

## Home Show is off and running!



*Flanked by career and technical education (CTE) students, their instructors and other officials, Gov. Gina Raimondo, at center, cuts the ribbon opening the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Rhode Island Home Show at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence on April 5<sup>th</sup>. With the governor at the ribbon are, from left, State Treasurer Seth Magaziner, Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea and Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza.*

### FEATURED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR MAY

*Center Section*

#### Speaker Mattiello sits down with RIBA Board

House Speaker Nicholas A. Mattiello sat down with the Rhode Island Builders Association's Board of Directors on April 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss industry issues.

*Page 6*

#### RIBA 2018 Membership Drive going strong

Earn rewards when you bring a non-member colleague to a RIBA networking event or sponsor a new member!

*Page 19*

#### Building bridges with Rhode Island's municipalities

In an interview with *The Rhode Island Builder*, the executive director of the League of Cities and Towns outlines areas of common ground with our industry.

*Page 23*

## Three years after call for more housing, R.I. supply is still in crisis

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

It has been three years since Rhode Island's housing agencies and advocacy groups called for the statewide production of 3,500 new housing units a year for 10 years. Nevertheless, permit numbers have barely hit 1,000 each year since.

Among the few bits of good news is that, in that period, population growth, and therefore demand, has

been a little less than projected, according to Brenda Clement, executive director of HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University.

"We're still greatly under-supplied, particularly at certain price points and for certain income levels that really need housing. Last year, throughout the third quarter and throughout New England, only about 3,600 multi-family units were given permits, the fewest units

*see HOUSING...page 29*

**68th Annual Home Show coverage begins on page 7**

# Hamel receives SPARK Award

Donald Hamel, dealer account representative for Andersen Corp. in our part of New England, was recently honored with a brand new national award from the company.

Mr. Hamel was selected from 400 Andersen sales representatives nationwide to receive the SPARK Award during the window and door manufacturer's 2018 Sales and Service Meeting in Orlando, Florida, in January.

The award recognizes the Andersen sales representative who shows not only outstanding sales performance but also exemplary leadership in promoting the success of others on his or her sales team, a company statement said.

"This includes sharing best practices, supporting peers, leading by example, maintaining a positive attitude, and delivering results."

When it comes to community service in general and support for the Rhode Island Builders Association in particular, Mr. Hamel seems to be everywhere.



"Andersen Corp., so well represented by Don, is an important presence at every major RIBA event, especially the Home Show," said RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio.

"Don's support is front and center at the Annual Clambake, the Golf Outing...you name it. Andersen advertising in the annual *Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide* and monthly in *The Rhode Island Builder* magazine make Andersen and Don Hamel familiar names to every member," Mr. Marcantonio added. "We congratulate Don on the well-deserved award."

Mr. Hamel said the SPARK Award came as a complete surprise. "I had no idea this was coming. I am still humbled!"



**At top, Donald Hamel, dealer account representative for Andersen Corp., displays the SPARK award he received at the recent Andersen 2018 Sales and Service Meeting in Orlando, Florida. With him are, from left: Sal Abbate, senior vice president and general manager, Residential & Commercial Divisions; Andersen Corp. Chairman and CEO Jay Lund; and Grant Davis, vice president of sales for Pro Channel. In lower picture. Mr. Hamel checks a window that was just installed by construction students during setup at the 2018 RIBA Home Show on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

## The Rhode Island Builder

Official publication of the  
Rhode Island Builders Association  
since 1951

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## DEADLINES FOR THE JUNE ISSUE

All copy, ads and photos must be to us by

# Friday, April 27

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## LOOKING AHEAD!

♦ **May 1<sup>st</sup>: RIBA Monthly Board of Directors Meeting** - 4 p.m. networking, 4:30 p.m. business meeting, RIBA headquarters, East Providence. RIBA members are invited to attend for informational purposes. For more information and to register, contact Elizabeth Carpenter, [ecarpenter@ribuilders.org](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400.

☞ ♦ **May 7<sup>th</sup>: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topic is Deck Codes. Details on page 20.

♦ **May 9<sup>th</sup>: Networking and Tour with RIBA's Professional Women in Building Council**: 6-8 p.m. DiStefano Brothers Construction, 433 Main St., Wakefield. To register, contact Linda Bohmbach at [linda@homehealthsmith.com](mailto:linda@homehealthsmith.com). Details on page 12.

☞ ♦ **May 23<sup>th</sup>: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topic is OSHA Safety Review. Class is available onsite or online at [RIBAEducat.es.com](http://RIBAEducat.es.com). Details on page 20.

♦ **May 24<sup>th</sup>: 8 Hour Lead-Safe Remodeler/Renovator Course** - 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m., RIBA Headquarters, East Providence. Rescheduled from March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Course is FREE for members with a \$40 materials/registration fee, \$110 for non-members with a \$40 materials/registration fee. **THIS CLASS IS FULL. To find out about the next available class, contact Sheila McCarthy, [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400.** Details on page 21.

☞ ♦ **June 7<sup>th</sup>: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topics are Exterior Water Management: Roofs and Walls, and Common Construction Regulations. Details on page 21.

♦ **June 7<sup>th</sup>: Annual Networking Barbecue** - Sponsored by Douglas Lumber, Kitchens & Home Center. FREE for members and their guests., RIBA headquarters, 4-7 p.m. Details on page 13.

♦ **August 10<sup>th</sup>: 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](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org). Premier Sponsors will have exhibit space at the Clambake.

♦ **September 17<sup>th</sup>: 28<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](http://RIBUILDERS.org).**

♦ Indicates a RIBA-sponsored event.

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

(S) Class will be taught in Spanish.

## Take RIBA classes online at [RIBAEducat.es.com](http://RIBAEducat.es.com)

Visit [RIBAEducat.es.com](http://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 on-site courses (see pages 21 and 22), 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 course. For information about online or on-site courses: Contact Sheila McCarthy [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org) or (401) 438-7400.



David A. Caldwell Jr.

# President's Message

## RIBA members' drive, dedication make the Home Show a hit

The 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Rhode Island Home Show, with the Flower and Garden Show, has concluded in another very successful evolution for the Rhode Island Builders Association.

Over 20,000 people made their way to the Rhode Island Convention Center this year for RIBA's signature annual public event, and I'm proud to say that we acquitted ourselves extremely well.

What's truly amazing is the amount of work that goes into the planning and execution for the Home Show. This work takes place throughout the year and culminates with the show itself.

