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JUNE**

Center Section

**Join RIBA and
get tuition-free
education**

Members and their employees get tuition-free classes from the Rhode Island Builders Association, both onsite and online, potentially saving thousands of dollars.

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**Networking
Barbecue slated
for June 7**

Join your fellow members, and bring your non-member colleagues, for a fun evening of good food, drink and networking, generously sponsored by Douglas Lumber, Kitchens & Home Center.

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**Tour the Energy
Innovation Hub!**

National Grid's Laura Rodormer takes us on a tour of the premiere energy-education venue in Rhode Island.

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**Contractors told
to bone up on
OSHA matters**

Safety Instructor Scott Asprey urges members to get informed on silica rule, SDS.

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Major developments in permitting

Statewide formula set for July 1

Cities and town fees must match their building-office expenses.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

In a long-awaited move to bring more predictability to municipal permitting, and to make fees more equitable, a statewide permit-fee formula is scheduled to take effect on July 1st.

Among other things, the system requires that the building permit fees every municipality levies be based only on the costs of running their building departments, and that the fee schedule be approved by the state Building Code Commission (BCC). Enabling legislation was passed in 2015, and the BCC has been hammering out the regulations for nearly three years. The municipal fee schedules have all been approved.

However, cities and towns have until June 30th to ask for extensions so their fee schedules can be re-

considered. As of April 25th, no community had requested this, according to Julietta Georgakis, project manager for implementing the statewide permitting formula.

“Prior to this, what municipalities were doing across the state didn’t work. It didn’t work for the construction industry or for home owners,” said Ms. Georgakis, formerly of the state’s Office of Regulatory Reform, now with the Rhode Island Commerce Corp., on loan to the Dept. of Business Regulation.

“When you went to pull a permit, communities were all over the board. You could easily pay \$200 for a per-



Julietta Georgakis

see STATEWIDE...page 28

E-permitting: Growing and popular



Elizabeth Tanner

Now in 22 cities and towns, the system is a national model because it interfaces with state and local governments.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

It’s in 22 Rhode Island municipalities, is coming to four more soon, and it seems that everyone likes it. It’s electronic permitting!

“As far as we know, this is the only e-permitting system in the country that combines both municipal and state permitting,” said Elizabeth Tanner, director of the Rhode Island Dept. of Business Regulation, who is spearheading the statewide e-permitting project. “That’s super important, especially in areas where the state and municipalities are trying to work together. They can literally push paper back and forth to each other electronically.”

Another strength is the ability of applicants to see where they are in the permit process at any time, according to Ms. Tanner.

see E-PERMITTING...page 29

Classes required by Massachusetts to be offered as well

Members and their employees get tuition-free classes at RIBA

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

If you work in Massachusetts as well as Rhode Island, you can save six hours by taking courses that meet requirements for both states. And the courses are tuition-free for members of the Rhode Island Builders Association and their employees.

That's the word from RIBA Membership Relations Coordinator Elise Geddes and Education Manager Sheila McCarthy.

"While there might be a nominal charge for course materials, classes are free of tuition charges for members and their employees," Ms. McCarthy said.

"Especially given the continuing education for contractors mandated by Rhode Island, this can save you thousands of dol-



John Pesce of Titan Lead Testing LLC teaches a lead class at Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters on April 18th.

lars as an employer. Even if it's just you, the free tuition will more than cover the cost of your RIBA membership dues," she added.

Bringing in classes recognized by both Massachusetts and Rhode Island will help contractors who work in both states "kill two birds with one stone," as the saying goes.

"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 Ms. McCarthy.

"This will save six hours for contractors who need both."

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. Those who need just Rhode Island renewal can take the appropriate classes for one day.

"That extra hour can only help increase

your knowledge!" Ms. McCarthy says.

Massachusetts has a separate registration layer for home improvement contractors, but does not require courses for it. See page 20 for more information.

Through the RIBAEducates.com website, anyone can take advantage of 24-7 continuing education.

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 4, 13 and 14), online courses are free of tuition charges for members and their employees.

Members can contact RIBA for a special coupon to get the free tuition for online courses. Just use your coupon code at the online checkout.

For non-members, the tuition charge is \$12 per credit hour.

Contact Ms. McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call during normal business hours: (401) 438-7400.



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DEADLINES FOR THE JULY ISSUE

All copy, ads and photos must be to us by

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LOOKING AHEAD!

 **June 7th: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours - Topics are Exterior Water Management: Roofs and Walls, and Common Construction Regulations.** *Details on page 13.*

June 7th: Annual Networking Barbecue - Sponsored by Douglas Lumber, Kitchens & Home Center. FREE for members and their guests., RIBA headquarters, 4-7 p.m. A brief meeting of the RIBA Board of Directors will take place at 4 p.m. Members may attend for informational purposes. For more information and to register for the Barbecue, contact Elizabeth Carpenter, ecarpenter@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 10.*

June 11th: Summer Social with RIBA's Professional Women in Building Council: 6-9 p.m. East Greenwich Yacht Club, 10 Water St., East Greenwich. To register, contact Linda Bohmbach at linda@homehealthsmith.com. *Details on page 9.*

 **June 14th: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours - Topics are Confined Spaces, Asbestos Awareness, Mold Awareness.** *Details on page 13.*

June 14th: Build-PAC Event: 5:30-8 p.m. East Greenwich Yacht Club, 10 Water St., East Greenwich. There will be *hors d'oeuvres*, beer and wine. Donation is \$150. To register, contact Elizabeth Carpenter at ecarpenter@ribuilders.org.

June 19th: RIBA Annual Baseball Outing: Barbecue and baseball at McCoy Stadium! Barbecue from 4:45-6:45, game begins at 6:15. McCoy Stadium, 1 Columbus Ave, Pawtucket. Cost \$30 per person. *Details on page 12.*

June 25th and 26th: OSHA 10-Hour Course - 7:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day at RIBA headquarters. Course is FREE for members and their employees with a \$40 materials/registration fee, \$125 for non-members with a \$40 materials/registration fee. For more information and to register, contact Sheila McCarthy, smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 14.*

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 25.*

 **July 19th: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours - Topic is OSHA Safety Review.** Class is available onsite or online at RIBAEducat.es.com. *Details on page 14.*

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. Premier Sponsors will have exhibit space at the Clambake. *Details on page 12.*

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. Premier Sponsors will have exhibit space at the event.

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.

Take RIBA classes online at RIBAEducat.es.com

Visit RIBAEducat.es.com for access to 24-7 continuing education!

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 XX and XX), 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

Ask candidates: What will you do to boost housing supply?

The spring season is historically the busiest time of the year for real estate transactions. This season, it's clearly a seller's market. The last couple of years

have seen significant upticks in the price of housing, and these were welcome reports, as prices have rebounded from the Great Recession. This year, however, the market prices have increased substantially, leading to scarcity, which further intensifies demand. Stories abound of bidding wars and multiple-offer situations.

This has resulted in a new theme in press coverage of housing in Rhode Island, highlighted in an April 23rd editorial in the *Providence Journal*: "R.I. isn't building enough homes."

We here at the Rhode Island Builders Association have known for some time that the chief culprit affecting the supply of obtainable homes is the lack of production, or supply. The free market will always be in search of an equilibrium between supply and demand. One of my professors in business school liked to say, "If you can teach a monkey to graph supply and demand curves, you've got yourself an economist."

