, with \$15 materials/registration fee. Lunch is included.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: No admittance without pre-registration and payment. One week before class

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

Confined spaces, asbestos awareness and mold awareness will be the topics as the Rhode Island Builders Association presents five credit hours of state-mandated continuing education for contractors. Any contractor registered in Rhode Island must fulfill this continuing education requirement within 24 months of his or her registration renewal date.

The instructors for this course will include Scott Asprey and

Lance Comeau.

You must pre-register for this course. There will be no admittance without pre-registration. Payment is due upon registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.

For complete details on Rhode Island's continuing education requirements, see page 2 of our January 2017 issue.



Four-hour lead certification refresher course

March 9th

WHEN: Thursday, March 9th, 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. No admittance without pre-registration and payment.

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

This is a four-hour Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule 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. In addition, a photo is required for your certificate. Please send a head shot only, similar to a passport photo.

E-mail the photo smccarthy@ribuilders.org at least five days before class to allow for processing. There will be no admittance to the class without pre-registration, this pre-registration photo and payment.

Participants must provide proof of employment with member company upon registration for class to be free.



**Members are encouraged to send their company news to *The Rhode Island Builder*.
Awards, hiring, your growth, staff promotions are all welcome
for our Member News section.
Send news to our editor at builder@newriverpress.com**

Your participation is crucial as the 2017 legislative session begins



Steven Carlino

The 2017 General Assembly session is under way, and the Rhode Island Builders Association has begun its advocacy for our industry. As we have done over the last few years, we will introduce an aggressive but reasonable agenda, aimed at making improvements in the way housing is planned for, approved, permitted and built.

Our issues include improving the development and building process, especially by reducing the time it takes to get local approvals.

We continue to seek impact-fee reform, preventing excessive impact fees and reducing the timeframes under which towns can hold money without returning funds. We're working on wetland rules and permit-fee reform.

Landowner rights are also a priority, and we hope to see improvements in the local notice provisions so property owners know

what communities are doing to affect their land uses.

We're taking a hard look at codes and work-truck taxes.

If you want to help make this all happen for the industry and its consumers, we need your participation! Please contact RIBA Executive Director John Marcantonio to see how you can help: (401) 438-7400 or jmarcantonio@ribuilders.org.

Another way you can help is by contributing to our Political Action Committee – BUILD PAC. All contributions (personal checks only, please) are put to work supporting legislators who support housing. Funds also allow us to educate policymakers on the importance of our industry's issues within the Rhode Island economy.

Together we can continue to make a difference for our industry and our state economy!



Roland J. Fiore

RIBA's Legislative Committee

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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 2016. Previously he was planning director for the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut, for the previous 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: When you first came to the Division of Planning, you stressed that there are clear connections between effective planning and strong economic development. What initiatives have been set in motion with that in mind?

AGRAWAL: The Planning Division has already completed some significant projects to enhance the state's economic development opportunities, preserve and enhance our environmental assets, and make the state more resilient to climate change and extreme weather conditions. All these things contribute to Rhode Island's economic viability.

Among the initiatives are the Water Quality Master Plan 2035, the State Freight Plan, State Guide Plan modernization, and looking at the vulnerability of municipal transportation assets to sea-level rise, and also the socio-economics of sea-level rise.

People can find more information about these projects on our website: www.PLANNING.ri.gov.

THE BUILDER: Transportation planning has a significant impact on housing, especially for the growing millennial market, as to where housing is built or rehabbed, what densities are needed, what kind of housing it will be, and other factors. What is the Division of Planning doing in this area?

AGRAWAL: We're working on the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). This document will show how we will invest in the transportation system, including both long- and short-range strategies that lead to the development of an integrated intermodal transportation system.

We have to be able to move people and goods efficiently, and this in itself will promote economic development. The Plan will include our agreed-upon goals, policy decisions and strategic investments to achieve this. It will outline priorities for roads, transit, freight, bicycle and pedestrian improvements.



By federal mandate, we are required to update the Transportation Plan every four years.