Starting with the Home Show Committee, the themes and ideas for the show are generated. Then the administration and logistics are planned. Finally, the plan must be executed. This is reminiscent of mobilizing a military operation.

Our staff at RIBA deserves full recognition for their efforts. Additionally, over 1,000 students from 25 schools and 43 school programs were involved in the design, construction, setup and take-down of key elements of the show.

Their youthful enthusiasm was only exceeded by the intensity they brought to their work. It's wonderful to have young men and women so involved in the show. In fact, it brings a great deal of infectious energy to everyone there, especially during some long

hours in the setup phase. We are lucky to have them!

But what's truly impressive is the voluntary participation of our members, without whom the success of the Home Show would not be possible. At literally every step of the process, RIBA members volunteered their time and specific areas of expertise. Whether it was planning the design of an exhibit, sending manpower to build it, or providing a truck to pick up the last of the flowers during the clean-up, our members stepped up to the plate.

This reflects the *esprit de corps* in our membership, and I personally believe that this directly contributes to the success of the enterprise. The energy and excitement generated by our members reflects positively on those who experienced the Home Show. It's more than just a show: It has become a "must see" event, and reinforces a very positive image of RIBA in the community in which we serve.

I thank all of our members for their assistance in making the Home Show a success. Any time something was needed, a RIBA volunteer was there to get the job done.

That says a lot about our members and our association, and it bodes very well for the future as we continue to grow and expand on our successes.



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# Speaker Mattiello vows continued support for housing

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

"We all want the same things: a vibrant economy, more jobs, more building."

That was the message from Speaker of the House Nicolas A. Mattiello (D-Cranston), as he addressed the Rhode Island Builders Association's Board of Directors on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

"I want to be known as 'the jobs and economy speaker,' and your industry is a very important part of our economic engine. But we have to have the environment to maintain that vibrant economy, so I encourage you to continue to work with us. A high tide lifts all boats. If we assist you, we assist our entire economic engine," Speaker Mattiello said.

Commenting on regulatory issues that face the residential construction industry, the speaker assured the board that "we are

*see BOARD...page 28*



**In top photo, Speaker of the House Nicholas A. Mattiello, center, addresses RIBA's Board of Directors on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Looking on are RIBA President David A. Caldwell Jr., left, are Vice President Timothy A. Stasiunas. Bottom photo, from left, are RIBA government affairs team member William Walsh, President Caldwell, RIBA Legislative Committee Member John Bentz, Speaker Mattiello, Legislative Committee Member Robert J. Baldwin and Executive Officer John Marcantonio.**

The Rhode Island **builder** RIBA

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June 2016

Governor addresses RIBA board



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# Expanded Home Show draws record crowds

Attendance was up 5 percent over 2017, early estimates say.

By Paul F. Eno Editor

As WPRI Channel 12's weatherman, Tony Petrarca, put it on April 6<sup>th</sup>: "The only sign of spring this weekend is the Home Show!"

He was right, and rain and rumors of snow did nothing to dampen the spring-time ardor of Home Show visitors as they streamed through the turnstiles at the Rhode Island Convention Center April 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>.

In fact, initial estimates put Home Show attendance at about 5 percent higher than the 2017 show, according to Home Show Committee Chairman Louis Cotoia Jr.

"The weather was overcast, but it didn't snow. And it was too cold for people to work in their yards. So they came to the Home Show," Mr. Cotoia said. "They would have come anyway because this was the biggest and best show ever! According to the visitors surveys I've read so far, people agreed."

## Over 1,000 students help

Mr. Cotoia and other volunteer contractors from the Rhode Island Builders Association joined instructors from 25 schools and 43 school programs from throughout the state for three days of setup before the show. This involved over 1,000 students, who cycled crews over the entire setup period.

Jesse Maynard of Maynard Construction BRC, Joseph Cracco of Modern Yankee Builders, and Alexander Mitchell of Meridian Design/Build were among the RIBA members who joined school instructors in supervising the students.

Opening ceremonies took place just before noon on April 5<sup>th</sup>. Joining Gov. Gina Raimondo were many dignitaries, including Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea, General Treasurer Seth Magaziner, Dept. of Labor

see *HOME SHOW...page 28*



Visitors flood through the Rhode Island Home Show on Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup>.



During opening ceremonies, Gov. Gina Raimondo presents a certificate of appreciation to RIBA for offering the Home Show. Accepting are John Bentz, left, and Executive Officer John Marcantonio.





Over 1,000 students from 25 schools and 43 school programs around the state participated in the Home Show setup over the three days before the event, supervised by their instructors and volunteer contractors from the Rhode Island Builders Association. Elements of the Home Design Hub, the Solar Greenhouse, the She Shed and other attractions were built at the schools and transported to the Convention Center.

Students from the Construction Program at Providence's DelSesto Middle School get their marching orders from RIBA's Home Show Committee Chairman and CTE Coordinator Louis Cotoia and Blakely Szosz, president of the Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs.



Students from the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center built the She Shed. Appreciating this are, from left, Kimberly Reall, Deja Bennett and Victoria Banaczuk.

Among the volunteer supervisors that day were Joe Cracco of Modern Yankee Builders, right, and Tom Giorgio of Giorgio Home Improvement.



Carpentry students from Mount Hope High School in Bristol work on the Home Design Hub.

During their lunch break, students chow down at the food pavilion, staffed by students from Westerly High School's culinary program.





# RIBA Happenings: 68th Annual Home Show



◀ **RIBA President David A. Caldwell presents opening remarks as the show gets under way.**



▲ **Don Hamel of Andersen Corp. talks with visitors at the Coventry Lumber exhibit.**



▲ **The show is about to open, and, from left, Bob Carlson, Lisa St. George, Randy Aronofsky and Mike Acton of Arnold Lumber are ready for the crowds.**



▲ **The Home Show has just opened, and Linda Bohmbach of Home Healthsmith is already busy!**



◀ **It's John Fitzsimmons and Alan Wornham from Santoro Oil!**

**Tom Kaine from Miracle Method welcomes one of his first leads on Thursday, April 5<sup>th</sup>.**



See the complete list of Home Show sponsors, and participating CTE schools, on page 11.