The best data available indicate that we need to have been producing 3,500 housing units a year to meet the demand in the Rhode Island market – and this assumes a no- to minimal-growth scenario. In 2017, the best year in almost a decade, Rhode Island issued 1,156 permits. So, we are falling further behind every year. And were Rhode Island to begin actually growing, we would need more along the lines of 5,000 permits a year issued. A Rhode Island issuing 5,000 building permits for new housing units would, without question, indicate a state that's growing and prospering.

In the interim, as a result of this shortage of supply, prices continue to escalate steeply, and this issue is beginning to affect great numbers of Rhode Islanders. Many people striving for that

first home, for example, are seeing the goal posts moved farther and faster away than they can reach. There is no single better path to the American middle class than the purchase of that first home. Many recent graduates who would otherwise stay in Rhode Island are factoring in housing costs, and the ability to buy a home, when they choose their new careers – and many have been leaving the state. Many seniors remain trapped in inappropriate housing, with no alternatives.

The solution is relatively simple, and well executed in other areas of the country: Collaborative efforts between state agencies, municipalities, environmentalists and developers. There should be a general understanding, if not agreement, that growth is good, that all stakeholders must work together to create a supply of housing that's obtainable for the population. But overall, it requires leadership from the state level to incentivize growth.

To quote that same editorial from the *Journal*, "The pathetic number of permits issued shows something is wrong. Rhode Island's leaders should be looking into what is keeping new homes from being built."

Strong words, but I'm hopeful. We at RIBA have been talking about this problem for years, and it's now getting resonance among a wider public audience. It's even possible that we're nearing a tipping point. I have believed, and will continue to believe, that Rhode Island can shake off its general malaise and build its way out of our problems, and that the construction industry can, and will, be the leading force in doing so. We will also put thousands of Rhode Island families not only into housing, but also into the middle class.

So, as we enter this election season, I would request of our members and readers to ask every candidate for elected office, from town councils to the State House: "What do you intend to do to increase the supply of housing in Rhode Island so that our state can grow?"



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RIBA officials, members urged to promote industry's economic message

Speakers also inform board about statewide e-permitting and streamlining.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

“Construction is always the leader in the economy. Statistics show that every dollar a construction worker makes pumps \$3.1 into the economy, and most of that spending takes place within 20 miles of home. In Rhode Island, that radius is basically the entire state.”

So said Rep. John G. “Jay” Edwards (D-Portsmouth, Tiverton), House majority whip, as he addressed the Rhode Island Builders Association’s Board of Directors on May 7th.

“You need to make people understand how valuable your industry is,” said Rep. Edwards as he called upon RIBA members to help educate state and local officials on residential construction issues.

Rep. Edwards also reviewed in detail pending state legislation of industry interest, and took questions and comments from board members. He also shared a story from Indiana, whose House speaker, Rep. Brian Bosma (R-Marion, Hamilton and Hancock Counties), he recently met.

“At crossings from Illinois into Indiana, there are big signs that say build here and you’ll have a building permit in 24 hours! That’s where we need to be,” Rep. Edwards said. “That’s not unfeasible for us, but you all need to make people who don’t understand your business see how much that would help the state. The towns would prosper, and the state would pick up the sales tax revenue.”

Also speaking to the board on May 7th were Dept. of Business Regulation (DBR) Director Elizabeth Tanner, along with Elizabeth Usherwood of ViewPoint, the Boston-based software company that now provides the state and local e-permitting system in Rhode Island (*related story on page 1*).

“Toward the end of the summer, we plan



During the May 7th meeting of the RIBA Board of Directors, Rep. John G. “Jay” Edwards (D-Portsmouth, Tiverton), at top, reviews pending legislation of interest to the residential construction industry. Below, Director of Business Regulation Elizabeth Tanner, left, reviews plan to streamline permitting. Later, Elizabeth Usherwood of ViewPoint, right, led the board on a tour of the statewide e-permitting system.

to launch ‘how to build a building’ from the viewpoint of streamlining the process,” Ms. Tanner said, noting that the “how to open a restaurant” project was the first in a series of educational projects that will become DBR reference web pages.

Ms. Tanner also noted that the new state fire marshal, Timothy McLaughlin, is settling in and plans statewide training for local fire inspectors in order to assure consistent inspection results. *See the interview with Mr. McLaughlin in the April Rhode Island Builder.*

There are plans for the Contractors’ Registration and Licensing Board to join

the municipalities and state agencies now participating in the statewide e-permitting system, according to Ms. Tanner.

Three-hour training sessions for local boards also will be introduced soon, she added.

“We’re also working on regulations for licensing well drillers, commercial roofers, pump installers, home inspectors and residential water filtration installers,” Ms. Tanner noted. “Enabling legislation for these has been in place since as long ago as 2000, but nobody ever did anything about it.”

Networking Night draws nearly 60 people

Nearly 60 members and guests dropped by Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters on Thursday, April 26th, to network, enjoy food and drink, and meet the RIBA staff.

The event was generously sponsored by National Building Products and United Vinyl Windows.

“Brad Taylor of United Vinyl Windows, on behalf of National Building Products, gave a short and informative presentation about the many features of their lifetime-warranty windows and doors to a very attentive crowd,” RIBA Member Relations Coordinator Elise Geddes reported.

“Our networking events are becoming more and more popular, and we are hearing from more potential sponsors who would like to hold their own networking events at RIBA. Our events attract members who want to be informed and involved, making for a great mix!” Ms. Geddes added.

Networking events are one of the many benefits of RIBA membership. Bring a non-member to show them what a great resource RIBA is!

If your company would like to sponsor a RIBA networking event, contact Ms. Geddes at (401) 438-7400 or egeddes@ribuilders.org.



Brad Taylor of United Vinyl Windows demonstrates a product for attendees on April 26th.



Doing some networking are, from left, John Fagan, Dan Silverman, Helder Buechell, Art Dwyer and Michell McDowell.

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Dean Amoroso, left, and George Grayson of TradeSource, with RIBA Health Insurance Administrator Robin Barlow.



Mike McDole of National Building Products and Daryl Frost of The Beck Companies.

Professional Women in Building : PWB NEWS

New Member Spotlight

Jessica Storm-Coyle

Vice President

Ed Wojcik Architect, Ltd.

What benefits do you find being a member?

I am new to the PWB membership, but I already feel connected with the group of women I have met. The TED lecture at the first meeting was inspiring, and I enjoyed the discussion that followed. Benefits of membership include networking with other women who share a common interest, while always bringing new perspectives. The continuing education opportunities are incredibly valuable to me both personally and professionally. I am looking forward to getting involved on a local level, through outreach and community involvement.

What drew you into your career?

Growing up, my dad was always working on house projects that transformed our home over the years. I witnessed his design intuition and the ability to reflect his vision into a built form. In high school, I realized that I enjoyed art and math, and my math teacher suggested that I pursue architecture. In college, I was able to explore many different types of design media and decided that architecture was where my heart was. I have worked all over the country for several firms, and have been with Ed Wojcik Architect for the past 13 years. I am always learning new things in the world of construction and design, and I love that each day brings a new set of challenges.

What sets your company apart from others?

Ed Wojcik Architect has been in business for 20 years, and we currently have nine people on staff. Ed is a great leader, is very passionate about construction and design, and this transcends through to all of the staff. EWA is dedicated to carrying through the client's vision, first through construction completion. We offer a unique and personal approach to each project, with a "whatever it takes" attitude. I think the combination of pragmatic construction knowledge and creative design skills sets us apart from others.

