

RIBA officials meet with Senate President Ruggerio

Officials from the Rhode Island Builders Association went to the State House on June 4th to meet with Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Providence, North Providence) and talk about economic issues, particularly housing.

Sen. Ruggerio expressed his ongoing support for building a more business-friendly atmosphere in Rhode Island, and for an improved housing market, along with a greater housing supply to support business expansion, especially for small business, in the state.

Story on page 7.



Sen. Dominick Ruggerio

FEATURED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR JULY

Center Section

SPECIAL FEATURE

Is R.I. headed for solar sprawl?

As land for housing dwindles, acres of forest are being bulldozed for solar farms, which might create more energy problems than they're worth, some say.

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East Greenwich to refund \$1.2 million in fees

As a result of a class-action settlement, builders who paid impact fees to the town's former fire district will get refunds.

Page 2

There's lots of code news

Find out about the voluntary Stretch Energy Code and some news on the lead-mitigation and certification fronts.

Pages 22-23

Tuition-free education going strong at RIBA

Get the courses you need from RIBA, both onsite and online. Members and their employees pay no tuition, potentially saving thousands of dollars!

Pages 13-14

Clambake time is almost here!

WHEN: Friday, August 10th, noon to 8 p.m.
WHERE: Francis Farm, Rehoboth, MA 02769
COST: \$40 for the first 300 members and their employees, \$86 after that and for non-members. All tickets must be paid when making reservations.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: August 1st.

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see CLAMBAKE...page 29

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East Greenwich to refund \$1.2 million in wrongly-collected impact fees

Superior Court okays settlement in long-running legal battle.

By Paul F. Eno Editor

Builders and developers who had to pay impact fees to the now-defunct East Greenwich Fire District from November 26, 2002, through June 3, 2013, will see refunds in July.

That's the news from Superior Court Judge Michael Silverstein, who on June 4th approved a settlement in a class action lawsuit between plaintiffs and the Town of East Greenwich, which is now on the hook for \$1.7 million.

"This is a case where developers, local businesses and new homeowners were charged illegal and unauthorized fees for



Joelle Rocha

new construction, including some fees which were in excess of \$100,000," stated attorney Joelle Rocha of Kelly, Souza, Rocha & Parmenter, who represented the plaintiffs.

"I was honored to represent these 89 fee payers and am very much looking forward to returning a substantial and unprecedented fee award to each of them as a result of the settlement we achieved," Ms. Rocha added.

The refunds are the result of a long-running legal battle that took the case all the way to the Rhode Island Supreme Court. After arguments by Ms. Rocha in 2016, the high court overturned a 2014 lower-court ruling that the East Greenwich Fire District, which ceased to exist in 2013 after the town created a municipal fire department, had the legal authority to collect impact fees on development, and had applied those fees properly.

The Supreme Court, on the other hand,

said the fire district failed to comply with due process requirements when they passed an ordinance providing for the collection of impact fees, which amounted to over \$1.2 million, without interest. When the fire district was abolished, the remaining money from the impact fees was turned over to the town, instead of being refunded.

Some of the fees were enormous, Ms. Rocha pointed out. According to records, Brooks Pharmacy paid an impact fee of over \$400,000.

"The class action suit was in response to the fact that the Town of East Greenwich took no steps to refund the impact fees in light of the Supreme Court decision, and according to the 2000 state impact-fee statute," Ms. Rocha said.

In mediation sessions that led to the settlement, parties met in March with retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Frank Williams. Under the \$1.7 million settlement approved by the court, individual class members will be refunded between \$740.70 and \$291,022.18 each, a recovery of 85.6 percent of the fees that were originally paid to the fire district.

Class members are expected to receive compensation by mid-July.

For more information, contact Lynn Daigle (or write to EG Fire District Case Administrator) at Kelly, Souza, Rocha & Parmenter, 128 Dorrance Street, Suite 300, Providence, RI 02903; or visit KSRPlaw.com to obtain more details, or call (401) 490-7334.



See the list
of refund recipients
on page 23

The Rhode Island Builder

Official publication of the
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since 1951

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DEADLINES FOR THE AUGUST ISSUE

All copy, ads and photos must be to us by

Friday, June 29

E-mail material to builder@newriverpress.com Fax: (401) 356-0913

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their sponsors!**

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Robert Coogan

R.E. Coogan Heating Inc.

125 Dewey Ave., Warwick, RI 02886

Sponsor: Vincent Graziano - Rise Engineering

see MEMBERS...page 28

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LOOKING AHEAD!

♦ **July 11th: Silica and MSDS: Your Right to Know** - Free seminar with Scott Asprey of Risk & Safety Management, 8-10 a.m. *Related story on page 14.*

☞ ♦ **July 19th: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topic is OSHA Safety Review. Class is available onsite or online at RIBAEducates.com. *Details on page 13.*

♦ **July 25th: 8 Hour Lead-Safe Remodeler/Renovator Course** - 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m., RIBA Headquarters, East Providence. Course is FREE for members with a \$40 materials/registration fee, \$110 for non-members with a \$40 materials/registration fee. *Details on page 14.*

☞ ♦ **July 27th: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topic is Advanced Framing, Air Leakage Testing / Sealing, Frost-Protected Foundations. *Details on page 13.*

♦ **August 10th: 68th Annual RIBA Outing and Clambake** - Noon to 8 p.m. at Francis Farm, Rehoboth, Mass. Watch for more information. To become a sponsor, contact Elizabeth Carpenter at (401) 438-7400 or ecarpenter@ribuilders.org. Sponsors will have exhibit space at the Clambake. All tickets must be paid when making reservations. *Details on page 2.*

☞ ♦ **August 16th: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topics are Confined Spaces, Asbestos Awareness, Mold Awareness. *Details on page 13.*

♦ **September TBA: Professional Women in Building Monthly Meeting** - Gathering and tour at RediFooting Easy Deck and Shed Footings, 123 Johnson Rd., Foster. To register, contact Linda Bohmbach at linda@homehealthsmith.com. *Watch for more information. Related story on page 8.*

♦ **September 13th: Networking Night** - 4:30 to 7 p.m., FREE for members and their guests.

♦ **September 17th: 28th Annual RIBA Golf Classic** - Wannamoisett Country Club, East Providence. Watch for more information. To become a sponsor, contact Robin Barlow at (401) 438-7400 or rbarlow@ribuilders.org.

♦ **October TBA: Professional Women in Building Monthly Meeting** - Gathering and tour at Reid's Remodeling, 22 Hoxsie Rd., Richmond. To register, contact Linda Bohmbach at linda@homehealthsmith.com. *Watch for more information. Related story on page 8.*

♦ **October 2nd: RIBA Annual Meeting and Election of Officers** - *Watch for more information.*

♦ **December 14th: Professional Women in Building Monthly Meeting** - 11:30 a.m., combined holiday meeting and dinner with the National Association of Women in Construction, Providence Biltmore Hotel. *Watch for more information.*

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.

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Online courses include *Scaffold Safety, Workplace Safety, Confined Spaces, Ladder Safety* and more, each worth one credit hour of state-mandated continuing education. Just as with RIBA's onsite courses (see pages 13 and 14), online courses are FREE of tuition charges for members and their employees. Just use your coupon at the online checkout.