## RIBA Happenings: 68th Annual Home Show



◀ **"How to Hire a Contractor" is the subject as George Whalen, recently retired executive director of the Rhode Island Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board shares his long experience -- as well as the law -- with Home Show visitors.**

▶ **Sharing information with some new leads are Allison Muccino and, at right, Lori Noel of Meridian Design/Build.**

**Past RIBA President Steve Hopkins visits the show with son Scott. Steve was president from 1990 to 1992.**



▶ **RIBA staffers worked non-stop throughout the Home Show. Here, with RIBA Treasurer Carol O'Donnell, at right, are Member Relations Coordinator Elise Geddes and Education Manager Sheila McCarthy. Others working the RIBA Welcome Booth included Operations Manager Elizabeth Carpenter, Health Insurance Administrator Robin Barlow, Bookkeeper Tara DeMelo, Sarah Carpenter and Becky Geddes.**



▲ **A new customer is very specific about what he wants, but Ethan Biederman from South County Post & Beam has the answers.**

◀ **Having as much fun as ever after many years as exhibitors are the gang from Lighting & Design by J&K Electric: Lisa lafrate, Jeanine Lantini, Kelly Casagrande and Joe Falvo.**



# **The Rhode Island Builders Association thanks the many sponsors and contributors who helped make the 2018 Home Show a great success!**

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Paul McConnell and the staff of the Rhode Island Dept. of Education  
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and RIBA members who assisted the students:  
Jesse Maynard of Maynard Construction • Joe Cracco of Modern Yankee Builders • Alex Mitchell of Meridian Design/Build

## **...and to the staff and students of:**

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## **And the members of our hard-working Home Show Committee!**

Chairman Louis Cotoia of Arnold Lumber Co., Inc.  
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Blakeley Szosz of the Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs/Visual Shift Art Studio  
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## *Professional Women in Building : PWB NEWS*



### *Network with Members in your Industry*



Carol O'Donnell and Jacqueline Pagel (shown left) represented the PWB at the American Heart Association of Southern New England's Go Red For Women's Luncheon. The event took place on February 16, 2018 at the Providence Convention Center. Over 700 people were in attendance for the wonderful event focused on Women's Health.



## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

- May 9: DiStefano Brothers – Networking & Showroom Tour  
433 Main St, Wakefield, RI 6-8pm
- June 11: Summer Social – East Greenwich Yacht Club
- September: REDI Footings for Decks & Sheds, onsite event
- October: Reid's Remodeling Tour
- December: NAWIC Holiday Brunch 12/14 – Biltmore Hotel  
Centerpiece Workshop Farmers Daughter

### ***PWB Officers***

Carol O'Donnell-President  
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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>



# Networking BBQ slated for June 7

**WHEN:** Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto:egeddes@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400.



*Nearly 150 members and guests turn out for RIBA's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Networking Barbecue in 2017. More are expected this year, with the event generously sponsored by Douglas Lumber, Kitchens & Home Center, along with Andersen Corp., Royal Building Products and Fiberon*

It's the Rhode Island Builders Association's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Networking Barbecue, generously sponsored by Douglas Lumber, Kitchens & Home Center, along with Andersen Corp., Royal Building Products and Fiberon! This is one of RIBA's most popular networking events of the year for a number of reasons.

"Not only do members come to enjoy hamburgers, hot dogs, barbeque chicken and a nice cold beer; but there are so many people to network with that we have to expand our space out the back door!" says RIBA Member Relations Coordinator Elise Geddes.

"Plus, Douglas Lumber and other sponsors will have products

on display, with representatives there to answer questions. Fiberon makes decking and railing, and Royal makes PVC trim and siding."

As always, this networking event is FREE for RIBA members and their guests.

Bring a non-member colleague so they can see RIBA's headquarters, meet the staff, and find out about the many benefits of membership. Mark your calendars and check back for details as the date approaches!





**Thursday, May 17 • 7am-2pm**

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## Member Profile: Brian Reid of Reid's Remodeling

# His job: Go above and beyond!



Photo by Jaimie Jusczyk

Brian Reid with his horse, Brenda Lee

By Paul F. Eno Editor

"I want to share this with every contractor out there: Your job is not to satisfy your customers. Your job is to go above and beyond!"

That's the word from Brian Reid of Reid's Remodeling, a man who knows exactly where to go and how to get there when it comes to his business. But the longtime member of the Rhode Island Builders Association wasn't always so focused.

A first-generation remodeler, Brian started working with a Providence home-improvement company in 1976.

"That's where I first caught the construction bug," he says. "Even while I was in the Air Force in Spokane, Washington, I did remodeling jobs on the side."

Returning to Rhode Island, Brian didn't return to remodeling full-time.

"I got into quahogging and personal fitness training! I even ran a couple of fitness centers."

Nevertheless, Brian somehow knew that the gods were determined to make him a remodeler.

"I wanted to maximize my GI Bill benefits, so in 1984 I enrolled at the New England Institute of Technology (NEIT) at night to take construction and cabinet-making courses," he recalls.

One of his instructors at NEIT was future RIBA President Felix A. Carlone. Trouble was brewing in the early '90s, though, as people cut back on "luxuries" like personal training.

"People who knew about my skills started to ask, 'Will you fix this at my house, will you fix that at my house?'" Brian remembers. "So, I started doing little repairs, about 1989."

### Reid's Remodeling Inc.

**Principal:** Brian S. Reid

**RIBA member since:** 1992

**Focus:** Remodeling Services

**Serves:** Rhode Island

**Founded:** 1992

**Based:** Jamestown, Rhode Island



When he moved to Jamestown in 1992, Brian set his goal. "I printed a single-sheet flyer listing the 10 things people hate about contractors. I hand-delivered these to 2,500 homes in Jamestown. It took me three months." The list of grievances?

"First, contractors don't return phone calls. I promised to return phone calls within 24 hours or they'd get a free hour of service – and that meant 24/7 phone calls. We've given away three hours in the last 15 years. Second, lack of cleanliness. I promised to clean the job to the customer's specs or they'd get a free day of service."

The list includes contractors not showing up on time, not sticking to the stated price, not finishing the job on time, and not making it clear that the price will go up if the customer adds to the job. Brian vowed to correct it all. He even promised that customers could choose which radio stations the crew could play while working in their houses.

"Our storyline became this: 'We send remodeling knights to the castles of kings and queens to slay their home-improvement dragons.' And people love it!"

The company logo displays a mounted knight and the motto "We Respond." The horse, of course, is dutifully wearing disposable shoe/boot covers, just as Brian's crews do in customers' homes.

Going above and beyond simply "satisfying" customers is easy, Brian insists, which is why Reid's Remodeling, now with seven employees, has never had to move far beyond its original range of Jamestown, Newport (including the naval base), Middletown and (occasionally) North Kingstown.