How do you spend your free time?

I spend most of my free time with my family, exploring the beauty of the outdoors. In the winter months, you will find me skiing on the mountain or in the backcountry. In the warmer months, you will find me near the coast, kayaking or enjoying the beaches. I love finding new places to explore, and I make the most of each day.

Join us for our next event

June 11th at East Greenwich Yacht Club for a Summer Social!

6-9pm 10 Water St, East Greenwich, RI RSVP to Linda – linda@homehealthsmith.com

PWB Officers

Carol O'Donnell-President
Linda Bohmbach- Vice President
Sophia Karvunis- Treasurer
Jacqueline Pagel- Secretary



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>

RIBA Happenings: Professional Women in Building



Professional Women in Building Member Showcase

Join us June 11th for our Summer Social!

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Networking BBQ slated for June 7

WHEN: Thursday, June 7th, 4 to 7 p.m.

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

COST: FREE for members and their guests

FOR INFORMATION & TO

REGISTER: Contact Elise Geddes at egeddes@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.



Members and guests turn out for a previous RIBA Annual Networking Barbecue. More than 150 people are expected this year, with the event generously sponsored by Douglas Lumber, Kitchens & Home Center, along with Andersen Corp., Royal Building Products and Fiberon.

Douglas Lumber, Kitchens & Home Center is generously sponsoring the Rhode Island Builders Association's 5th Annual Networking Barbeque!

RIBA members and their guests will enjoy hamburgers, hot dogs, barbecued chicken with all the fixings and, of course, a nice cold beer. All this while networking with fellow members and checking out the products that Douglas Lumber, Andersen Windows, Fiberon Decking and Royal Building Products will have on display.

Representatives will be on hand to talk about what's new, and they will be available to answer product and installation questions.

This Barbecue is free for members and their guests. Because of the popularity of this event, please contact RIBA Member Relations Coordinator Elise Geddes if you wish to attend.

"Not only do members come to enjoy the food and drink, but there are so many people to network with that we have to expand our space out the back door!" Ms. Geddes says.

"Bring a non-member colleague so they can find out about the many benefits of membership."



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Member Profile: Jamie Stebenne of JPS Construction and Design

Unexpected career, big success!

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

He tried it. He liked it!

As a young lad, Jamie Stebenne never planned to become an architect, and certainly not a contractor. But Fate had other ideas.

"My father and grandfather owned a paint and wallpaper business in Pawtucket, and they did some installation," recalls Jamie, who grew up in Barrington. "My dad was very handy, and he taught me to use power tools while I was pretty young. So, I guess that's what planted the seeds!"

Then there was Jamie's uncle.

"He was a physical therapist by profession, but he loved construction. He actually started a general contracting business as a hobby, and so that he could build his own house," Jamie says.

"That was my first experience with carpentry, about 2003. I was still in high school."

With that, and the fact that a teacher got Jamie interested in computer-aided design (CAD) work, the kid was hooked.

"I found my path! I applied for early acceptance to the architecture program at Roger Williams University. I was accepted, and I didn't apply anywhere else," Jamie declares.

In 2008, Jamie graduated from the five-year program, armed with a degree in architecture and a minor in construction management. But it's not like he waited for that before plunging into the residential construction industry.

"While I was still at Roger Williams, I worked for my uncle, but he shut down about 2005," Jamie remembers. "I hooked up with another construction company, until I decided to partner with a friend and to go out on our own in 2006."

The result was M&J Construction and Design, the prosperous forerunner of today's JPS Construction and Design. And it kept Jamie plenty busy.

"While still in college, I was managing the business. During vacations, on weekends and after hours, I put on the belt and was



Jamie Stebenne

out doing carpentry."

After graduation in 2008, Jamie worked in the business full-time, but he and his partner went their separate ways in 2012. The company name changed to JPS, and its enviable success continued.

The company saw a milestone in 2011, when Jamie's college friend Kevin Sawyer came aboard as vice president.

"Kevin and I met in architecture school, and he has been an important player in the success of the company," Jamie says.

"The business has grown organically over the years," Jamie says. "We have hired steadily."

Even the recession of 2008, 2009 and onward didn't faze the new company.

"We were fortunate enough to get into

a niche on Aquidneck Island, with high-end renovation jobs as opposed to spec housing. We saw no decrease in sales during the recession because we were just starting to ramp up at that point."

Today, the company averages 40 employees, with up to 29 of those on jobsites. Jamie's sister, Lindsey, is the office manager.

While JPS works in both Rhode Island and Massachusetts, 85 percent of the company's work is still in Newport, Portsmouth, Middletown, Barrington, Bristol and Warren. But Jamie's crews have ranged as far as Wellesley, Massachusetts.

The vast majority of JPS's projects are high-end residential, but there is a little commercial work. "We have some good networking through architects in Newport," Jamie notes.

JPS also likes to keep much of the work in-house, such as carpentry, roofing and siding, and project management.

"That's to help maintain schedule and quality. We sub out the plumbing, electrical, HVAC, excavation and the foundation. We also have estimators and designers on staff," Jamie explains.

JPS joined the Rhode Island Builders Association in 2012, and is now a fixture at the RIBA Home Show.

"This is our fourth year," says Jamie. "We started small, then moved to larger and larger exhibit space. The Home Show has been great for us! Even though we're totally slammed with work, the people we meet at the show not only generate more leads, but they draw us into new markets in other areas."

Jamie and his people also take advantage of the tuition-free classes at RIBA. In fact, one of Jamie's goals for the future is to get even more involved with the association.

"We want to get more involved with that great networking!" he says.

Learn more about JPS Construction and Design at JPSconst-design.com.

JPS Construction and Design Inc.

Principal: Jamie Stebenne

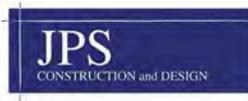
RIBA member since: 2012

Focus: Remodeling Services

Serves: Rhode Island

Founded: 2006

Based: Middletown, Rhode Island





RIBA Baseball Outing on track for June 19

WHEN: Tuesday, June 19th. Barbecue 4:45-6:45, game begins at 6:15.
WHERE: McCoy Stadium, 1 Columbus Ave, Pawtucket, RI 02860
COST: \$30 per person
DEADLINE TO REGISTER: June 1st
FOR INFORMATION & TO REGISTER: Contact Robin Barlow at RIBA, (401) 438-7400 or rbarlow@ribuilders.org.

Join your RIBA colleagues as the Pawtucket Red Sox take on the Buffalo Bisons! Meet up before the game at the McCoy Stadium Barbecue Area for a leisurely meal, then enjoy some great baseball on a lovely June evening.

"This is the second year for our revived Baseball Outing, and it's one of many new and revived RIBA social events that are on the calendar!" stated Steven Gianlorenzo, chairman of the RIBA Events Committee and a past president of the association.

"We have 30 tickets for the ballgame and barbecue, but we can always get more, so register now. These are opportunities for great networking and great fun!" Mr. Gianlorenzo added.

Watch *The Rhode Island Builder*, RIBuilders.org and your mail for information about more events coming your way, such as the 67th Annual Clambake on August 10th and the 28th Annual Golf Classic on September 17th. See you there!

Coming in August: 68th Annual RIBA Clambake!