We need to consider all modes (of transportation) to outline the most effective strategy for investing the Rhode Island's limited transportation funding.

The Plan will provide direction for state agencies and partners to achieve a common vision for our transportation system in a coordinated, multimodal and fiscally responsible way.

THE BUILDER: We understand that bicycles, a popular form of transport among millennials, will figure significantly in the LRTP.

AGRAWAL: Yes, the Bicycle Mobility Plan (BMP) will provide policy and infrastructure recommendations, linked to an implementation plan, that advance bicycle mobility and safety in the state.

The plan will outline a strategy for leveraging bicycle, pedestrian, safety, accessibility, air quality and multimodal mobility dollars to develop a first-class alternative transportation system in Rhode Island, including a vision for the development of bike-friendly complete streets, a network of off- and on-road trails, and comprehensive bicycle infrastructure at intermodal facilities and in communities throughout the state.

The plan will identify bicycle projects to be developed within the next 10 years, and will include preliminary cost estimates and implementation timelines. I think Rhode Island has a lot of potential there.

THE BUILDER: There's also the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Where does that stand right now?

AGRAWAL: TIP is a list of transportation projects the State of Rhode Island intends to implement using U.S. Dept. of Transportation funds. For a transportation project to use federal funds, it must be included in the TIP, which outlines plan for the subsequent decade. We plan to update Rhode Island's TIP each year.

The State Planning Council has approved the current TIP for federal fiscal years 2017-2025, which means roughly \$4 billion dollars over the nine-year program in various transportation categories, including bridge capital, bridge maintenance, drainage capital, maintenance operations, pavement capital, traffic-safety maintenance, transit operations (RIPTA & RIDOT), other transit

see *INTERVIEW...next page*

www.ribuilders.org

Think Tank tackles code issues of concern to builders, officials

Contractors and code officials alike are invited to contribute their experiences with the process so that all may learn.

Code issues of concern to both contractors and code officials are among the subjects now being tackled by the Rhode Island Permitting Think Tank.

Among the points Think Tank members want to communicate this month:

- Blower door testing is still required, although there is no minimum standard as yet.
- Duct testing is required as well, and must comply with either post-construction or rough-in test requirements found in the International Energy Code, Section R403.2.2. Ducts within a building's thermal envelope do no need to meet this requirement.
- Deck lateral connectors are required.
- Some contractors don't provide enough

information on the plans when submitting them to building officials.

- Deck footings must be correctly sized.
- Documentation must be provided on truss and beam engineering.

Think Tank members also urge contractors to read a recent article in the *Journal of Light Construction*, pointing out the top 10 code violations. www.builderonline.com/newsletter/home-buildings-top-10-code-violations_s.

The Think Tank was organized in 2016 by Louis Cotoia of P.S.I. Property Maintenance/Arnold Lumber Co., secretary of the Rhode Island Builders Association; State Building Commissioner John Leyden; Rhode Island Building Officials Association President Wayne Pimental, and International Code Council representative William Nash.

It brings together state and local code and building officials, builders, remodelers and suppliers who are working together to

solve permitting and inspection issues. This information is passed on to the RIBA membership through this magazine and in other ways. The Think Tank meets quarterly.

"Discussion topics include any issue related to permitting and regulation," Mr. Cotoia said. "The key words are 'communication' and 'working together.' And to do that, we need members of the industry to contribute their stories."

Do you have stories – good, bad or neutral – about your experiences with permitting in Rhode Island?

All feedback is kept anonymous, and builders, remodelers, inspectors, building officials and others are urged to contribute their experiences at www.RIBUILDERS.org/permitting-think-tank. We thank those who have already contributed stories.

For more information, contact Louis Cotoia, (401) 640-9313 or lcotoia@arnoldlumber.com or Cheryl Boyd at RIBA, (401) 438-7400 or cboyd@ribuilders.org. 

INTERVIEW...from previous page

Initiatives (RIPTA), Routes 6/10 improvements, and transportation-alternatives projects that are eligible to receive federal funding.