"Customer satisfaction does not breed customer loyalty. Every customer expects to be satisfied. Don't think that you've gone above and beyond just by doing what's expected!" Brian explains.

This philosophy of service paid off 1999, when *Remodeling Magazine* put Reid's Remodeling in its "Big 50" list, dubbing Reid's one of the top 50 remodeling companies in the country.

"That was because we did 450 jobs that year and \$1.2 million in volume. Because it was all in the Jamestown, Newport area, we defied the numbers, which said you can't do that many jobs in that small a demographic!"

Communication is another linchpin at Reid's.

"Our public website is general. But customers have their own website, where everything is communicated before, during and after the job," Brian explains.

Customers also receive "mind-blowing" CAD work and presentation programs that put them right in their remodeled space, Brian says. His wife does professional-grade photography, even including breathtaking drone footage of properties

Brian joined RIBA in 1992, and he praises benefits like the insurance offerings, networking, and tuition-free education.

"Mostly, it's the people at RIBA. Every time I call, everyone there is fantastic."

Check out the basics at [Reidsremodeling.com](http://Reidsremodeling.com).



# *Featured Products & Services for May 2018*



*A Rhode Island Builder Report Special Section*





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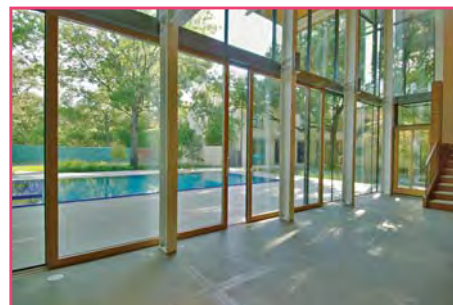
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# Win rewards for recruiting in RIBA's Membership Drive

State-mandated classes and other educational opportunities free of tuition charge, free and low-cost social events for valuable networking, discounts and rebates on products you use every day, active and effective legislative advocacy for your business – these are just a few reasons for you to stay a member of the Rhode Island Builders Association, and to get your industry colleagues to join.

In fact, RIBA is in the midst of its 2018 Membership Drive. All members who either bring a potential member to a networking or social event or sponsor a new member will be entered to win prizes, with the winners being announced at the 2018 Annual Meeting on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

There's a third way to win: If you sponsor a builder/remodeler member, you will receive three chances to win. Of course, multiple entries are encouraged!

*see MEMBERSHIP...page 27*



***Tuition-free classes, valuable networking events and cost-saving discounts and rebates are among the many incentives to join and remain in the Rhode Island Builders Association.***

## English learners match up with employers

RIBA-partnered program graduates first class.

Employers and industry partners joined members of the Rhode Island Builders Association in meeting the first group to

complete the Vocational English Language Learners (VESL) on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

The event took place at the Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island, in Providence.

The VESL program was funded by a Real Jobs Rhode Island grant and was

offered by the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP) with RIBA as the hub.

"The course provided students with the skills needed to gain entry-level employment in the construction-industry," said Cheryl Boyd, RIBA's marketing director and RCWP coordinator.

Students received OSHA-10 Certification, learned construction terminology, basic construction math, an overview of blueprints and hands-on tools, use and maintenance in a shop environment, all at the Providence Career and Technical Academy.

"Representatives from employers like Brownlow Associates spoke to the job candidates about their companies, the opportunities available and the benefits of becoming employees," Ms. Boyd explained.

"Candidates and employers alike were able to ask questions in an open forum, which proved to be an ice-breaker, and set-



***At left, Bill Iuliano and Doug Brownlow of Brownlow Associates speak to job candidates who have completed the English class at the Dorcas Institute.***

*see ENGLISH...page 26*



## 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: Deck Construction Codes *May 7<sup>th</sup>*

**WHEN:** Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 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: "Deck Construction Codes: Sorting Out Codes and Solutions."

Included will be a review of jobsite safety rules, fall protection, ladders and scaffolding, and confined spaces.

With more and more homeowners loving their backyards and looking for outdoor living solutions, decks are becoming an important part of an increasing number of homes. So it's more important than ever for contractors to know about the codes relating to deck construction.

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 *May 23<sup>rd</sup>*

**WHEN:** Wednesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 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.



***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  
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if they have additional questions  
or issues to discuss.***

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



## 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 7<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto: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.



## 8 Hour Lead-Safe Remodeler-Renovator Course

May 24<sup>th</sup>

**THIS CLASS IS FULL**  
**For information on the next class,  
see the contact information below.**

**WHEN:** Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 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 ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE**

**CLASS:** Contact Sheila McCarthy at [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400.

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


A written exam is given at the end of the course. A passing grade allows attendees to apply for licensing through the Rhode Island Dept. of Health and the EPA.

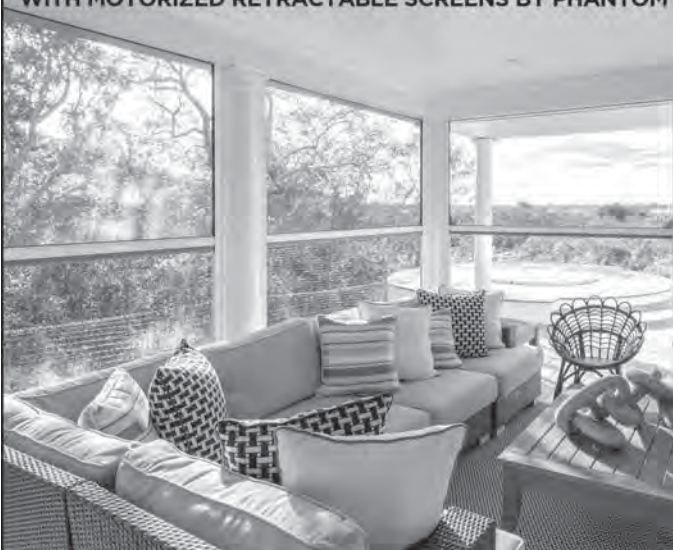
Pre-registration and a photo are required for your certificate. This must be a headshot only. E-mail it to [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org) at least five days before the class.

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.





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# Gov. Baker in major push to ease Bay State Housing crisis



**Massachusetts Gov. Charles Baker, center, testifies before the legislature's Joint Committee on Housing on January 30<sup>th</sup>. With him are Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Jay Ash and Undersecretary of Housing and Community Development Chrystal Kornegay.**

Housing Choices Initiative is meant to spur legislation and help create 135,000 new units by 2025.