WHEN: Friday, August 10th, noon to 8 p.m.
WHERE: Francis Farm, 27 Francis Farm Rd., Rehoboth, MA 02769
COST: TBD
DEADLINE TO REGISTER: August 1st.
FOR INFORMATION, FOR SPONSORSHIPS AND TO REGISTER: Contact Elizabeth Carpenter at ecarpenter@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Plan now to attend the Rhode Island Builders Association's 68th Annual Clambake, and get a real bargain! Over 600 people are expected to attend, and tickets will be as low-cost as RIBA can make them.

The low price will include a whole day of fun, food, drink (including two free beers), contests and networking, for as long as the sponsorships keep coming.

Be a sponsor

There are five sponsorship levels, with more perks the higher you go! The more sponsors who sign on this year, the more people will be able to enjoy a fabulous day of fun, contests, events, prizes, food and drink. Each ticket includes two free beers.

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! Watch for more information.

12/June 2018



What's hot this spring?

Builders Insurance Group (BIG), your RIBA-owned insurance subsidiary, continues to meet the insurance needs of the builder community, members and non-members alike.

This spring, bonds, both performance and permit, seem to be hot items for our customers, and we've been providing them at a brisk rate. With the advent of nice weather, you might expect that builders risk policies would be in high demand, and that's true. We're providing them all over the state, even for coastal locations.

Our site-prep contractors have been busy too, adding new purchases to their contractor's equipment schedules to keep up with the demand for work. Be sure to check the great rates Builders Insurance Group has for this specialized equipment.

Contact me at clowe@builderinsgroup.com or (401) 438-4244.

Be sure that RIBA has your latest contact information

Members of the Rhode Island Builders Association are urged to keep RIBA staff informed about their latest phone numbers, e-mail addresses 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!"

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

www.ribuilders.org

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:

*Water Management for Walls - WRBs, Windows and Flashings
Critical Roof Details - Underlayments and Flashing by Code
Common Construction Regulations in Rhode Island*

June 7th

WHEN: Thursday, June 7th, 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.

Flashings and roof underlayment provide a last line of defense to roof leaks, but both can be defeated when poorly installed. Learn what the minimum code requirements are for step flashing, kickout flashing, drip edge and underlayment selection and installation. See how self-adhering membrane can be detailed at critical locations to reduce the chance of water leaks and call-backs

Also learn about water management for walls - WRBs, windows and flashings. All siding installations leak, so you need a properly detailed and flashed water resistive barrier (WRB) to keep water out of the house. Learn what WRB materials comply with code and installation requirements.

See common problem areas to pay extra attention to, and how to flash doors and windows to comply with the building code.

There will also be a quick overview of state and federal regulations you may or may not know about and how to comply. From DigSafe and sediment control to hoisting licenses and employee classification, see what you need to know (and comply with) to avoid job shut-downs and fines.

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.



**For RIBA
membership information
contact Elise Geddes
401-438-7400
or egeddes@ribuilders.org**

Five Credit Hours: Confined Spaces, Asbestos, Mold

June 14th

WHEN: Thursday, June 14th, 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.



***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***



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.



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you and your
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Join RIBA today!

Contact Elise Geddes

401-438-7400 or egeddes@ribuilders.org

OSHA-10 Course

June 25th-26th

WHEN: Monday and Tuesday, June 25th and 26th, 7:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day.

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

COST: FREE for members and their employees with a \$40 materials/registration fee, \$125 for non-members with a \$40 materials/registration fee.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: One week before class

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

This is a 10-hour class, held over two days.

The course is geared to train safety directors, job foremen and field employees in OSHA construction standards. It highlights the areas of major safety concerns, with the intent to reduce accidents on the job site, saving time and money.

Each person completing the course will receive a copy of the OSHA Standard 29 CFR Part 1926 and an OSHA-10 certification card.

Every person working on a municipal or state construction project with a total project cost of \$100,000 or more must have card certifying their completion of an OSHA 10-Hour training program on their person at all times while work is being performed.

According to the requirement, the rule applies to "any private person or entity bound by a contractual agreement to provide goods or services to a contractor/developer who must physically enter the place where work is being performed or business is being conducted."

This does not apply to sales representatives, vendors, or to those delivering building materials and supplies/products to a construction site. (Fines can range from \$250 to \$950 per offense, on each day in which a violation occurs.)

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.



*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*

June 2018

Featured Products & Services

A Rhode Island
Builder Report
Special Section



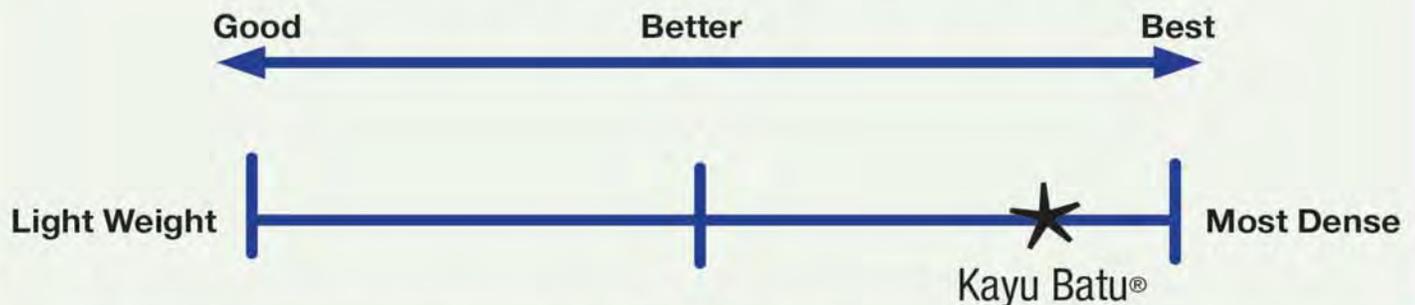
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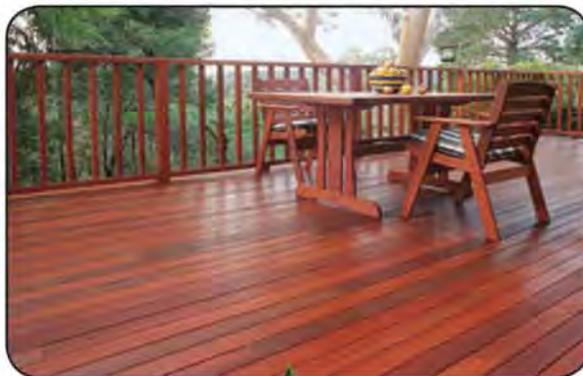
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Speaker Mattiello urges officials, educators to unite on CTE

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

There has been dramatic progress in strengthening and expanding career and technical education (CTE) in Rhode Island over the last four years, but the hoped-for unified, statewide CTE system still faces an uphill climb.

That was the message on May 7th as the CTE Subcommittee on Implementation Roadblocks (SIR) met at the Warwick Area Career and Technical Center. The panel's task is to identify and remove barriers to a statewide CTE program in Rhode Island, authorized by CTE reform legislation passed in 2014 and inspired by the nationally acclaimed model at Worcester Technical High School in Massachusetts.

Among those attending the May 7th meeting was Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello.

"The cooperation between business and public education can be very impressive. You look at the (Worcester Technical High School) model and you see what can be accomplished. Cooperatively, we can do great things together. That's the model we need to create," Speaker Mattiello said.