The TIP update we're working on now will cover the 10-year timeframe from 2018-2027.

Updating the TIP annually allows the state to ensure that project priorities align with economic-development priorities, which can change with shifts in economic conditions, national policy, etc. An annual process places Rhode Island among just a handful of states that update the TIP and solicit new projects annually, and revisit the plan in a way that is above and beyond what is required by the federal government.

THE BUILDER: Beyond these specific initiatives, what are you focusing on in 2017?

AGRAWAL: My personal goal is to increase the Planning Program's outreach. I've made an effort to reach out to the planning community in Rhode Island and bring people together to talk about the successes and challenges.

We really want local planners and municipalities to know that the state is available as a resource to them – not just when it comes to funding projects. There are a lot of really knowledgeable, tal-

ented people on my team who can offer expertise and assistance with problem-solving.

We want to help communities implement the best planning practices and engage them in discussions about the future of planning in Rhode Island.

THE BUILDER: How can the average person, and specifically members of the Rhode Island Builders Association, learn more about projects happening in their own city or town?

AGRAWAL: We are actually in the process of creating a digital mapping tool, which we will hopefully be able to roll out this year.

People are using technology more and more to stay in the loop on what's going on in their communities. We value the public's input and are looking for ways to increase opportunities for feedback. In addition to public hearings, we're aiming to expand our digital presence.

This mapping tool, for instance, will allow people to see which transportation projects are slated for their communities. This year, we're trying to educate more Rhode Islanders about some of the exciting projects – both proposed and ongoing – in their neighborhoods so we can increase participation at every level of the planning process. The mapping tool, which will be linked to our website, will assist us in our goal. 

RIBOA slates 2017 Education Expo

WHEN: Friday, February 17th, with registration at 8 a.m. and the Expo from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

WHERE: New England Institute of Technology, East Greenwich Campus, One New England Tech Blvd., East Greenwich, RI 02818

COST: FREE for contractors

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: February 10th

FOR INFORMATION & TO REGISTER: Visit RIBOA.net

It's the 7th Annual Expo and Education Fair, sponsored by the Rhode Island Building Officials Association (RIBOA), and there's a great lineup of educational events.

Some courses may qualify for continuing-education credits from the Contractors Registration and Licensing Board (CRLB) for registration renewals only.

Mike Guertin will discuss "Sizing Deck Footings & Deck Lateral Connections" along with "Frost Protected Shallow Foundations." A ClearResult representative will discuss -Energy

code-related topics. Steve Noon will talk about "Simpson-Deck Lateral Connectors & Ledger Connectors." George Whalen of the CRLB will address contractor registration rules and regulations.

There will be vendor booths, code-book ordering and door prizes. Lunch will be available. Please register early. For information, contact Wayne Pimental at wpimental@eastgreenwichri.com. 

YOUTHBUILD...from page 8

Street, we encountered Elijah Stephenson, special project coordinator; Damita Delves, student support and family coordinator; and YouthBuild Associate Director Robert Nyahkoon. Working with a class in a state-of-the-art computer room nearby was Lead Teacher Mike Deragon.

It was easy to see that YouthBuild is fulfilling what it has set out to do.

"Our mission is to unleash the intelligence and positive energy of low-income Providence youth to rebuild their communities and lives," stated YouthBuild Director Anthony L. Hubbard. "We provide nationally recognized academic and career-development services to disconnected, undereducated and underemployed, out-of-school Providence youth."

Over the past five years, YouthBuild has spent many months aligning its current project-based curriculum with the new Common Core standards and the Career Cluster Initiative standards, Mr. Hubbard added.

"This is to ensure that our students are mastering the necessary competencies to satisfy graduation requirements. Beyond our rigorous, standards-based curriculum, with its emphasis on literacy, numeracy and critical thinking, the investments YouthBuild makes in service-learning activities and hands-on instruction help our students succeed," he added.

"They gain value-transferable work skills that will make them competitive in the job market beyond the program, while earning industry-recognized certifications in construction."