By Paul F. Eno Editor

With Rhode Island still stalled in its attempts to produce a fraction of this goal, Massachusetts has launched a concerted effort to produce 135,000 new housing units over the next seven years.

Our neighbor to the north and east needs more and better housing choices if it is to remain competitive with other states when it comes to attracting jobs and talent, according to Gov. Charles Baker. In fact, the governor identified his proposed Act to Promote Housing Choices as one of his top two legislative priorities, up there with opioid abuse-prevention legislation.

He described Massachusetts as “in virtual crisis mode” when it comes to its housing shortage.

The Housing Choices Bill would allow municipalities to adopt certain zoning changes by a simple majority vote rather than a two-thirds supermajority, as now required. Backed by the Massachusetts Municipal Association and the state's largest employers, the move makes it easier to advance local developments that are mixed-use, multi-family and transit-oriented, and to increase density and to lower minimum lot sizes where appropriate.

Specifically, the legislation would clear hurdles for multifamily and cluster development, establish by-right zones for accessory apartments (contingent on meeting local health and safety standards), allow for transfers of development rights, and reduce parking and dimensional requirements.

Overall, the Housing Choice Initiative will reward communities that are producing new housing units and have adopted best practices to promote sustainable housing development.

“We have tons of great organizations doing great things. We have wonderful people. We have a whole generation of young

people excited to be here,” Gov. Baker said. “But if we want to keep those jobs, that opportunity and that talent here, we’re going to have to get a lot more aggressive about creating opportunities for people to find housing they can afford to live in.”

One industry leader who is on board is James D. Gallagher, executive vice president of Boston-based Manulife Financial Corp./John Hancock Financial. He said the availability of affordable housing is one of the top concerns of college students his company

see MASSACHUSETTS...page 27

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://MassHousing.com).





# Brian R. Daniels

## Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns

*A Rhode Island native, Brian M. Daniels has over 15 years of experience in federal, state and local government. In his current position, he collaborates with mayors, town managers and councils to represent their perspectives on legislative and policy matters before the state legislature and state agencies. Before joining the League of Cities and Towns, Mr. Daniels served in Rhode Island's Office of Management and Budget, originally as the state's first director of performance management, responsible for reviewing program effectiveness and efficiency of all major government programs. He also served as OMB's deputy budget officer, and was policy director for Gov. Lincoln Chafee. He worked in Washington, D.C., for 10 years, where his jobs included legislative director to Congressman Jim Langevin. Mr. Daniels holds a bachelor's degree in public policy from Duke University and a master's in business administration from the Yale School of Management.*



is the number of contributing factors, and we really see that in New England. No-one can really point to one factor that's causing the housing shortage.

When I worked at the state Office of Management and Budget, I spent a lot of time on lean-process improvement for state agencies, and some time on regulatory reform. I'm always interested in understanding, when there's a problem, what the root cause of that problem could be. On the issue of land-

use, is it a state law or regulations, or their interpretations, that are making it difficult to develop? Is it local ordinances? Is it the state or municipal processes?

So, it's important for us to understand, from the builders' perspective, whether concerns are real or perceived, and what is the right way to address those concerns? Some communities are very pro-development, and others are a bit more cautious.

I think, when it comes to housing shortages, that we need to make sure we're fixing the right problem in the right way, whether it's the regulatory side, the ordinance side, or simply a process.

**THE BUILDER:** Some of our readers might be a little fuzzy on what the League of Cities and Towns actually does. Can you explain?

**DANIELS:** Sure. The League is a membership organization representing all 39 cities and towns. It was created in 1968, so we're celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The primary role has been to advocate for their interests before the General Assembly, state agencies and the administration, and to speak with one voice. When I started with the League just over a year ago, our board expressed interest in doing more training and professional development. So, we're working with our members to find out what training opportunities they need, and whether we can help provide that. Also, how can we help share ideas and best practices across communities?

We're also working more closely with some of the municipal professional organizations, like the planners, solicitors and finance officers, so we're all on the same page as we look at the operations of our cities and towns.

**THE BUILDER:** Nationally and in Rhode Island, there is a severe shortage of housing in general and workforce housing in particular. Many housing experts lay partial blame at the door of local land-use regulations. What vision do you have on this issue, and do you see Rhode Island municipalities adopting a more pro-housing attitude?

**DANIELS:** It's a good question. One challenge with housing

**THE BUILDER:** Do you feel that the League can help build bridges between municipalities and the residential construction industry on these issues?

**DANIELS:** Yes, that's very important. It's easy to say "no" to things. It's easy for the League to testify before the General Assembly, and to simply oppose legislation. It's more productive if we can pull stakeholders together, and come up with solutions that everyone can agree on.

We've had some very productive conversations with the Rhode Island Builders Association, as well as the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Planning Association, on some of the legislation that the planners and builders are interested in. That's the way we need to go forward.

To my previous point: If there's a problem, are we fixing it the right way and not creating other problems? Or are we trying to do a one-size-fits-all solution that ends up hurting some communities in ways no-one expected?

**THE BUILDER:** Given the size of the state, what's the feeling about regionalizing in general and statewide regulations (freshwater wetlands and permitting standards, which already have legislative approval) in particular?

**DANIELS:** Regionalization is helpful when it addresses an

see *INTERVIEW...next page*

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

actual need and occurs organically from the parties involved. For example, we've seen some great work between Pawtucket and Central Falls on sharing services on joint economic-development initiatives around the old railroad station. That's a good model for other communities. It's also helpful because some of our communities have very small municipal staffs, so the more they can collaborate, rather than duplicate efforts, that's good.

Forcing regionalization, however, doesn't always have the expected result. So it's helpful to do a problem-based approach. Is there a shared problem across multiple communities? Can they solve it collectively?

When it comes to one-size-fits-all, that can apply to some of the processes that are going forward. E-permitting is a good example. There are more than 20 communities participating, and this creates a more transparent process for residents and builders.

There there's the question of the permit fees, which has been in limbo for years because it's basically impossible to come up with a statewide building fee. Little Compton and Providence are very different in their needs. So maybe we should find a solution that works for multiple communities, and we can work on that together.

**THE BUILDER: Wasn't the idea statewide standards for permit fees, rather than statewide fees, based on each community's need to fund its building department?**

**DANIELS:** The original legislation called for statewide fees. Then they realized that we can't do that, and it became statewide fee standards instead. That makes more sense because communities shouldn't profit off building fees. The fees should cover the cost of their operations.