NEED A COUPON CODE? CALL RIBA AT (401) 438-7400. Non-members: \$12 per credit hour. For information about online or on-site courses: Contact Sheila McCarthy smccarthy@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400.



David A. Caldwell Jr.

President's Message

Let's have some support for housing growth

Few businesses are more sensitive to the vagaries of weather than the construction industry. Among the many challenges with which builders must wrestle, Mother Nature can be the toughest. The weather has been particularly challenging these last several months, cold and wet. I've turned the heat off in my own home – for what I hoped to be the last time for the season – at least six times, only to have the temperature drop uncomfortably low again.

As I write this column, I'm reaching yet again for that fleece that I had thought was packed away until fall. Despite an improving economy, getting the work built has been very difficult, and beset by delays this year.

I've been lucky to know a couple of farmers in South County. Aside from the obvious upside, gifts of summer corn and tomatoes, which are much appreciated, I have had the opportunity to gain a much better understanding of how farmers work with nature.

Rhode Island has seen a substantial increase in the number of local farms, and locally produced agricultural products, over the last 20 years.

There are many reasons for this, first and foremost being that the food is grown with great attention to quality. Consumers like it, so there is demand in the market. Many of our restaurants, some of the best in the country, have done an excellent job featuring local products.

Farmers get the support they need

I'm grateful for this, as I like to eat. So, the market is growing, more farms are being created, and supply is increasing. The State of Rhode Island has been a partner in this growth, incentivizing farmers and providing various means of support.

Often, local property taxes on farms are substantially lower. Some regulations are relaxed. The University of Rhode Island is a valuable resource.

Both government and the market are generally supportive of farming and the growth of the agriculture industry in Rhode Island, and this is a good thing.

Growing food from the soil is a minor miracle to me, as I can't do it. Many factors must be managed to obtain a good crop. Good soil, seeds, water and fertilizer, just to start. Then tending the crop, managing pests and diseases, hoping for good weather, enough rainfall (but not too much), and the absence of natural disasters. Then comes the management of the harvest, and getting the crop to market.

Farmers, much like builders, are able to make general strategic

plans based on the 12-month calendar and the four individual seasons. But within that framework, there's a large amount of uncertainty on a day-to-day basis. Both businesses are risky, and prone to widely varying cycles.

In addition to the annual challenges, farmers must ensure that their land is viable, year after year. They can't replace the land. So, they are charged with managing the challenges of the yearly growing and harvesting as well as the sustainability of the soil and land over multi-decade horizons. They must constantly be vigilant in managing both the short- and long-term dynamics necessary for growing crops.

In South America, it's possible to slash and burn rain forests to create some of the most fertile growing conditions on the planet. But this lasts for only a few years, at which time the nutrients in the soil that have built up over centuries are exhausted, leaving the soil barren and unsuitable for growing anything.

Demand is acute, but supply is low

In Rhode Island, the demand for housing is accelerating, becoming acute at many price points. But supply is not growing to meet demand. We have a deficit of housing that's growing larger every year, pressuring prices higher. There is a distortion in the market, causing the market not to work. The conditions are not right for growth.

There are many conditions necessary for our industry to grow, in both the short and the long terms. These include demand in the marketplace, quality skilled labor, and tolerance for risking capital. Most importantly, Rhode Island must embrace the concept of growth in the housing sector. Much like our farmers, if we grow sustainably, we will all eat well.

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Is Rhode Island embracing 'solar sprawl' at the expense of housing?

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Anywhere you look in Rhode Island today, solar is king.

The state and federal governments provide tax incentives and subsidies for homeowners to bolt solar arrays to their rooftops. Programs like Solarize North Smithfield, Newport or (pick a city or town) organize whole communities of residential and commercial property owners to “go solar.” And utility companies reduce your electric bill or pay you outright for the excess power your photovoltaics produce and send back into the grid.

In addition, “solar farms,” sometimes occupying hundreds of acres, are springing up hither and yon. According to *The Providence Journal*, four major solar farms are in operation, and at least 26 more are under construction or planned, in Rhode Island, many in forested rural areas. And there is a great deal of money involved.

The underside of success

Is Rhode Island headed for “solar sprawl”? Does all this sunlight have a dark side? From the housing perspective, yes, according to some builders and planners.

“We love solar,” declared David A. Caldwell of North Kingstown-based Caldwell and Johnson Inc., president of the Rhode Island Builders Association and a nationally recognized leader in green home building. “The solar concept isn’t the problem. It’s how it’s being applied,” Mr. Caldwell said.

“Many solar farms are going into areas where the landowners originally planned housing subdivisions, such as in Saunderson. Residents aren’t thrilled about the solar farms, but the attitude is: It could be worse. It could be houses.”

In reality, Mr. Caldwell indicated, hundreds of acres of trees are being bulldozed to accommodate solar farms, which are supposed to be an environmentally friendly energy solution.

“Wouldn’t it make more sense to take that 100 acres, use 20 of them for attrac-



A new solar farm, a 2.6-megawatt ground-mount array, on once-forested land off Danielson Pike in Foster, near the Connecticut border.

tive, high-density housing, and leave the rest alone?” he asked.

Not according to some folks in North Smithfield. At an April 23rd Town Council meeting, landowner Ralph Ferra reportedly threatened to sell his 200-acre property to a housing developer if the town didn’t let him lease the land to a solar-farm developer instead.

“Either this happens, or six months from now we sign the papers with a developer,” Mr. Ferra was quoted as saying.

As of this writing, the project, which would create the largest solar farm in the state, between Route 146 and Iron Mine Hill Road, was moving toward fruition by means of an overlay zoning district approved by the Town Council in May.

Thomas Ward, publisher of *The Valley Breeze*, responded in a May 1st editorial: “Isn’t it sad that putting homes on land is now a threat? It speaks precisely to the challenge I noted in this space only a few months ago: It’s as if the state has fired a starter’s pistol, and now, plans to rip down forests are a runaway freight train so we can ‘green’ up and de-carbon our atmosphere. The pace of so-called ‘solar sprawl,’ a very questionable public policy, is quickening. Meanwhile, home prices are surging due to a sudden interest in buying by young adults,

and a lack of home inventory due to – you guessed it – a lack of affordable, buildable land,” Mr. Ward wrote.

Mr. Caldwell pointed out some alternatives.

“A crucial point is that solar farms can be built in places that housing can’t, such as on old dumps and in brownfields. This is a viable alternative to taking our best, high and dry land. The fact is that we need to take a more thoughtful approach to how we are applying solar in Rhode Island. We love renewable energy, but our best land is in limited supply!”

Nathan Kelly AICP, NCI, principal planner at the Horsley Witten Group in Providence and immediate past president of the American Planning Association’s Rhode Island Chapter, agreed.

“Solar is big, and the industry is on the move. The numbers are really starting to work on the development side, from what I understand. This is great news for those of us who feel that an immediate shift to renewable energy is critical at every level,” Mr. Kelly told *The Rhode Island Builder*.

“That said, I do believe that the push from the solar industry has not been particularly thoughtful. Widespread clear-cutting of forest, one of our most important weap-

see *SOLAR...page 29*

Ruggerio to RIBA: 'Keep building!'