For more information about YouthBuild Providence, visit www.YOUTHBUILDPROV.org. 

HOME SHOW...from page 6

"We have asked every school to choose a business or institution from their own communities that they would like to reproduce in this exhibit, where show visitors can actually purchase products. This can be a bakery, a flower shop, a general store.... One school even wants to do Wright's Dairy Farm, the famous North Smithfield farm and bakery," he explained.

"Students will build the storefronts, accenting their own talents. CAD students will design the structures, art students will decorate them, culinary students can make food products, and students will sell the goods. The list goes on and on."

Each school will be offered exhibit space to sell their own CTE programs as part of an ongoing campaign to attract more students to the residential construction industry. *Related story on page 2.*

Get your exhibit space now. RIBA provides full guidance, and there is a special arrangement if you don't want to exhibit for all four days. Contact Bob Yoffe at Yoffe Exposition Services, (800) 963-3395, to reserve your exhibit space now. 



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WORKFORCE...from page 2

ing attracted over 100 people for a complete overview of, as Mr. Cotoia, the meeting moderator, put it, “where we have been, where we are, and where we’re going with workforce development for



**Dept. of Labor and Training
Director Scott Jensen**

the residential construction industry.”

Workforce development to solve the labor shortage requires the industry to network in order to develop its own “pipeline” for potential employees, according to Mr. Cotoia, and that was the purpose of the meeting.

“First, we have to develop a pipeline for younger students to learn about, then go into, our CTE schools,” he said, praising past RIBA President Robert J. Baldwin and board member John Bentz

for their liaison work with CTE schools that began nearly 20 years ago.

National attention

Among those present at the December 19th meeting was Norman L. “Norm” Abram, host of the PBS television series *This Old House* and a Woonsocket native.

“Workforce development is a problem not just for Rhode Island but for the whole country,” Mr. Abram told the group. “I congratulate everyone in this room who is dedicated to solving this problem.”

Mr. Abram, who started working on jobsites with his father and grew up in the industry, noted that the top priority for change is the current public perception of the industry and of CTE.

“The public has totally lost the knowledge of how valuable the trades are. They have no idea what it takes to build a house. We have to start informing them.”

In fact, the team from *The Old House* has announced the Work Ethic Scholarship Program, set to begin in March, to provide scholarships for students training for careers as carpenters, electricians, roofers, masons or plumbers. This program will become a resource for Rhode Island’s overall campaign to attract young people to the residential construction industry. Mr. Cotoia indicated.

Employers willing to hire graduates

He added that, based on a recent survey by the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP), of which RIBA is the hub, 80 percent of responding employers said they would be willing to hire a high school graduate from a construction career program,

“That’s encouraging, and that’s where we want to go with this,” Mr. Cotoia said, then proceeded to review in detail the projected labor needs for all the construction trades, along with potential recruitment methods for the future labor force.

Mr. Cotoia also reviewed forthcoming industry events in which CTE schools will participate, including the 2017 RIBA Home Show, March 31st-April 2nd. *Related story on page 6.* He listed and thanked the many suppliers, organizations, officials and schools that have committed themselves to the workforce-development campaign.

He cited job fairs and ongoing support from media outlets as major factors in recruiting, along with social media as a method to educate potential CTE students and their parents.

Along with Mr. Abram, attendees who offered remarks included Anna Satterfield, regional representative of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB); Bruce Charleson of Arnold Lumber Co.; RIBA President David A. Caldwell Jr.; Scott Jensen, director of the Dept. of Labor and Training; RIBA’s John Bentz of Property Advisory Group; East Greenwich Building Official Wayne Pimental, representing the Rhode Island Building Officials Association and the International Code Council; Darren Jodoin of Paradigm Media Consultants; and several others.

Watch for further updates. For more information now, contact Cheryl Boyd at (401) 438-7400 or cboyd@ribuilders.org.

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BARRIERS...from page 1

changes to construction codes and standards over the past 10 years," Dr. Emrath added.