So we've introduced legislation that would accept some of those standards but would put the responsibility back on the city or town to set those fees. Trouble is, we have a state agency (the Building Code Commission) that's trying to assess municipal financial data and come up with fees based on that, but they don't necessarily understand all the municipal operations.

So we've tried to thread that needle legislatively. Our bill says that you can't exceed the cost of your (building department) operations, and as projects get larger, the fees have to come down on a per-square-foot basis.

Some of the original concepts RIBA put forward make a lot of sense. The trouble comes when you try to do one-size-fits-all and have the state come up with what the appropriate fees should be. That just doesn't seem to make anyone happy.

**THE BUILDER: How can RIBA help towns build their comprehensive plans?**

**DANIELS:** Great question. One of the things I like about Rhode Island and my job is that our 39 cities and towns, even though we're in a small geographic area, are very different. That's largely because they have the comprehensive planning process, which allows them to envision their future and grow the way they want.

From the builders' perspective, there are two things that RIBA can do. First, if a member's own community is working with a comprehensive plan, they should get engaged and be there on the

front end. Comprehensive plans are developed through a public process, and they're largely shaped by the people who show up. The more voices heard in that process, the better product you will get because there will be a better representative view of what the community's needs are.

If a comprehensive plan is already developed, RIBA members should try to understand what the community's vision for growth is. Not all communities want single-family homes in subdivisions. So are there other things your members can propose, whether it's mixed-use development, greater densities, or transit-oriented development.

Understand what the community wants, and then respond accordingly.

**THE BUILDER: There is tremendous need for upgraded and expanded drinking water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure in Rhode Island. Could a statewide grant program like MassWorks assist towns to execute infrastructure development?**

**DANIELS:** The League has endorsed the infrastructure bill in the legislature this year, the one modeled on MassWorks. It's important to find a sustainable funding source for this, though. But we've been completely on board with that.

In addition, our League belongs to the National League of Cities. I went to Washington a few weeks ago for their annual legislative conference, and we emphasized the importance of federal funding for infrastructure. That's not just roads and bridges, but stormwater, drinking water and sewer infrastructure as well, along with telecommunications. Those are all very important for growth, especially in New England.

We're very much in support of infrastructure initiatives.

**THE BUILDER: Do some towns still consider children and families a liability, and what can be done to change that perspective?**

**DANIELS:** I certainly can't speak for individual communities and their views, but I can say that population growth for Rhode Island in general is important for economic development. New England is relatively slow-growing in population, compared with other parts of the country, and we need to recognize the need for it.

The question then becomes: What's the best way to manage that? That gets us back to the comprehensive plans, and having the Division of Statewide Planning and others explain what the demographic growth for the state is, and examine some growth targets. Then, how do cities and towns manage that growth appropriately?

School construction has been a huge priority for the League lately. I think people are seeing the incentives for newer and fewer schools so they can have better facilities, but fewer of them. That becomes very appealing for families with children.

So, if we're putting this effort into improving our schools, we should expect that people will want to move to communities where these good schools exist. The cities and towns will have to figure that out and accommodate that in their comprehensive plans.

I really appreciate the opportunity to address RIBA's membership. If we continue to work together, I know that we will find considerable common ground!



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## ENGLISH...from page 19

ting a comfortable and productive tone for the evening.”

Employers left their contact information for candidates, and some of the latter interviewed for jobs then and there, according to Ms. Boyd.

Other employers at the event included Jose Marciano of Jomar Painting and George Constantinides of Calyx Builds.

For more information, contact Ms. Boyd at RIBA, (401) 255-5910 or cboyd@ribuilders.org.

RIBA



# NAHB: Lumber talks appear stalled

National Association of Home Builders

During a March 21<sup>st</sup> hearing before the House Committee on Ways and Means on the U.S. trade policy agenda, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said there is little chance that the softwood lumber trade dispute with Canada will be resolved anytime soon.

“Right now, I would say there’s probably not much going on in terms of those negotiations,” said Mr. Lighthizer. “Right now, the positions are kind of intractable.”

This was in a response to a question by Rep. Kenny Marchant (R-Texas), who said that his state’s home builders are concerned about 40 to 50 percent increases in lumber prices in the last year because of tariffs.

In fact, new data compiled by National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) economists show that the changes in lumber prices between Jan. 6, 2017, and March 16, 2018, are enough to increase 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. These cost increases are in the average price paid by consumers — not just the change in cost paid by the builder.

“NAHB continues to work with Congress and the administration to boost domestic lumber production,” NAHB said. For more information, contact Alex Strong at 800-368-5242 x8279.

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## **MEMBERSHIP...from page 19**

"The purpose of the membership drive is certainly to increase membership," said Member Relations Coordinator Elise Geddes. "The larger our membership, the more people in the residential construction industry will benefit, and the more effective our advocacy will be."

That's not the only reason, though.

"It also will encourage even more participation at our lively networking events. We want to see increasing camaraderie among our members, and more members wanting to be involved," Ms. Geddes said.

"This also encourages more interaction between newer and older members as the torch is passed from one generation of builders and remodelers to the next," she added.

"There are so many compelling reasons to join RIBA and to stay, but I also tell potential members that the overall reason is to add to our strength. There is power in numbers."

Contact Ms. Geddes for more information: (401) 438-7400 or [egeddes@ribuilders.org](mailto:egeddes@ribuilders.org)



## **MASSACHUSETTS...from page 22**

recruits from local universities.

"It's time to get this done," Mr. Gallagher said.

Gov. Baker said that current housing production in Massachusetts is less than half what it was in the 1970s through the early 1990s, when the rate averaged 30,000 a year.

As in Rhode Island, the primary problem is lack of supply that's driving up prices. The governor pointed out that this has priced many low-to-moderate income families out of many housing markets, forcing them to leave the state or commute farther to work.

According to The Warren Group, a Boston-based real estate and financial information firm, the median sale price of a single family home in Massachusetts in January was 350,000, and the median price of a condominium was \$345,000, both record highs for the month.

Among those praising the housing initiative and the proposed legislation was Boston Medical Center CEO Kathleen E. Walsh, who cited housing availability as a major problem, not only for her staff, but also for her patients, many of whom are homeless.