"I know there are some challenges with CTE, with everyone not necessarily agreeing with everything. At the General Assembly, we have the same challenges. But I'm asking you to keep in mind that Worcester Tech model, and ask yourselves how we can get there for our students in Rhode Island," he added.

"If we put our differences aside, we can find a way."

The speaker mentioned that he had spoken with his son, an engineer who works in the construction industry, the previous evening.

"He said they can't find tradespeople. The jobs are there and the wages are there, but we need to provide the pathway."

SIR is chaired by Robert J. Baldwin of R.B. Homes Inc., a past president of the Rhode Island Builders Association and chairman of RIBA's Education and



Robert J. Baldwin, center, opens the May 7th meeting of the CTE Subcommittee on Implementation Roadblocks. To his right is Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello, who has been a supporter of career and technical education in the state.

Workforce Development Committee. Also attended the meeting were CTE educators, administrators, industry representatives, and officials such as Rhode Island Commissioner of Education Kenneth Wagner.

Mr. Baldwin opened the meeting on a very positive note.

"The Rhode Island Business Coalition came together in 2013 to address an issue that affected every employer in the state: getting students career-ready by the time they graduated." Mr. Baldwin said.

"When we started out in 2014, Rhode Island had under 4,000 CTE students statewide. Today, we have 10,000. In 2014, we had CTE programs being closed. Today, the Dept. of Education (RIDE) has applications for 49 new CTE programs in schools across the state, and the current programs are full," Mr. Baldwin continued.

"Our goal is still for Rhode Island to

have a statewide CTE system, and the best CTE program in the world. And we wouldn't be so well on our way to that goal without Speaker Mattiello's unfailing support."

In its work since 2017, SIR has heard from all relevant sectors about what roadblocks they see when it comes to implementing the 2014 reforms.

"If we continue our hard work with our coalition of employers, educators and government, Rhode Island will have a unified, statewide, K-to-14 CTE system, second to none in the world, on a par with, or better than, programs in Germany, South Korea or any U.S. state," Mr. Baldwin said.

"That's an ambitious goal, but we intend to achieve it."

Watch *The Rhode Island Builder* for more information as the CTE issue continues to develop.



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New pay equity law will affect R.I. contractors working in Bay State

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Employers in Massachusetts will need to update their job applications to remove salary inquiries to comply with a new state law that takes effect July 1st, but how that affects Rhode Island-based contractors who work in the Bay State is unclear.

Calls to the Massachusetts Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation found no-one who could provide information on how the law affects Rhode Island contractors.

The stated purpose of the Massachusetts Pay Equity Act is to prevent employers from paying men and women different rates for comparable work. The law also prohibits employers from screening job candidates based on their previous salary or asking salary-related questions during the application process, until the employer actually makes an offer.

“If the employee works in Massachusetts, the statute applies regardless of where the employer is located. However, geography becomes important because the wages that employee makes must be compared to similarly situated people. This means that you compare their wages to people who work in a similar locale,” Thomas J. Enright of Enright Law LLC, a Cranston-based attorney who specializes in labor law, told *The Rhode Island Builder*.

“In fact, geography is expressly mentioned as a factor that can be considered in paying certain people more,” Mr. Enright said. “If he or she is the only employee working in Massachusetts, it will be tough to find comparable workers in deciding whether a violation has taken place.”

There’s an additional caveat, according to Mr. Enright.

“If the employee works in multiple states, Massachusetts would have to be the state where the worker works the most, not necessarily less than 50 percent of the time if the employee works in three or more states.”

Under the pay equity law, passed unanimously by the Massachusetts legislature last year to take effect this year, employers aren’t allowed to contact an applicant’s former employer to confirm the wage amount until after an offer is made. Even then, employers will only be able to verify past wage amounts if they have written permission from the applicant.

The law is expected to cause headaches for company human-resource directors, recruiters and managers who handle job interviews and negotiate job offers.

The law is one of the strongest in the nation aimed at equalizing pay for employees with comparable jobs, seniority and jobsite conditions. It states:

“No employer shall discriminate in any way on the basis of gender in the payment of wages, including benefits or other compensation, or pay any person a salary or wage rate less than the rates paid to employees of a different gender for comparable work.”

In addition to preventing employers from asking job candidates about their salary history before extending an offer of employment,

including compensation, to the applicant, the law:

- Prohibits employers from preventing workers disclosing or discussing salary information about their earnings or those of their colleagues.
- Bars employers from discharging or retaliating against employees for opposing any violations of the pay equity law by the employer.
- Gives employees the right to begin court actions on their own

see PAY EQUITY...page 28

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.



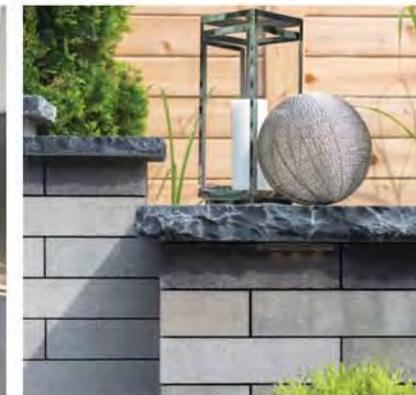
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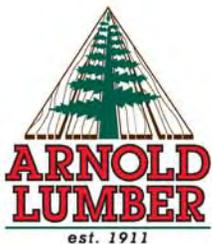


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The National Grid Energy Innovation Hub

With Laura Rodormer
Energy Efficiency Lead Analyst

Laura Rodormer is the energy efficiency lead analyst for National Grid's Energy Efficiency Program. She has been with National Grid since 2013, and has spent over 24 years developing and implementing programs, projects and partnerships in Fortune 500 companies and diverse public sector settings, with particular focus on sustainability and environmental initiatives. Ms. Rodormer's previous positions included director of corporate citizenship for McKesson, manager of green consulting services for Swinerton Management & Consulting, and commercial green building coordinator for the City of San Francisco. She holds a bachelor's degree in biology and environmental science from St. Lawrence University.

THE BUILDER: So, what is the National Grid Energy Innovation Hub, and why has it opened?

RODORMER: Energy issues are many and complicated, both for home builders and home owners. The Energy Innovation Hub is an answer to that, through education.

The idea was born from a conversation my boss and I had about two years ago, and we were saying that Rhode Island is a national leader in energy efficiency. In fact, we're third in the nation, but people tend not to think of Rhode Island in those terms: innovation, being a leader. As we talked, we really began to think about that leadership aspect when it comes to energy.

Even better, Rhode Island is first in the nation for utility programs, and first for a deep-water wind project, for the Block Island Wind Farm. And we're doing fantastic innovation in terms of system reliability, maintenance and innovation, along with electric vehicles, renewable energy and energy management in general.

We needed a space where people could go to actually learn about this, where all the information could be brought together. So, the Energy Innovation Hub was created to educate our customers. That includes home owners, business owners, companies, policy makers, regulators, elected officials, universities, and other thought leaders.

We wanted a place that would inform all those constituencies, and help them connect with energy, with our state and with National Grid. So, the Energy Innovation Hub has become a collaborative community space meant to elevate the conversation around the future of energy and the environment.

The Energy Innovation Hub is located in a street-accessible space in the Dunkin Donuts Center in Providence. The Hub offers interactive exhibits where Rhode Islanders can learn how they can save money, and help create a clean energy future. Exhibits offer energy-savings tips, and information about energy-efficiency, renewable energy, electric vehicles, our ConnectedSolutions Platform, and other ways to reduce energy bills.