By Paul F. Eno Editor

"Your industry puts a lot of people to work, and you have a great organization. Keep building!"

So said Rhode Island State Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Providence, North Providence) after meeting with a delegation from the Rhode Island Builders Association at his State House office on June 4th.

"I'm looking to protect business in this state and to help the economy, and your industry is very important. We can't bring new companies into Rhode Island if their people can't find places to live," Sen. Ruggerio added.

Studies by Rhode Island Housing and local advocacy organizations show that Rhode Island needs 3,500 new housing units per year to accommodate demand by 2025.

Building permit figures indicate that housing production is less than one third of that.

"With the information I receive from Rhode Island Housing, it's clear that we are not producing enough," Sen. Ruggerio continued.

"We will continue to work at this end, and I thank you (builders) for all you do."

Those who attended the meeting were grateful for the senator's support.



Meeting at the State House on June 4th to review issues of interest to the residential construction industry were, from left, Rhode Island Builders Association Vice President Timothy A. Stasiunas, President David A. Caldwell Jr., Treasurer Carol O'Donnell, RIBA State Director John Bentz, Rhode Island State Senate President Dominick J. Ruggerio (D-Providence, North Providence), RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio, RIBA Legislative Committee Co-Chairman Steven A. Carlino, and RIBA government affairs advocate William G. Walsh.

"Sen. Ruggerio understands the part housing plays in our economy, and the need for Rhode Island to produce more of it," said RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio.

"It's clear that Senate leadership continues to want to work on the issue to make Rhode Island a better and more affordable place to live," Mr. Marcantonio added.

RIBA officials attending the meeting

included President David A. Caldwell Jr., Vice President Timothy A. Stasiunas, Treasurer Carol O'Donnell, RIBA State Director John Bentz, RIBA Legislative Committee Co-Chairman Steven A. Carlino, RIBA Executive Director John Marcantonio, and RIBA government affairs advocates Joseph W. Walsh and William G. Walsh.

Watch for more information as the General Assembly session winds down.



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We want to give a huge thank you to our May networking event host, DiStefano Brothers! A wonderful networking event at a beautiful showroom (shown on right). The ladies of DiStefano shown left (left to right) Kristin Longo, Rebecca Downing, Kaitlin McCarthy, Marisa Navakauskas.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- September: REDI Footings for Decks & Sheds, onsite event
October: Reid's Remodeling Tour
December: NAWIC Holiday Brunch 12/14 – Biltmore Hotel
Centerpiece Workshop - The Farmers Daughter

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Want to learn more about the PWB?

Please visit our site for contact info, up-coming events and news at <http://ribuilders.org/professional-women-in-building>

Member Profile: Mary Cool of California Closets

Everyone needs their space

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

One thing's for certain: She's not in Kentucky anymore.

On the other hand, "I still bleed blue," says Mary Cool of California Closets/Creative Closets, a native of the "Blue Grass State," who followed her husband's work north to New England long before she'd ever heard of the Rhode Island Builders Association.

"You never know where life is going to take you," says Mary, who didn't start out as a senior designer for the storage-space company.

"I actually started in home textiles. I spent my early years buying, selling and designing textiles," says Mary, a graduate of the University of Kentucky.

"Originally, I was a buyer for department stores, including May and Filene's. Then I started designing and selling textiles through catalogs and online companies."

Mary lived in Boston for 25 years. Then, in 2004, it happened.

"I was coming to Rhode Island a great deal, to call on customers. It wasn't long before I fell in love with this state. I just had to be here!" Mary recalls.

Mary sold her place in New York, and the house in Massachusetts, and she moved to Westerly. That's when her life really began to transform.

"As the textile business changed, more and more of the manufacturing went offshore, and things became more uncertain."

As with so many people who build new careers, an avocation can become a new path to success.

"On the side, I had always designed spaces for friends and family. I enjoyed it and I was pretty good at it. So I decided that I wanted to do that full-time," Mary remembers. "I had a hunch that storage spaces were going to be very big in the future. So, I looked around for companies that did any kind of design for closets and storage."



Mary Cool

That's how Mary found California Closets, founded in 1978 by a frustrated student at the University of California, Berkeley, who didn't have enough space in his dorm room for all his stuff.

"He figured out that compartmentalizing and making space for different things would work. His father was a successful businessman, saw what his son was doing, and realized that everyone needs efficient storage space. The company was so successful that a whole industry followed."

Mary loved it!

"California Closets was the only place to be!"

Actually, California Closets is a global company, with headquarters in, of course, California. But there are local showrooms all over the place, including Warwick, which would become a base of operations for Mary.

"Some showrooms are franchises, others, like mine, are owned by corporate," Mary explains. "But it's still very entrepreneurial for the designers. You build your own customer base, you work with and network with different designers, with remodelers and builders. It's important to build up a network of people who know you, and you know them. It's very collaborative."

Sales responsibilities aren't based on territories.

"It all depends on your customers. All the designers work out of all the showrooms."

On any given day, Mary could be in Rhode Island, Massachusetts or New Hampshire.

It was the need for networking that promoted Mary to get California Closets to join RIBA in 2008.

"The recession was beginning, and that's when you need to network the most. I feel very strongly about RIBA. I so support the missions! And working with the student career and technical education programs is unbelievably valuable for the future of our industries," Mary states. "For myself, whenever I call John or Elizabeth at RIBA headquarters with a question, they always have an answer."

Thanks to Mary, California Closets is a fixture at the Rhode Island Home Show every year.

"The Home Show and the RIBA networking events are a great chance to meet people who are doing exciting things all over the state."

Mary is also looking for time to take more classes at RIBA, which are tuition-free for members.

"My only problem is finding time to take all the classes I want!"

Find more information at Californiaclosets.com/locations/ri/warwick/.



California Closets/Creative Closets

Senior Designer: Mary B. Cool

RIBA member since: 2008

Focus: Storage and design solutions

Serves: Global

Founded: 1978

Local based: Warwick, Rhode Island

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Over 150 enjoy RIBA's 2018 Networking Barbecue

Throughout the late afternoon and evening on June 7th, a steady stream of members and guests enjoyed the Rhode Island Builders Association's free Annual Networking Barbecue at RIBA headquarters in East Providence. It was all thanks to the generous sponsorship of Douglas Lumber, Kitchens & Home Center. Here's the Douglas contingent, with owner Steven Carlino, fourth from right. ►

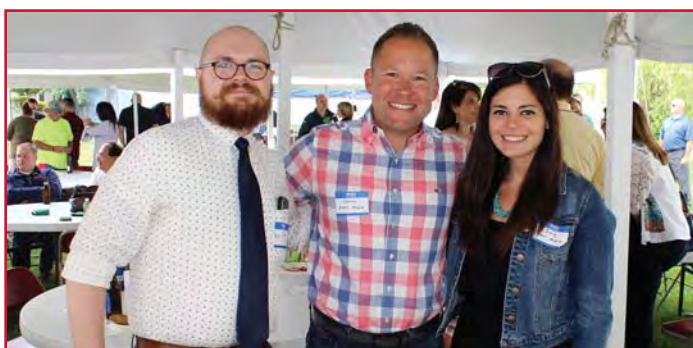


▲ Early arrivals included members of RIBA's Board of Directors, who held a brief meeting before taking a summer recess. RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio, seated at right, updated the board on current legislative matters.