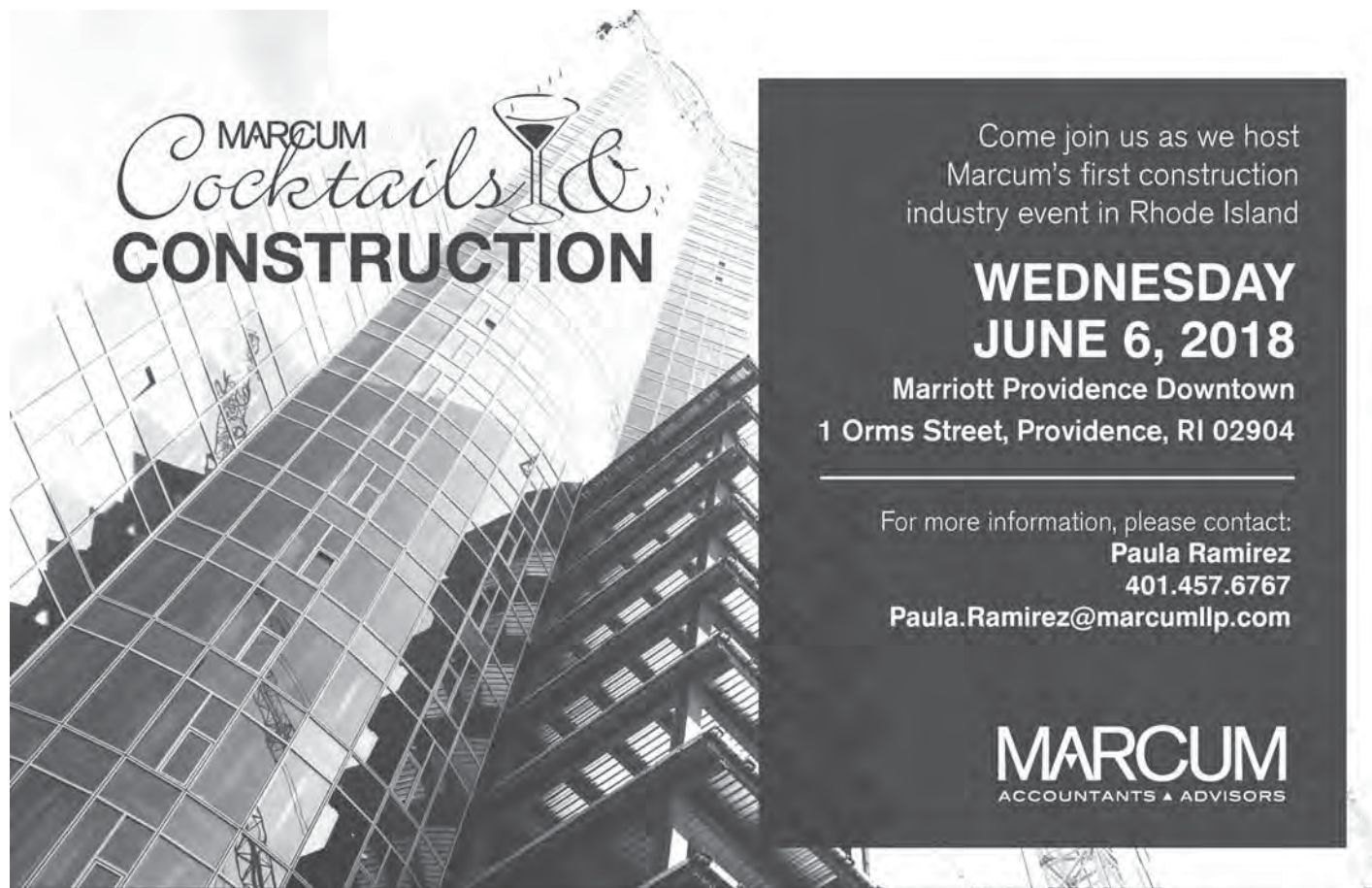
The housing initiative is bipartisan. Senate President Harriette Chandler, a Worcester Democrat, said that senators in her party share the governor's sense of urgency with respect to housing, and believe the governor's bill is "strong," but also that more could be done.

Also backing Gov. Baker's initiative and the legislation is the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA).

"As a commonwealth, we dug ourselves into this housing crisis by limiting the housing we allowed for several decades," said MSGA Executive Director André Leroux.

"It will take hard work to dig our way out, but momentum is clearly on our side. Let's create healthy communities, keep our region economically competitive, and build more housing by passing (this legislation)" Mr. Leroux said.

"Our region is in a housing crisis. Solving it will require bold action and a comprehensive solution set," said Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone.

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## ***BOARD...from page 6***

working on that.”

He reviewed RIBA’s 2018 legislative agenda bill by bill and point by point, listening to insights from board members and taking questions, then offering his own comments.

Board members were unanimous in thanking Speaker Mattiello for his support, and for his economic initiatives.

## ***Home Show report***

RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio offered a report on the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Home Show, which had wrapped up the previous day.

“We thank all the supplier members. What you do is unprecedented across the country, and we couldn’t pull off what we’ve done with the Home Show over the last six years without you,” Mr. Marcantonio said.

He noted that 40 to 50 supplier members’ trucks brought in materials to the Convention Center over a period of hours, starting a 6 a.m., before and after the show.

In addition, show attendance was up 5 percent over last year, with participation by over 1,000 students from 43 school programs, according to Mr. Marcantonio.

“(Home Show Committee Chairman) Lou Cotoia and (Marketing Director) Cheryl Boyd managed all this,” he noted.

Sponsorships and booth sales were up more than expected, and visitors surveys indicated a 91 percent approval rating, according to the executive officer.

“Also, the flower and garden part of show is doing great, thanks to our partners from the landscaping and horticulture industries.”

## ***New course offerings***

Regarding RIBA’s expanding educational programs, classes to fulfill Massachusetts contractor requirements will be offered beginning in July, and there will be new online courses starting in June, Mr. Marcantonio reported.

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](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org) for more information.



Louis Cotoia Jr.

# **With increasing visibility, RCWP Jobs Bank continues to grow**

With continued interaction between Rhode Island’s career and technical education (CTE) students, hands-on projects like the Home Show (*see page 7*), and contact with potential employers through the Rhode Island Builders Association and its partners, the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership’s (RCWP’s) Jobs Bank at [RCWPjobs.com](http://RCWPjobs.com) is reaching more and more employers and potential employees.

As of April 11<sup>th</sup>, the number of job candidates had risen to 321, from 318 in March. There were 598 employers registered at the site, one more than in March. There were, however, 24 job postings, down from 28 in March and 50 in January, indicating that the site is matching employers with their future employees.