Groups can even meet here at no charge so they can learn about energy.

THE BUILDER: What's the ConnectedSolutions Platform?

RODORMER: When your home energy devices are connected through wi-fi, they can be automatically controlled to reduce electric use during periods of high energy demand. For example, a wi-fi thermostat can save up to \$180 per month on your energy costs.

That's an example of a connected solution, and people can learn more about this at the Energy Innovation Hub too.

THE BUILDER: So let's take a look at the Hub!



The entrance to National Grid's Energy Innovation Hub at the Dunkin Donuts Center in Providence.

RODORMER: Great! As we walk in, you can see that all these exhibits are multi-functional, and they resonate with everyone from school children to rocket scientists.



Ms. Rodormer explains the first exhibit.

This first kiosk is meant to help people understand their relationship with energy. It asks questions like: Do you use air conditioning? How long do you use it? Do you use renewable energy? How did you get to the Energy Innovation Hub today? Then it will tell

see *INTERVIEW...next page*

INTERVIEW...from previous page

you whether you're doing some great things to save energy – or not!

Another exhibit helps people see how energy efficiency can translate into real dollars for homes, but it can apply to businesses as well.



Two impromptu visitors to the Energy Innovation Hub learn about their own energy use.

You can actually push a button to activate each device. Find out what the “energy hogs” are, from vacuum cleaners and hair dryers to light bulbs. It shows you how much electricity you're using with each one. People are very surprised to see some of the results. For example, the difference between traditional incandescent light bulbs and the newer, energy-saving compact-fluorescent or LED (light-emitting diode) lighting is enormous. Incandescents burn about 100 watts more! Just think of the impact of that over time.

THE BUILDER: Who manages the Energy Innovation Hub?



RODORMER: Well, here's Ginger Gritzo, our Hub co-manager. Ginger is National Grid's energy and environmental programs coordinator, and she was 100 percent when it came getting the Hub up and running, and getting our interns on board. There are five interns from the local colleges and universities, and we're helping them learn about the energy industry.

You're heard Gov. Gina Raimondo talk about how renewable energy is one of the fastest-growing industries in our state.

Everything here at the Energy Innovation Hub can help people understand that energy is real. They'll see more than just numbers on their bills; they'll be able to understand them

THE BUILDER: There's a question many of our readers might be asking right now. National Grid is in the business of selling electricity. Why are you encouraging people to use less of what you sell?

RODORMER: Actually, we're encouraging more energy use from renewable sources, and less from traditional sources. For example, it costs us a lot to produce electricity in the traditional way. If electricity is being produced by a coal-fired power plant, costs can range between \$807 and \$2,719 per kilowatt of capacity. So, it's actually more cost-effective for us to promote lower electricity use from traditional sources and more from renewable sources. Since that also saves the customer a great deal on their energy costs, everybody wins!

THE BUILDER: We've heard the term “energy vampires,” things like game consoles, night lights and many other little devices that people don't think about but that are drawing energy all the time. Is that a legitimate concern?

RODORMER: Absolutely! And it's major appliances doing that as well. For example, the refrigerator is always on. One of the exhibits here at the Hub will show you how much energy is used when the compressor comes on. The more you open the fridge, the more that will happen.

This is another way the Energy Innovation Hub can help. Guests can sign up for a no-cost Home Energy Assessment while they're here, and there's a video they can watch to show them how the assessment works. This whole process helps them learn specifics on where they can save on energy costs. Ultimately, it will help them make choices that will affect the clean energy future for all of us.

THE BUILDER: Because everyone uses interior lighting, one of the more obvious advances in energy-efficiency are the LED and compact fluorescent bulbs we mentioned before. Don't those have to be recycled instead of just thrown away, like the traditional incandescent bulbs?

RODORMER: The LEDs and compact fluorescent bulbs need to be recycled, and there are frequent local recycling events around Rhode Island. Just watch your local media for times and places. Also, many home supply and hardware stores will take them.

There's really not a market for recycling incandescent bulbs, unfortunately.

What's more, if people have the free Home Energy Assessment, they can get energy-efficient bulbs for free.

THE BUILDER: How do you educate low-income people about these energy needs, and how can they – or many moderate-income people -- afford any upgrades needed to save on their bills?

RODORMER: That can be a challenge. Right now, the income-eligible population in Rhode Island is really struggling to stay afloat. Many costs are rising. So, we have discount-rate

see **ENERGY HUB...next page**

ENERGY HUB...from previous page

programs to help these customers, and we have arrears programs if people have fallen behind on their energy bills. We also have budget programs to help people spread their winter heating bills over the entire year.

There are incentive programs that come with the Home Energy Assessment as well. For example, if someone needs a new home heating system, they can get zero-percent financing for seven years. That's real money to people, and they're increasing the value of their homes. For income-eligible customers, if their heating system is highly inefficient or dangerous, they can have it replaced free. They have to be 60 percent below the average median income to do this.

Then there's insulation. National Grid pays 75 percent of installation costs, up to \$4,000, which is huge. And new incentives are being developed.

THE BUILDER: So, here at the Energy Innovation Hub, you deal with gas as well as electricity issues?

RODORMER: Yes, we deal with gas too. And the Home Energy Assessment deals with gas also. This display has major appliances that employ the latest energy-efficient technology.



It's not a fridge. It's a high-efficiency gas water heater! Above Ms. Rodormer is a combination heating-cooling unit controlled by a wi-fi thermostat.

We're heavily promoting wi-fi connectivity, as you asked about before. One reason is that we're moving toward strategic electrification. In other words, we want to move our customers, residential and commercial, toward electrification and away from gas. It's more efficient, and we're able to provide increasing amounts of the energy from renewable sources rather than fossil fuels.

With all this in mind, we have an exhibit specifically geared toward new construction, including insulation.

THE BUILDER: So, this appears to be a large exhibit about renewable energy.

RODORMER: Yes, the display and the flip charts provide more in-depth technical information. People can learn about battery storage, electric vehicles, new technology to help streamline



Learning about renewable energy sources.

energy as it moves through the wires, and much more.

Anything you want to know about energy, it's here at the Energy Innovation Hub!



The Hub is open to the public Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. By appointment on Thursday. Groups are welcome.



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Asprey: Contractors need to get straight on OSHA silica rule

Knowledge about material safety data sheets (MSDS) is also lacking, safety instructor says.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

There's still a great deal of confusion about OSHA's silica rule – officially the Respirable Crystalline Silica Standard for Construction, and contractors had better get it straight.

That's the advice from Scott Asprey of Risk & Safety Management (RSM), a familiar face at Rhode Island Builders Association events and as an instructor in RIBA's education program.

"OSHA is requiring that contractors certify and prove that their crews working with silica are aware of the dangers and are

protected," Mr. Asprey said. "We're getting more and more phone calls from contractors wanting to know more about the rule."

The Obama-era silica rule probably was the biggest change coming from OSHA in 2017. Enforcement began in September, having been delayed since May by the Trump Administration.

"The silica rule is huge for contractors, as far as compliance is concerned," said RSM President Cheri Walton.

The silica rule's key provisions include:

- An exposure limit for crystalline silica. It will be the employer's responsibility to prove that they're under that limit.
- A requirement for air monitoring,



Scott Asprey

and OSHA can provide a list of specific control measures employers should take to keep airborne silica levels below the limit.