Attendees enjoyed hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken and all the fixings, with beer, wine and dessert items. ►



From left, Don Hamel of Andersen Corp., RIBA President Dave Caldwell, and Joe Cracco of Modern Yankee Builders. ▲



Here's Ben Eno of California Closets, left, with Darren Jodoin and Emily Hattub of PMC Media.



▲ Meeting up at the Networking Barbecue are, from left, Ed Ladouceur of the Stormtite Co., a past RIBA president; Carol O'Donnell of CRM Modular Homes, RIBA's treasurer; and Mike Kubacki of Hearthstone Properties. For information about RIBA membership and networking events, contact Elise Geddes at (401) 438-7400 or egeddes@ribuilders.org.


Be sure that RIBA has your latest contact information

Many people change their e-mail addresses as often as once a year. Maybe they go with new Internet service providers, or they just want to throw off the spammers.

Please check with the Rhode Island Builders Association staff to make sure we have your correct contact information, including your current e-mail, phone numbers and physical addresses.

That's the message from Elise Geddes, the association's member relations coordinator.

"RIBA offers tremendous membership benefits, and these are always growing," Ms. Geddes says. "But we have to be able to keep in regular touch with members if we're to keep you fully informed! You can take full advantage of your member benefits only if you know about them."

Please call Ms. Geddes when you need to update your contact information: (401) 438-7400 or egeddes@ribuilders.org. 

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Thanks, and next month I'll bring you the latest on what's happening with health insurance!

If you need information sooner, contact me at Builders Insurance Group Inc., 450 Veterans Memorial Parkway, Suite 301A, East Providence, RI 02914, (401) 438-4244 or clowe@builderinsgroup.com.

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nationalgrid UPDATE

with Laura Rodormer



RNC: It's the builder's pathway to Zero Energy Homes!

The Rhode Island Residential New Construction Program (RNC) (www.ngrid.com/save) has been in operation for 20 years, providing comprehensive technical support and incentives in support of energy-efficient construction.

Technical support is available free to industry professionals, including training and customized project analysis. RNC project managers provide guidance throughout the construction process, from early design through completion. Each home receives a Home Energy Rating System (HERS) Index, the industry's standard by which a home's energy efficiency is measured.

The RNC program serves a wide variety of projects, including single-family homes, townhouses and apartment buildings, new construction, gut rehabs, adaptive reuse and major renovations, market-rate and affordable housing developments meeting a minimum of 15 percent savings, up to Zero Net Energy.

The program has seen remarkable growth over the years, from serving 12 homes in 1998 to 680 homes in 2017, helping to improve the energy efficiency of newly constructed and renovated homes, and leading to progressively higher standards for qualifying homes.

So, what's next for National Grid's RNC Program? It will play a vital role in support of a statewide initiative currently underway to move buildings to Zero Energy. In the next few months, National Grid will launch a pilot specifically focused on this effort, providing key assistance for design and construction professionals, including custom planning and design guidance, Zero Energy project certification, statewide classroom and on-site trainings, tours of Zero Energy homes, integrated advanced technology, incentives, web resources, and marketing and promotion.

Most importantly, the pilot will offer an opportunity for industry professionals to become involved and help shape the future of construction and real estate in Rhode Island. Stay tuned for future updates on this exciting new initiative. For more information, contact me at National Grid (781) 907-1564.



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Continuing Education for Contractors

Courses headlined in RED on the Education Pages qualify for state-mandated continuing education requirements. EVERY RESIDENTIAL CONTRACTOR registered to work in Rhode Island must take five hours of continuing education before his or her next renewal date.

Five Credit Hours:

Advanced Framing: Codes and Practices
Air Leakage Testing / Blower Door and Air Sealing Strategies
Frost-Protected Shallow Foundations

July 27th

WHEN: Friday, July 27th, 7:45 a.m. to 1 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 \$15 materials/registration fee. \$150 for non-members, with a \$15 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 course will cover several topics, including blower-door and air-leakage testing. This testing has been an Energy Code requirement in Rhode Island for some time, but soon the test results will matter when you apply for a certificate of occupancy anywhere in the state.

Other subjects will be advanced framing, using less material and labor, and frost-protected shallow foundations.

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. Lunch is included. 

Five Credit Hours:

Confined Spaces, Asbestos, Mold

August 16th

WHEN: Thursday, August 16th, 7:45 a.m. to 1 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 \$15 materials/registration fee. A \$150 charge for non-members and a \$15 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 course will cover:

- Confined spaces,
- Asbestos awareness, and
- Mold awareness.

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. Lunch is included. 

Five Credit Hours: OSHA Safety Review

July 19th

WHEN: Thursday, July 19th, 7:45 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 a \$15 materials/registration fee. A \$150 charge for non-members and a \$15 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.


Join instructor Scott Asprey of Risk & Safety Management for an "OSHA Safety Review" to improve your knowledge and compliance, and avoid accidents and costly fines.

Subjects will include:

- A review of jobsite safety rules,
- Fall protection,
- Ladders and scaffolding,
- and confined spaces.

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. Lunch is included. 



Silica and MSDS: Your Right to Know

July 11th

WHEN: Wednesday, July 11th, 8 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, **but registration is required.**

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: One week before class

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

Join Scott Asprey of Risk and Safety Management to review the key provisions of OSHA's new Silica Rule, and see how they affect you and your business.

Learn about:

- The exposure limit for crystalline silica. It will be the employer's responsibility to prove that they're under that limit.
- The requirement for air monitoring, and how OSHA can provide a list of specific control measures employers should take to keep airborne silica levels below the limit.
- Find out about Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and how to keep them compliant. In 2015, this was the second most-cited violation by OSHA.

This seminar is free for members and non members, but you must register in order to attend.



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. For information, contact Sheila McCarthy (401) 438-7400 or smccarthy@ribuilders.org

As an added benefit to RIBA's Education Program, our instructors are happy to speak with class attendees by phone, after class, if they have additional questions or issues to discuss. For more information, contact Sheila McCarthy at RIBA (401) 438-7400 or smccarthy@ribuilders.org

8 Hour Lead Safe Remodeler/ Renovator Course

July 25th

WHEN: Wednesday, July 25th, 7:45 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 certification, which is 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 certification through the Rhode Island Dept. of Health and the federal Environmental Protection Agency (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.

Lunch is included.



Watch for Mass. classes at RIBA

Within the next few months, the Rhode Island Builders Association will introduce classes recognized by both Massachusetts and Rhode Island, a great help to contractors who work in both states.

"We plan to offer 12 hours of courses, over two days, that can apply to both Rhode Island contractor registration and Massachusetts construction supervisor licensing (CSL)," said RIBA Education Manager Sheila McCarthy.

Massachusetts requires 12 hours of continuing education for CSL renewal, while Rhode Island requires five hours for registration renewal. Those who need both Rhode Island and Massachusetts renewals can take the classes for both days they will be offered. Contact Ms. McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call during normal business hours: (401) 438-7400.