“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.”

Signing up for an account at [RCWPJobs.com](http://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 Ms. Boyd at (401) 255-5910 or [cboyd@ribuilders.org](mailto:cboyd@ribuilders.org).



## ***HOME SHOW...from page 7***

and Training Director Scott R. Jensen, Rhode Island Housing Executive Director Barbara Fields, Office of Energy Resources Commissioner Carol Grant, and Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza.

## ***More floor space than ever***

For the first time, the Home Show expanded into the Convention Center lobby, where visitors found displays on electricity, along with energy-awareness vignettes built and designed by students and sponsored by National Grid. Beyond that was “Springtime Floral Fusion,” the Rhode Island Flower and Garden Show, nurtured by the Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs Inc.

On display were 48 floral designs, educational displays, and speakers on a variety of topics.

Once inside and on the main show floor, visitors were welcomed at the RIBA booth, where they could get information and literature. Show attractions included the 10-room Home Design Hub, the Home Tech Experience, the Energy Expo, the Décor Store, the RI Living Resources Center, the AARP Home Solutions Hub and over 300 exhibits and seminars.

Visited by *The Rhode Island Builder* on Saturday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, exhibitors were pleased with the turnout.

“It’s been good, even on Thursday and Friday,” said Tom Kaine of Miracle Method. “The show is always great for us!”

RIBA thanks the many generous volunteers and sponsors who made the Home Show possible! *See the list on page 11.*



**For RIBA**  
**membership information**  
**contact Elise Geddes**  
**401-438-7400**  
**or [egeddes@ribuilders.org](mailto:egeddes@ribuilders.org)**



## ***HOUSING...from page 1***

since the same period in 2013,” Ms. Clement told *The Rhode Island Builder*.

“Rhode Island’s production was pretty much non-existent. In 2016, we had a very small number of units produced. We continue to lag behind the rest of New England, and are still well below the projected need over the next 10 years,” she added.

Statistics from national media back up that contention. A March 5<sup>th</sup> article in *National Mortgage News* cited Greater Providence as 10<sup>th</sup> among the 12 worst urban areas in America for housing inventory.

“As housing demand continues outpacing supply, tight inventory is plaguing potential buyers and putting upward pressure on home prices,” wrote reporter Elina Tarkazikis.

New Providence-area listings for the fourth quarter of 2017 were 1,314, an 11.1 percent drop from the same period the previous year, according to Ms. Tarkazikis. Some 1,156 homes were sold, an 8.5 percent drop from the same period in 2016, while the median sales price increased 8.9 percent, to \$245,000.

National housing economist Elliot Eisenberg, who has addressed members of the Rhode Island General Assembly on housing issues and keeps an eye on the local housing scene, summed up the situation across the country.

“The March 23<sup>rd</sup> new housing sales data was troubling. February sales of 618,000 were up just 0.5 percent year-over-year, and year-to-date sales are up just 2 percent!” Dr. Eisenberg said. “Maybe it’s the new tax laws, maybe it’s rates; in a few months we’ll know. The immediate problem: New home prices are skyrocketing, up 9.7 percent year-over-year, and inventories of (increasingly highly priced) new homes are at 5.9 months, so they’re regrettably balanced. New, cheaper homes remain MIA!”

Among other back-handed good news for the local housing market: Our two northern neighbors, Worcester and Boston, are in worse shape than Providence when it comes to dropping supply and rising prices. Worcester is number 1, worst in the nation, and Boston is 6<sup>th</sup>.

### ***Extreme vacancy rate***

“Another troubling statistic for us is our extremely low vacancy rate (for rental housing),” Ms. Clement of HousingWorks reported. “As of the third quarter of 2017 in Rhode Island, we’re at 1.9 percent, which is one of the lowest in New England: low supply, high demand. A healthy vacancy rate is anywhere from 5 to 7 percent.”

The only lasting response is to build more housing, she indicated.

“We’re just not doing much to balance that market in a healthy fashion. It also amplifies the narrative at the State House and the federal level to build more housing, especially workforce housing.”

### ***Are officials disconnected?***

State and municipal officials are slowly getting the message that more, and more appropriate, housing is inevitable, according



Brenda Clement

to Ms. Clement.

“I think there’s growing attention to this on the state and local levels because they see the changing demographic needs, especially with people who want to age in place,” she said. “They see that seniors want to downsize. Other people want to add accessory dwelling units to their houses so older relatives can stay. That’s what people we work with on the community level are seeing as a tremendous need.”

Not only is our population aging, but so is our housing stock, Ms. Clement stressed.

“There’s more need for home-repair loans, modification loans, so seniors can age in place.”

There’s an exodus of young, educated people from Rhode Island, and the Northeast in general, partly because of a lack of workforce housing.

“Workforce housing is also starter housing. New college graduates, starting out as young teachers, home-health aides and in many other professions, can’t afford to stay here. And those are the jobs growing fastest in Rhode Island. There’s a growing disconnect between what people can afford and what housing costs.”

On the bright side, Ms. Clement pointed out that the recently enacted federal omnibus spending bill “actually has a lot of good stuff in it for housing, including a tax credit and some significant increases in key programs that had been severely cut for the last few years.”

John Bentz of the Property Advisory Group, an affordable-housing developer, a longtime member of the Rhode Island Builders Association, and one of RIBA’s point men on housing issues, isn’t so sure that officials are getting the message.

“I attended a meeting in Providence recently, with a number of city and state officials, developers and other professionals, including bankers and lawyers,” Mr. Bentz said.

“The purpose was to showcase all the commercial and residential projects under way in downtown Providence. I counted them: There were 1,018 conventional apartments and only 54 of the so-called workforce, affordable units. Officials from the public and private sectors were patting themselves on the back, talking about how great everything is.”

During a question period, one participant asked about the “Superman Building,” and another asked about the Pawtucket Red Sox.

“I got up and said: ‘I’m in the affordable-housing business, and I notice that there are over 1,000 market rate units going up, and only 54 workforce units. That’s quite a disparity. We should be looking at more.’ And they went right on talking as they had been. Nobody addressed the issue. What’s the thought process on that? Needless to say, I didn’t make any friends at that meeting.”

Officials still don’t get it, according to Mr. Bentz.

“There has to be somewhere for the nurses, teachers, police officers, apartment managers, firefighters, college-maintenance people and others to live. These people make \$40,000 or \$50,000. They can’t afford \$1,400 or more rent. What are we doing?”



John Bentz

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