"These measures should keep you below that limit. But let's say you're cutting concrete," Ms. Walton explained. "You might put a worker in a dust mask and use water, then you hire a testing company

to monitor the worker's air flow for eight hours. This can be burdensome. The good news is that, for companies we've talked with that are already taking these control measures, silica levels have been well below the limit. But it's that initial testing that everyone will have to do."

see OSHA ISSUES...page 28

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Shingle and shake products from Canada see price hikes from lumber tariffs

National Association of Home Builders

John C. “Jack” Dawley got an unwelcome surprise recently when he opened an e-mail from the company that supplies the white cedar shingles for the homes in an active-adult development he’s building in Massachusetts.

The shingles are imported from Canada and, since March 14th, have been subject to an immediate 20.8 percent duty that the U.S. imposed as part of its ongoing softwood-lumber trade dispute. That translated into an additional cost of \$1,400 per unit for the 12 homes planned for the next phase of construction – and half had already been sold.

“For most people, including me, the topic of tariffs and their impact is abstract,” said Mr. Dawley, president and CEO of Northland Residential Corp., a high-end, single-family and condo developer based in Concord, Massachusetts. “It was instantly clarified with this message.”

Coniferous shingle and shake products hadn’t previously been subject to tariffs because there’s so little production in the United States that they don’t compete with similar American products. Further, there had been no accusations of improper conduct levied against Canadian shake and shingle manufacturers, his supplier explained.

“What Americans and our administration need to understand is that, at a minimum, a third of the U.S. supply of dimensional framing lumber and 100 percent of red and white cedar shingles come from Canada,” Mr. Dawley said.

“The simple fact is that the U.S. simply does not produce what it consumes, and its economy relies on the rational importation of certain goods. In the case of home building, taxing such goods via a tariff simply drives up the cost of production,” he said.

The prices on softwood lumber imports skyrocketed after the 2017 hurricane season, and were up 30 percent from the four

months leading to January 2018. By April 6th, the Random Lengths Framing Lumber Composite price hit \$492, up from \$414 a year earlier.

A study by National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) economists shows that the increase in the cost of lumber since the beginning of 2017 has been enough to drive up the price of an average new single-family home by \$6,388, and the market value of an average new multifamily housing unit by \$2,430.

The study also shows that while they were designed to boost employment in the U.S., the tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber will instead result in the net loss of 9,370 jobs in 2018.

“While there’s an expected increase of 1,193 jobs in U.S. sawmills, there is an expected loss of 10,563 jobs in all other industries because there are millions more jobs that depend on lumber than there are jobs in domestic lumber production,” a

see LUMBER...next page

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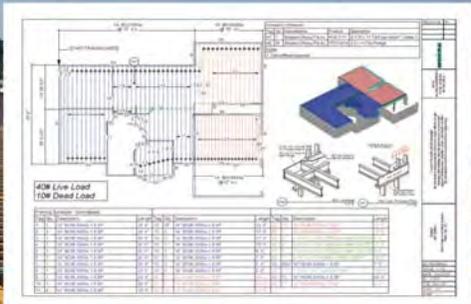
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RIBA, AARP work with state to launch 'livable home' initiative

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Money is now set aside in the state budget to help disabled people and/or the elderly make their homes more “livable.”

That’s the news from John J. DiTomasso, associate state director of the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), who is taking steps to get the word out, especially during the 68th Annual Rhode Island Home Show in April.

“This initiative is the Rhode Island Livable Home Modification Grant Program,” Mr. DiTomasso said. “There was a coalition last year, involving AARP, the Rhode Island Builders Association and other partners, that advocated for a Livable Home Modification Tax Credit.”

That push was unsuccessful, but it did result in the grant program instead.

Better than tax credit

“That works even better. If I had the work done today under a tax credit, I’d have to wait a year to file it with next year’s taxes. With a grant program, you get the money right away,” he explained.

The grants are intended to help people stay in their homes, and out of long-term-care facilities, for as long as possible. They cover such needed improvements as wheelchair ramps, chairlifts, walk-in or roll-in showers. There is 50 percent reimbursement up to \$5,000.

“If the job is \$10,000, the grant program would pay \$5,000. If the job is \$4,000 the grant would be \$2,000,” Mr. DiTomasso said.

The grants are funded by state money re-directed from the Office of Health and Human Services, according to Mr. DiTomasso.

“The grant program started in January, and people are just beginning to apply. There’s no age limit as long as there is a need, a disability or mobility problem,” he added.

Grants are administered by the Governor’s Commission on Disabilities (GCD).

Along with AARP and RIBA, other coalition partners included the Rhode Island



Daniel Liparini and Mary Richards of AARP Rhode Island at the Rhode Island Home Show in April, where they educated visitors about the Rhode Island Livable Home Modification Grant Program.

Association of Realtors® and the Rhode Island Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Also working for the grant program were Rhode Island Housing and other housing advocates.

An exhibit at RIBA’s 68th Annual Home Show in April highlighted the Livable Home Modification Grant Program. For complete information, contact Alyssa Gleason of the GCD at (401) 462-0103.

LUMBER...from previous page

statement from NAHB said.

“In other words, nearly nine jobs will be lost in other U.S. industries for every job gained in domestic sawmills as a result of these tariffs.”

NAHB CEO Jerry Howard met with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross in March and urged him to work with his Canadian counterparts to reach a long-term solution to the trade dispute that is equitable to both sides.

“Operating a business with this level of production price uncertainty takes almost constant vigilance,” Mr. Dawley said. “My fear is that it will take years to unravel this misplaced and inappropriate tariff, and only after real harm has been done to housing affordability and our economy.”

For updates on this issue, visit NAHB.org.

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OSHA ISSUES...from page 25

What does this rule mean for OSHA jobsite inspections?

“My understanding is that OSHA has to have reasonable cause to believe that you’re over the silica limit,” Ms. Walton said. “Say someone drives by your jobsite and reports a cloud of dust. That will trigger an inspection. And again, it will be up to you as the employer to prove that you’re not above the limit.”

If, during an inspection, OSHA representatives see someone cutting, the worker is wearing a mask, and things seem to be under control, a citation probably won’t result, according to Ms. Walton.

“That said, the company owner should always be prepared to provide test results to an inspector.”

For the silica rule, OSHA has an online compliance guide for small businesses at www.OSHA.gov/Publications/OSHA3902.pdf.

On another OSHA-related issue, RSM is noticing a lack of training when it comes to material safety data sheets (MSDS), part of the agency’s Hazard Communication Standards.

“In 2015, this was the second most-cited violation by OSHA,” Mr. Asprey said. “Workers need to be trained on this, especially when it comes to handling chemicals. When I teach classes, I often find that people are unfamiliar with the MSDS requirements.”

For more information on any of these matters, contact RSM at (401) 884-0430 or riskandsafetymanagement@verizon.net. 

STATEWIDE...from page 1

mit in one community, then pay \$20 in another. You can’t justify that. These are fees, not taxes,” she added.

“In addition, many municipal formulas were very hard to read, and were different from town to town, making it difficult for builders to cost out jobs. The new system creates homogeneity and predictability.”

Fees for each municipality will be posted on the BCC website at RIBCC.ri.gov.

As Ms. Georgakis explained it, cities and towns have until June 30th to submit any request for an extension, and it must be in writing. If they do so, they will have until January 1, 2019, to provide all the data so BCC can review their fee schedules again. If they don’t provide their data by that date, the fee schedule goes into effect July 1, 2019. If they do submit the data by that date, BCC will review it, and a new fee schedule will take effect by July 1, 2020.