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CTE students build unique playhouse for child with cancer

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

"They sent us an e-mail and suggested that we build him a coffee stand. What will a six-year-old do with a coffee stand?"

So said Cameron Eccleston, a senior at the Coventry Regional Career and Technical Center, when he and classmate Ben Wiitala decided to build a playhouse for six-year-old Gavin Stanton of Coventry, who was diagnosed with leukemia at the age of three.

The Rhode Island Builder tracked down Cameron and Ben on May 18th, as they worked with their instructor, Scott Leavitt, to build a 6' by 32' farmer's porch at a house on Hancock Drive in their home town.

"We got a list of Gavin's interests, like sports and hobbies, and we found out that he loved *Star Wars*," Ben said. "So, we decided to come up with something with that theme."

The result was nothing less than an imperial tie fighter, complete with cockpit controls, and Darth Vader and Chewbacca action figures! The playhouse was one of four built by Rhode Island and Massachusetts career and technical education (CTE) students as part of the 3rd annual Project Playhouse, sponsored by Bryant University and Wish Kids, a local not-for-profit.

Ben and Cameron started the playhouse in January, and it took two months to complete. They had plenty of help.

"We asked around, and nobody in our program had any idea how to build a spaceship," Mr. Leavitt said. "Finding out how to do it was half the fun!"

"We had a lot of help from our school's welding and metal shops, which fabricated metal parts for the cockpit. Our art department came up with graphics," he added.

Materials came mostly from Coventry Lumber, and Kent County Glass supplied the plexiglass.

The playhouse was trucked to Bryant to join the other such projects for unveiling to the lucky children on April 25th. Gavin was the first one inside his new playhouse, and he was overjoyed!

www.ribuilders.org



At top, Cameron Eccleston and Ben Wiitala work with Instructor Scott Leavitt. Below, the "tie-fighter" takes shape at Coventry Regional Career and Technical Center earlier this year.

"It felt great, and it means a lot to us that we built this for Gavin," said Cameron.

Project Playhouse was conceived by management students at Bryant. Along with Coventry, participating schools this year included Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School in Upton,

Mass.; Chariho Career and Technical Center; and Providence Career and Technical Academy.

Additional support came from Navigant Credit Union, Target®, Bishop Hendricken Catholic High School and Mount St. Charles Academy.

Students win honors for completing code certification



Students from the Warwick Area Career and Technical Center, the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center, and the Coventry Regional Career and Technical Center received awards on May 30th for completing the International Code Council (ICC) Certification Course. Among those attending were Warwick Acting Mayor Joseph J. Solomon, Rep. Joseph J. Solomon Jr. (D-Warwick), representatives from the Rhode Island Building Officials Association, Netco Sales Co., Dewalt® Tools and Simpson Strong-Tie®. The annual awards ceremony took place at the Warwick Area Career and Technical Center.

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Need good employees? Use the Jobs Bank!

Good news continues on the workforce front when it comes to the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership's (RCWP's) Jobs Bank at RCWPjobs.com.

As of June 9th, the number of job candidates had risen to 323. from 322 in May. There were 602 employers registered at the site, with 81 resumes posted, along with 24 job postings.

Signing up for an account at RCWPJobs.com is free, and employers are urged to do so even if they have no immediate hiring plans. Once you do hire, you'll know who's available and what their qualifications are.

"When your company posts a job opening, it will be personally managed. As soon as it's posted, I receive an immediate e-mail," said RIBA Marketing Director Cheryl Boyd.

"I know who you are and what you're looking for."

It's the same when a resumé is posted.

For details, contact RIBA Marketing Director Cheryl Boyd at (401) 255-5910 or cboyd@ribuilders.org.



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Gov. Baker signs \$1.8 billion bill to boost low-moderate income housing



Gov. Charlie Baker signs the Act Financing the Production and Preservation of Housing for Low and Moderate Income Residents adjacent to a construction site on Chestnut Hill Avenue in Boston on May 31st. Photo courtesy Office of the Governor

By Paul F. Eno Editor

Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker on May 31st signed into law a \$1.8 billion package, including tax incentives, to fund a number of state programs for the construction of workforce housing and the repair and maintenance of existing units.

Included in An Act Financing the Production and Preservation of Housing for Low and Moderate Income Residents (H.4536) is \$600 million to rehabilitate and modernize public housing units. Also in the package is \$400 million for the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which subsidizes a number of housing programs, including assistance for first-time homebuyers.

Also funded is a tax credit program worth \$10 million for market-rate housing projects in so-called “Gateway Cities” like Springfield and New Bedford.

In addition, there is \$100 million for construction of rental housing for middle-income working families who have been priced out of the market. There’s another \$60 million for seniors who are disabled, to repair and modify homes to accommodate their disabilities.

The package includes \$45 million for grants to not-for-profit organizations for educational and program facilities for children from low-income families.

The package extends the Massachusetts Community Investment Tax Credit from December 31, 2019, to December 31, 2025, for taxpayers who make cash contributions to community partners investing in economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income households. An additional \$5 million per year goes to the Massachusetts low-income housing tax credit program for projects that preserve and improve existing state or federally assisted housing.

“This bill will help expand our administration’s commitment to ensuring residents across the commonwealth have more access to quality, safe and affordable housing and economic development

opportunities,” said Gov. Baker.

“Municipalities, developers, and local housing authorities will be supported by a toolbox of flexible resources to create more affordable options and explore new avenues to meet a growing demand,” he added.

“Our goal is to ensure Massachusetts families and residents, despite their income, have access to safe, quality housing they can afford,” said Housing and Community Development Undersecretary Janelle Chan.



Resources for RIBA members who work in Massachusetts

The Rhode Island Builder covers Massachusetts news relevant to members of the Rhode Island Builders Association who work in our neighbor to the north and east.

Here are some sources of regulatory information and forms for contractors who work in the Bay State, or who plan to. For education purposes, RIBA will shortly expand its education programs to include courses required for work in Massachusetts.

Building Permits: Massachusetts has a statewide formula for building permits. Application forms may vary a little by municipality, but standard forms and information may be found at the Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation (OCABR) website: Mass.gov/ocabr.

Contractor Registration and Licensing: Massachusetts has licensing for construction supervisors and registration for home improvement contractors. Find the details at Mass.gov/topics/building-trades.

Also find information about trade licensing at this site.

MassHousing: Similar to Rhode Island Housing, MassHousing is an independent, quasi-public agency that provides financing for affordable housing in Massachusetts.

Created in 1966, MassHousing raises capital by selling bonds, and lends the proceeds to low- and moderate-income homebuyers and homeowners, and to developers who build or preserve affordable and/or mixed-income rental housing. Since its inception, MassHousing has provided more than \$20 billion for affordable housing. Find out more at MassHousing.com.



Want to go above and beyond energy-wise? Use the voluntary Stretch Code!

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

If you want to build green, and do it bigger, bolder and better, you can “stretch” the energy code, and win recognition doing so.

Becca Trietch, administrator of energy efficiency programs for the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER), recently stopped by Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters to explain the stretch energy code, a voluntary appendix to the mandatory state energy code.

The stretch code, known in some areas of the nation as a “reach” code, was prompted by Gov. Gina Raimondo’s “Lead by Example” executive order of December 2015, and it became an official option for builders as of February 2018.