"As of 10 years ago, building codes were well established in most parts of the country and had been revised many times over a period of decades. A 9.2 percent increase since then does not mean all subsequent code changes have been unnecessary, but does raise a question about how well possible cost impacts are being factored into the code revision process."

Readers can judge that for themselves, but here's what some members of the Rhode Island Builders Association have to say about the ins and outs of permitting and inspections in our state.

Unnecessarily complex

"Wait times can vary widely, although response time has become better since reduced turn-around times were mandated a couple of years ago," stated Timothy A. Stasiunas of The Stasiunas Companies, a builder/developer based in Charlestown.

"Generally speaking, in my area most building departments are pretty good. Some still forget who they're working for and think it's their duty to be a barrier instead of a conduit to the building process."



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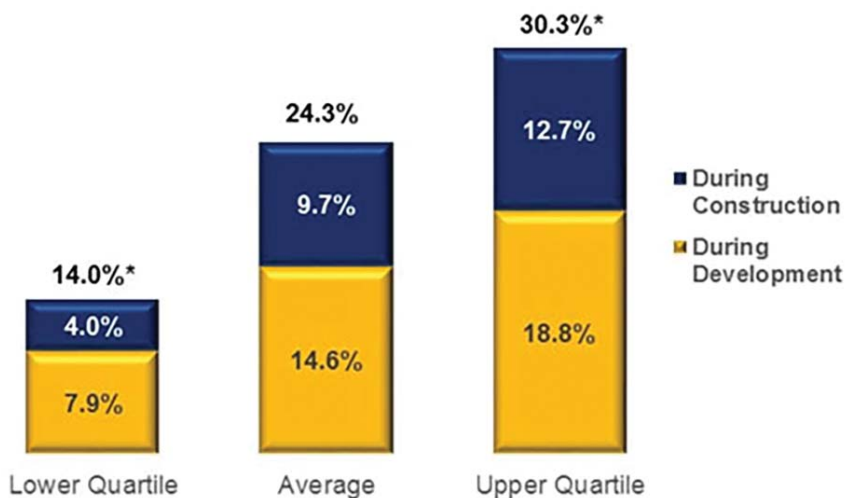
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Figure 1. Regulatory Costs as a Share of Home Price



* For quartiles, construction and development costs do not sum to the total.
Source: NAHB/Wells Fargo HMI survey, assumptions described in the Appendix.

Basic delays are caused by departments wanting "an extraordinary amount of documentation" even when the application is for a basic structure, according to Mr. Stasiunas.

"They're requiring engineered, stamped and complicated submissions. That's strange because the building official is exempt from any liability, which is right in the code. I think it's a cover-yourself mentality, but it's also detrimental from a time standpoint," he added.

"Fees have always varied widely. Where I am (Charlestown) the new fee structure will cost more but it wasn't unreasonable in the first place, and the impact fee wasn't as bad as in many communities."

In the opinion of Mr. Stasiunas, "all localities are against growth, which is going to be a huge challenge for our industry and for the state."

Another member who finds better wait times but high impact fees is James G. Deslandes Sr. of Warwick-based Deslandes Construction Inc.

"Wait times seem to be around two weeks, which I find exceptional. It's plan reviews (during the approval process) that take longest," Mr. Deslandes told *The Rhode Island Builder*.

"I find fees in most of the towns fair. What I don't like are impact fees," he added.

Another barrier to building during the permitting and inspection process can be

local attitudes toward growth, Mr. Deslandes believes.

"It depends on the town, but South County is terrible."

The proposed statewide permit-fee formula now being firmed up by the State Building Code Commission, with RIBA input, will be a step in the right direction, he says.

"It will make it easier for us to include permit fees in our estimates."

Widely varying fees aren't the only problem for builders/developers during the permitting and inspection process. Time-consuming inspections and, at times, unpredictable inspectors, can be a problem too, Mr. Deslandes indicated.

"We need a better way to deal with part-time inspectors. This can delay a job for a week."