Additionally, the BCC may review each community’s expenses and fee-schedule information every three years.

A bill was filed in the state Senate earlier this year to essentially cut the legs out from under the statewide permitting formula by returning full control to the municipalities. But S-2415 has been “held for further study.”

For more information, contact Ms. Georgakis at (401) 278-9155 or Julietta.georgakis@commerceri.com. 

**For RIBA
membership information
contact Elise Geddes
401-438-7400
or egeddes@ribuilders.org**

RCWP Jobs Bank continues its march!

Complemented by great news from the career and technical education (CTE) front (related story on page X), the numbers continue rosy for the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership’s (RCWP’s) Jobs Bank at RCWPjobs.com.

As of May 8th, the number of job candidates had risen to 322, from 321 in April. There were 602 employers registered at the site, our more than in April. There were 80 resumes posted, along with 26 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.

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

PAY EQUITY...from page 20

behalf, with or without a lawyer, without having to file an initial charge of discrimination with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. The statute of limitations is three years from the alleged violation.

The advice from all sources: Rhode Island contractors should consult their own attorneys for any information about how the pay equity law will affect them when working in Massachusetts.

For general information, our sources suggest the Massachusetts Law Updates official site at Blog.mass.gov/masslawlib/new-laws/massachusetts-enacts-pay-equity-act. 

BOARD...from page 6

Ms. Usherwood offered a presentation on how the e-permitting system works, including how future contractor registration renewals and documentation will take place online.

Other matters...

RIBA Executive Director John Marcantonio confirmed the great success of the Rhode Island Home Show in April, with numbers still coming in. He also reported in detail on the progress of RIBA’s legislative agenda, the association’s growing education program, growth of the Builders Insurance Group (BIG – *related story on page 12*), and the progress for further plans to support and expand career and technical education (CTE), including the new RI-Best Construction Pathway through the Rhode Island Dept. of Education (watch for more information).

The June meeting of the Board of Directors will take place before the Annual Networking Barbecue on June 7th (*related story on page 10*). RIBA members are invited to attend the public portion of the monthly Board of Directors meetings, which usually take place on the first Tuesday of each month at RIBA’s East Providence headquarters. Please contact Elizabeth Carpenter at (401) 438-7400 or ecarpenter@ribuilders.org for more information. 

E-PERMITTING...from page 1

“One of the beauties of this system is the transparency. If your application is with Mary at town hall, then it goes up to Joe at the state, then back down to Sue at town hall, you can see where it is throughout the process. You don’t have to wonder,” she stated.

Problems resolved one by one

In the beginning, the system, provided and maintained by ViewPoint, a Boston-based company that specializes in municipal government software (*related story on page 6*), wasn’t without its problems.

“We’re very grateful to our 10 pilot communities, the first ones that used the system (beginning in 2016). There were glitches we had to work out, and they were the guinea pigs. They told us what the problems were so we could fix them. I won’t deny that there were quite a few, but that’s what the pilot program was for. Since then, we’ve had very few problems. And if others do come up, we fix them for each community,” Ms. Tanner explained.

Also in the e-permitting system are the State Building Commission and the State Fire Marshal’s Office. In order of participation, the 10 municipalities in the pilot program were North Smithfield, West Warwick, Pawtucket, Cranston, Providence, North Providence, Warwick, North Kingstown, Woonsocket and Newport.

Since then, they have been joined by Westerly, Hopkinton, Richmond, Smithfield, Central Falls, Middletown, Lincoln, Bristol, East Providence, Cumberland, Barrington and Little Compton.

Coventry, East Greenwich, New Shoreham and South Kingstown are slated to come on board later this year.

“I hear that this has dramatically reduced traffic flow into town and city halls,” Ms. Tanner said. “Because applicants are able to have their questions answered electronically, it’s easier for everyone. The biggest positive that we hear from the construction community is the ability to get forms and submit applications right from the worksite rather than having to go to the city or town hall. So this works for both sides.”

Mary Ann Rosenlof, administrative assistant at the office of Barrington Building Official Robert Speaker, agreed.

“E-permitting is going well! It’s much better than we used to have, which was essentially nothing. We used to have to use Excel™ spreadsheets, very labor-intensive, and everything had to be printed,” Ms. Rosenlof said.

Barrington joined the e-permitting system in January.

“Permit tracking has become so much easier, too. Real estate people come in and ask for building-permit histories for certain properties. Previously, we had to go through boxes and boxes of records. Now I just type in an address and it tells me every permit that was pulled on that property.”

Also pleased is Smithfield Building Official James Cambio.

“E-permitting is working out great here. Hopefully, those using the software are realizing the many benefits that we are seeing in our department,” said Mr. Cambio.

What about from the contractor side?

“I’m using e-permitting in South Kingstown. There was a little bit of a learning curve but, overall, I feel it’s much better,” Alexander A. Mitchell of Meridian Design/Build reported.

“I have instant access on my smart phone and iPad™ to every application I’ve submitted. That includes site plans, septic plans, building plans, etc. It eliminates piles of paperwork, and there’s faster turn-around,” Mr. Mitchell said.

Also using e-permitting in South Kingstown is Jeffrey Sweenor of Sweenor Builders.

“It’s very user-friendly, and I’m all for it,” Mr. Sweenor declared.

Ronald J. Smith of Ron Smith Homes is cautiously optimistic.

“I would mostly agree. In towns that have embraced e-permitting, it mostly works with some minimal bumps. It has gotten a lot better than when I first used it,” Mr. Smith told *The Rhode Island Builder*.

“I just finished a home in North Kingstown with it, and 90 percent was hassle-free with the statewide e-permitting system. The different departments all came to view online, and it only took two and a half weeks to get the building permit,” he added.

“The trouble was with the certificate of occupancy (CO) at the end. While all the departments would review it online after inspections, if there was an issue, you would end up having to chase the department down for explanations. Also, (North Kingstown) is the only one that needs (the Engineering Dept.) to sign off, and that’s overkill. Engineering is for building roads, not houses. The system is poor at explaining any issue a department may have.”

Mr. Smith pointed out that Narragansett and South Kingstown still have their own systems.

“You still need to scan the prints and bring in hard copies after submitting. Once approved, South Kingstown has an Internet e-mail notification system that’s very hard to understand.”

As mentioned, South Kingstown is scheduled to join the statewide system this year. Ms. Tanner agrees that all towns need to get on board with statewide e-permitting.

“The towns that haven’t tried it are still a problem, mostly because each town has a different way of doing permitting, and a contractor needs to know what each one desires for the permit,” she pointed out. “Contractors who work in towns that still don’t participate need to encourage them to get on board.

Narragansett is just one example.

“When inspecting, they go back to the old, paper-copy notification system and you have to chase down an inspector for explanations of what they feel is wrong,” Mr. Smith noted. “Charlestown isn’t on any Internet system. You have all paper submissions and inspections.”

Non-participating towns should join up

Ms. Tanner urged RIBA members to ask communities that don’t yet participate in the e-permitting system to do so as soon as possible. Mr. Smith agrees.

“The statewide system can only work if the towns let it work,” Mr. Smith concluded.

Find out more about the statewide e-permitting system and get started at Permits.ri.gov.



Ronald J. Smith

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