The executive order itself was prompted by the Resilient Rhode Island Act, passed by the General Assembly in 2014, which set ambitious carbon-emission reduction and energy-efficiency goals for the state.

“The residential stretch code is just that, a stretch. It’s a voluntary guidance document where builders, remodelers and homeowners can take their energy-efficient construction to the next level. This is the path,” Ms. Trietch explained.

Getting the word out

OER and RIBA have joined forces to help get the word out. National Grid is encouraging builders to use the stretch code as well. The U.S. Dept. of Energy’s (DOE’s) Zero Energy Ready Home Program (ZERH) forms the basis of the stretch code.

“We have added a few additional requirements just for Rhode Island,” said Ms. Trietch. “The code also ties into the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) WaterSense Program for water-saving.”

How to comply

Wall thickness, insulation type and methods, and HVAC systems all play a role in the stretch code, she indicated. Specifically:

- There are multiple ways to comply, using well-established certification programs: DOE’s ZERH; Passive House Institute certification; the Living Building Challenge; Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Homes.

- Blower door testing to measure air leakage is required and a performance level, depending on building size, must be documented.

- The home must be designed to use no more than the energy that can be supplied by a roof-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) system on an annual basis.

- The compliance path can be prescriptive or performance; both paths are intended to result in at least a 15 percent energy reduction



Becca Trietch

compared with the current energy code.

- The home must be photovoltaic (PV) ready. The roof structure must be designed to handle the load of solar panels, and electrical conduits from the service panel to the roof area must be installed. Ground mount is also an option.

- A solar site survey must be completed, and an installation estimate obtained.

- Provisions for adding a 240V electric vehicle charging station must be installed.

- The EPA WaterSense Program requirements, or an equivalent, must be met. WaterSense specifies water-efficient fixtures and plumbing layouts. The EPA has been working with manufacturers on a labeling program for water-efficient products that comply with WaterSense criteria.

- Ventilation and materials must comply with volatile organic compound (VOC) rules to assure indoor environmental quality.

- Homeowners must receive a comprehensive owner’s manual that includes operating and maintenance instructions for all energy-using systems and appliances.

While the stretch code is voluntary, *The Rhode Island Builder* asked Ms. Trietch about any implications it might have for inspections.

“We’re coordinating with National Grid, and they have an education program for code officials on the base code, but they are now adding specific training on the stretch code,” she said. “So, we hope, within a year, to be well on the way to educating inspectors about the stretch codes.”

Third-party verification

Stretch code compliance will be verified by a third-party, Home Energy Rating System (HERS)-rated inspector. Incentives for builders will include recognition by OER and other agencies.

“We want builders who go above and beyond by using the stretch code to know we’re proud of them, that they’re adding value to their products, and that we want them to keep doing this,” said Ms. Trietch.

There is also a commercial version of the stretch code.

Rhode Island’s stretch code is somewhat unusual, Ms. Trietch explained.

“In many states, Massachusetts, for example, municipalities can adopt different code standards from the state. Rhode Island doesn’t do that. It’s a statewide code,” she said. “Builders don’t have to adapt every time they build in a different city or town.”

Find out more about the Stretch Energy Code at Energy.ri.gov/policies-programs/lead-by-example/rhode-island-stretch-codes.php. Or contact Ms. Trietch at (401) 574-9106 or becca.trietch@energy.ri.gov.

EPA: RRP rules are fine as is, but R.I. makes changes

The EPA has announced that its Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) rules, promulgated April 2008, are just fine the way they are.

That was the news in April 2018 at the

end of a 10th anniversary review of the RRP rules by the EPA. The review was prompted by concerns that the rules might create an unreasonable burden on small contractors.

"The Agency concluded that the RRP

rule should remain unchanged without any actions to amend or rescind it," an EPA statement said.

"The Agency based its conclusion on a review of stakeholder comments, other data that EPA reviewed that are relevant to the factors...and the stated objectives... to reduce hazards associated with lead in paint. If EPA were aware of changes that would reduce burdens that were consistent with Congress's objectives, the Agency would consider adopting them."

For more details, visit EPA.gov.

Story on page 2

Recipients in the settlement with East Greenwich over impact fees

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| AMC Construction | \$2,962.82 |
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| Lynn Sarazen | \$740.70 |
| Mark Davis | \$670.49 |
| Mark Weaver | \$869.15 |
| Matthew Micone | \$1,025.31 |
| Meridian Custom Homes | \$897.41 |
| Mike Gormley | \$831.47 |
| Ming Ling Yau | \$920.53 |
| North End Realty | \$9,591.47 |
| Pariseault Builders | \$1,025.31 |
| Parker Thompson | \$7,407.04 |
| Pathmark Development | \$52,104.55 |
| Pawtucket Credit Union | \$11,673.00 |
| Petra Building Corp. | \$2,050.61 |
| Philip Ryan Homes | \$24,924.18 |
| PVT Construction | \$897.41 |
| R.C. Associates | \$897.41 |
| R+M Properties | \$2,222.11 |
| Richmond Builders & Remodeling | \$663.64 |
| Robert & Melissa Muehlberg | \$897.41 |
| Robert Fitch | \$740.70 |
| Rocco Sammartino Builders | \$10,755.19 |
| Roland DeCesare | \$1,050.93 |
| Rossini & Smith | \$7,133.59 |
| Sean McHugh | \$920.53 |
| Shoreline Properties LLC | \$1,945.53 |
| Smiley Development | \$3,053.58 |
| Stephen Andruchow | \$1,768.01 |
| Steve Najas | \$1,050.93 |
| Steven and Donna Gouveia | \$740.70 |
| Sun Valley Manufactured Homes | \$1,893.29 |
| Temple Torat Yisrael | \$11,239.40 |
| Thomas & Alla Dahlin | \$1,050.93 |
| Tim & Laurie Grenier | \$1,025.31 |
| Timber Properties LLC | \$972.76 |
| Toll Brothers | \$39,432.00 |
| Tri-Star Construction, Inc. | \$740.70 |
| Tuscon Property Management | \$107,004.10 |
| UJS Associates/ John Buontempo | \$920.53 |
| Valleywood Associates | \$2,222.11 |
| Vasco, Inc. | \$1,050.93 |
| Westminster Unitarian Church | \$5,487.47 |
| Wo P. Chan | \$740.70 |
| WSCHB, LLC | \$52,354.50 |
| Zarrella Development | \$12,758.09 |

Grand Total **\$1,133,333.32**

R.I. makes some changes

"The Rhode Island Dept. of Health has aligned its regulations to be more consistent with the EPA. Regulations will make it easier for contractors in the region to work in neighboring states," said RIBA Education Manager Sheila McCarthy.

"Lead test kits can now be used when determining if lead is present. A lead renovator who performs lead testing for the purpose of determining the applicability of the RRP Rule, must test every component affected by the renovation," Ms. McCarthy added.

"The lead renovator must complete a Test Kit Documentation Form or Paint Chip Sample Collection Form and chain of custody. A signed copy must be provided to the property owner and retained for at least three years from completion of the project. This replaces the rule that called for lab testing."

Certification, not licensing

Lead renovator training certification is now recognized. The renovator no longer needs to apply for a license from the Health Dept.