Inconsistency in the permitting and inspection process is a problem cited by Jesse Maynard of Maynard Construction BRC Inc., headquartered in Attleboro, Mass.

"My largest concern with the permitting process is the inconsistency of it all. Each municipality is different and stresses different things. This makes it difficult because we strive for consistency and efficiency with our work and the process," Mr. Maynard said.

"Sometimes it doesn't feel like the building departments do the same, and sometimes the curveballs can hurt. Unless

see **PERMITS...next page**

PERMITS...from previous page

you work in a specific town often, you never know what to expect.”

He said the same thing about the unpredictability of fees.

“It makes no sense why the same project can literally cost twice as much in a neighboring town. Compounding the problem is the interpretation of fees by some building officials. Many times this can result in an argument over what is ‘permit-able.’ I do think a statewide formula will help.”

Mr. Maynard also cited a lack of communication between municipal departments.

“Many towns require you to come in and pick up a document, literally to hand it to an official at the next desk. It just seems ridiculous, and certainly a barrier in working with us while we try to follow the rules and do the right thing,” he stated.

“A large pet peeve I have with some municipalities is that they ‘require’ a copy of the contract. I don’t feel this should be a requirement.”

There are inconsistencies among communities when it comes to wait times for inspections, according to Mr. Maynard.

“For the most part, in towns we work in all the time, we don’t have a problem. But in others, the delays are a major concern. These towns tend to have part-time personnel who inspect, say, plumbing or electrical. Maybe it can happen only on Mondays or Thursdays between 3 and 6 p.m.”

This is unacceptable to Mr. Maynard.

“Imagine a bathroom remodel on the only bathroom in a home, and you request an inspection that doesn’t get done for three to four days! The homeowner thinks you’re not doing your job. Then there’s the pushback from all the subs. But you’re handcuffed by the town.”

The Rhode Island Builder even heard from a homeowner, a client of RIBA Treasurer Carol O’Donnell of CRM Modular Homes, on the trials and tribulations of building a home in Rhode Island. The narrative mostly involves the approval process, which this series dealt with in its first installment in last month’s edition, but it illustrates the “Barriers to Building” experienced not just by builders/developers but by those who ultimately pay: homeowners.

“The building inspector was on the same page with us, that the town could not hold

up anything because it had all been approved by the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC),” the homeowner said. “The (planning) board, however, doesn’t like CRMC having that control, so the board put (the surveyor/engineer) through the wringer with questions until the town attorney finally said that the board must accept CRMC approval.”

The homeowner said he had driven two hours from his Connecticut home, spent over three hours at the Planning Board hearing, then drove back.

“I had to pay my engineer, which was very expensive. (The building official) was very accommodating through the entire process leading up to the meeting, giving me all the answers and help I needed. I don’t think he’s difficult to deal with as long as you have all of your paperwork in order,” the homeowner continued.

“The barriers the town...put in the path of building is ludicrous and extremely expensive. I have spent thousands in unnecessary funds to ‘fight’ for what I have rights to from the beginning. The delay is also unjustified.”

Watch for more on the “Barriers to Building” as our series continues in the March *Rhode Island Builder*.



MEMBERS...from page 2

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R.I. Housing slates projects

Rhode Island Housing (RIH) closed out 2016 by announcing on December 8th that it would fund the construction or preservation of more than 230 housing units in Providence and Warwick.

RIH expects the move to support over 110 jobs, a statement from the agency said.

“These projects will further RIH’s efforts to meet the state’s demand for housing, which is essential to economic growth,” the statement continued.

The RIH Board approved \$8.5 million for Hagan Manor in Providence, for rehabilitation of 80 one- and two-bedroom units.

The board also approved \$4.68 million for Greenwood Terrace in Warwick, a 53-unit elderly housing development.

Additionally, the board approved financing for Cathedral Square Apartments in Providence, which includes 100 one-bedroom units for elderly and disabled residents.

For details, contact Emily Martineau (401) 450-1309 or emartineau@rhodeislandhousing.org.





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