However, renovators must submit their applications along with the certificate from the class to be "certified" as a Lead Safe Remodeler/Renovator.

RIBA offers all the classes contractors need in order to comply with lead and other requirements. For more information, e-mail Ms. McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org.

-Paul Eno

Harry Winthrop

Mayor of Newport

Harry Winthrop, a lifelong Newporter, is a graduate of the former De La Salle Academy and Rhode Island College, and did course work at the Sloan School of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was director of planning with Electric Boat – General Dynamics Corp., until his retirement in 2007. From 2007 through 2014, Mr. Winthrop was a defense industry consultant with Apollo Professional Solutions in the development of a 20-year facilities master plan for the Electric Boat manufacturing plant at Quonset Point. He served terms on the Newport City Council from 1990-1993, 1995, and then from 2011-2012. He served as mayor from 2012 to 2014, and again, starting in 2016.



THE BUILDER: What is Newport doing to address Rhode Island's chronic shortage of workforce housing?

WINTHROP: There are a few things going on. Right now, Newport has more subsidized housing than any other community in the state. We're at 17 percent. Recently, the City Council passed a resolution to sign a contract with a developer to convert one of our former school buildings, the Cranston-Calvert School, into what we define as affordable or workforce housing. That will be roughly 30 units.

We do have the objective of providing that type of housing here in the city because the price of real estate has made it unobtainable for the average person in Newport. That's clearly market-driven, and the market has priced a lot of people out. That's not good for any city or town, and gentrification is the real cause of it.

We're acutely aware of that and, where we can, we're attempting to provide housing choices. We have a substantial amount of workforce housing, but we want to add more. That's an objective of the City Council going forward.

Now, we don't have a lot of land available. We're a pretty densely developed and populated city as it is. The only real space, though it's not really developable, is around Ocean Drive. The price of the real estate is outrageous there, and I don't believe our zoning would allow further development there anyway.

THE BUILDER: So, Newport is open to more population growth. Is the city on board with denser, mixed-use development in "village centers"?

WINTHROP: Yes, and I think that's what we've always had here anyway. We're a small city, so that's the way Newport has developed since the beginning.

THE BUILDER: If you had to put a percentage on how much residential growth, as compared with commercial

growth, Newport wants, what would it be?

WINTHROP: I'm not sure how to quantify that. As I say, there's not a lot of buildable property left in the city. Where we can, we will convert property to residential use, as with the Cranston-Calvert school. In fact, we're working with developers to do something similar with the Coggeshall School.

We don't have actual percentage goals. We just know that we need to grow the city, because our actual population numbers have declined. In the late 1970s, we were at 32,000 people. Today we're at 24,000. Much of that has to do with household size, which is much smaller today.

THE BUILDER: Are you talking about the year-round population, not including summer residents?

WINTHROP: I mean people who claim Newport as their permanent residence, so essentially the year-round population.

THE BUILDER: How is Newport's position unique in the Boston/Providence metro area?

WINTHROP: There are many things that make Newport unique, and a very special place. One is our harbor, Ocean Drive, the Cliff Walk, and certainly the natural beauty. Because of the harbor and the excellent sailing conditions, we're known as the sailing capital of the world. We're the former – and, hopefully, the future – home of the America's Cup.

If you look around here, there are things most states, never mind cities and towns, would like to have. The Tennis Hall of Fame is here, and we're now negotiating with the National Sailing Hall of Fame for their home to be here. Not bad for a town of 24,000. There's nowhere quite like Newport!

THE BUILDER: As mayor, what's your overall vision for the future of Newport?

WINTHROP: We want to diversify our economy. Right now, we're heavily dependent on tourism and the hospitality industry, which is good because it pays the bills. Because of that, our tax rate is the 32nd lowest out of Rhode Island's 39 cities and towns.

Still, we want to see some growth in the technology industries. We have an area in the North End, where the Newport Bridge on and off ramps are. We're now developing plans for what to do when those bridge ramps are realigned, because that will free up 43 acres of land for redevelopment.

Also, the city is going to take title to the former naval hospital, on 17 acres that abuts that redevelopment area. We'd like to create

see *INTERVIEW...next page*

www.ribuilders.org

INTERVIEW...from previous page

an innovation hub there. As a precursor to that, we're developing a small-business education center, or a "technology business incubator," at our former Sheffield School. We hope to have that functional by December or January.

Entrepreneurs will be able to come in, find out how to set up and grow their businesses. They can start at the "incubator," then move out into the innovation hub when they grow. We had hoped to acquire the Newport Grand property, but the Carpiato Group has that, and plans to develop it are in process.

THE BUILDER: How can the residential construction industry in general, and the Rhode Island Builders Association in particular, help Newport achieve its housing/growth plans?

WINTHROP: That could be difficult because Newport doesn't have formal, long-term growth plans as other cities and towns do. Buildable property for new housing just doesn't exist here as it does in other communities. However, there are possibilities in renovating existing properties, like the schools I mentioned.

We need these to be affordable, with the quality of work RIBA members have a reputation for. If we can build affordably, we can rent it or sell it affordably.

THE BUILDER: Please sum up the message you would like to convey to residential builders and developers.

WINTHROP: I'd just say that Newport is a great place to live,

work and play, if you will. We have a lot to offer here, including great venues, schools, restaurants, and even a huge arts community.

The one thing I always say is that it takes three main components to make a community world-class. One is a community hospital, and we have that in Newport Hospital. Another is a vibrant arts and cultural community, and it would take me all afternoon to list all the arts groups we have in this city.

Finally, you need a top-notch university. And we're lucky enough to have Salve Regina University right here. We also have the Community College of Rhode Island's Newport Campus, and even the U.S. Naval War College, probably the most famous military college of its kind in the world.

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NAHB: Lumber prices threaten housing affordability

The most serious headwind facing housing markets today is the escalation of framing lumber prices—up 59 percent since the start of 2017.

So say recent surveys by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), which suggest that the price for lumber has overtaken the availability of labor as the primary business challenge for home builders. Since the beginning of last year, rising lumber prices have added more than \$7,000 to the price of a typical new home, and more than \$2,000 to the price of a typical apartment, according to NAHB.

“There are a number of reasons why lumber prices have jumped, including a rail car shortage in Canada, but the primary factor is the 21 percent effective tariff rate placed on Canadian softwood lumber,” said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. “The ongoing concerns over trade wars represent a macroeconomic risk to the gains resulting from the recent tax legislation, and lumber is a prime example.”

Nonetheless, builder confidence remains strong, despite total housing starts falling 3.7 percent in April, according to Dr. Dietz.

“Though multifamily starts declined 11 percent in April, that market is up 10 percent year-to-date, outperforming our forecast. And single-family starts are 8 percent above their year-to-date totals from a year ago. However, recent data show a gain in average new-home size, which is an early indicator of weakness in the entry-level market due to rising input costs.”

Find out more at NAHB.org.



Survey: Bathrooms most popular remodeling project

National Association of Home Builders

Bathrooms overtook kitchens as the most popular remodeling project, according to a new survey released by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). The national trade association released the survey results, which highlight the most common remodeling projects, to kick off National Home Remodeling Month in May.

“Small-scale renovations are slowly becoming just as popular as large-scale projects, as seen with bathroom remodeling becoming more common than kitchens,” said 2018 NAHB Remodelers Chairwoman Joanne Theunissen, CPG, CGR, a remodeler from Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

“Home owners are finding cost-effective and shorter timeframe upgrades can also add comfort and value to their homes.”


In the survey, remodelers reported the most common projects in 2017:

- 81 percent bathroom remodeling
- 78 percent kitchen remodeling
- 49 percent whole house remodeling
- 37 percent room additions
- 30 percent window/door replacements

Additionally, a separate survey by NAHB showed that high-performing, low-emissivity (Low-E) windows are the most common green building product installed by residential remodelers. Programmable thermostats and high-efficiency HVAC systems also ranked highly among the most common green products used. While remodeling is most commonly associated with kitchens and baths, green upgrades can save home owners on utilities, improve air quality and increase the value of their homes.

For more information about remodeling, visit nabh.org/remodel. For a copy of the full survey, please contact Kristin LeMunyon at klemunyon@nabh.org.





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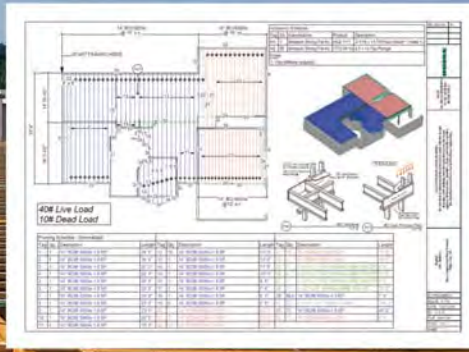
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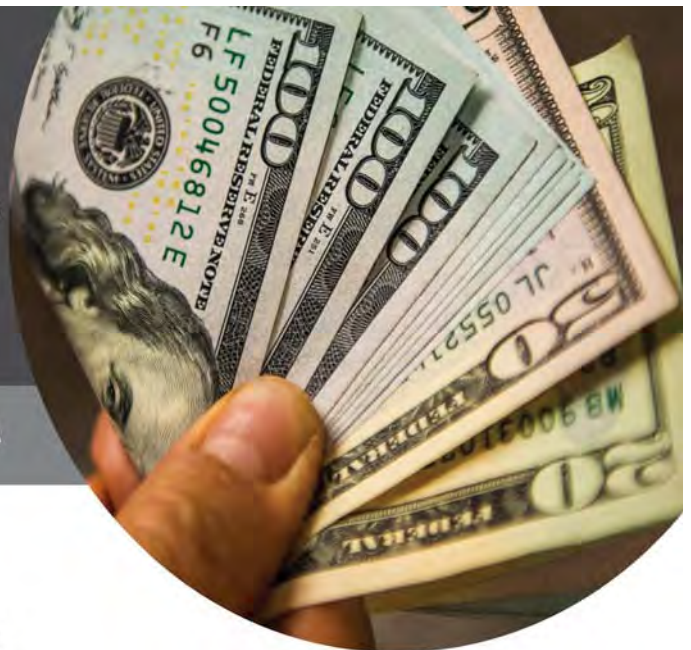
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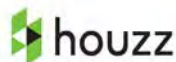
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MEMBERS...from page 3

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SOLAR...from page 6

ons against greenhouse-gas emissions, is not something we should take lightly, to say the least. I agree with those who say that Rhode Island should follow in the footsteps of other states that provide strong incentives for developing solar energy facilities in areas already developed.”

Municipalities need to help steer solar-farm developers into these areas, according to Mr. Kelly.

“Communities should remove regulatory barriers to developing solar facilities on large rooftops and/or in parking areas. But more so, it must be a programmatic issue. The incentives provided at the state and local levels need to make the development of solar in these greyfield areas more financially attractive than the greenfield option.”

Timothy Roughan, director of energy and environmental policy at National Grid, said the solution is squarely in the hands of government.

“State and local leaders have promoted solar and renewable energy development because they believe their constituents see it as a worthwhile goal. If folks are not comfortable with how it’s being deployed, they need to persuade them to modify the underlying guidelines allowing for these projects,” Mr. Roughan said.



Nathan Kelly

Land is not the only issue

Where to put solar farms isn’t the only problem. Ironically, especially when placed on the ground, they can have negative environmental consequences.

“If the array isn’t installed properly, there can be serious runoff problems at the site, affecting neighboring properties and the local environment,” Mr. Caldwell pointed out.

In addition, solar farms can threaten passing birds, thousands of which are incinerated daily in concentrated beams of sunlight associated with the arrays. Biologists have only recently begun to track this phenomenon. At just one facility, the Ivanpah Solar Plant, about 15 miles west of Las Vegas, Nevada, federal scientists estimate that some 6,000 birds a day are literally vaporized. According to a *Los Angeles Times* report, plant workers call them “streamers.”

An oversupply of solar power?

“Right now, the primary problem is our inability to store the electricity produced by solar power in any practical way,” Mr. Caldwell pointed out.

Under Rhode Island’s net metering law, he explained, the excess electricity produced by a home owner’s solar array feeds into the main power grid at par prices.

“So, if you’re paying 18¢ a kilowatt hour out, the utility is required to pay you 18¢ a kilowatt hour in. Utilities are starting to push back on that.”

The problem down the road is too much solar energy, and nowhere to put it.

By far the worst example of this is California, whose problems tend to head eastward, and that state’s solar power situation almost defies belief. As reported by the *Los Angeles Times*: For periods of up to two weeks at a time since 2016, California produced so much solar power that utilities were worried about overloaded power lines.

Arizona was offered the power free, but wouldn’t accept it, so California had to pay Arizona and other states to take the power. The Golden State’s solar power glut would have been even worse had state regulators not ordered some solar farms to cut production.

One problem is disorganization: Among California’s regulators and utilities, no-one is really in charge of energy policy. So, while the state legislature has just mandated that all new homes be solar-powered, beginning in 2020, some utilities are still building fossil-fuel generating plants. And Californians are now paying 50 percent higher energy rates than people elsewhere in America.

“Rhode Island needs to learn from California’s mistakes,” Mr. Caldwell said. “We need to work together and think things through.”

White House to work with builders

National Association of Home Builders

If the clout of a Washington trade association is measured by its access to high-level policymakers, then the members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) have much to be proud of.

In May alone, during the 2018 NAHB Spring Executive Board Meeting in Washington, builders met at the White House with Vice President Mike Pence and top administration officials; discussed the housing outlook with the Fed chairman; hosted HUD Secretary Ben Carson at the National Housing Center; and held several meetings with lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

“The fact that the National Association of Home Builders is so respected in Washington, D.C. is that (these high officials) all want to hear what we have to say,” said NAHB Chairman Randy Noel.

“They want to talk about our issues and really get something done. That’s unprecedented, and it shows you the importance of housing.”

Learn more about NAHB government affairs activities at NAHB.org.



CLAMBAKE...from page 1

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Enjoy volleyball, horseshoes, basketball, the football toss, insulation toss, the RIBA-invented sport of plywood throwing, and more! At the end of the day, enjoy awards and many door prizes. Consider making this event, a RIBA tradition since 1950, your company’s outing, and please consider a sponsorship!

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