

**FEATURED  
PRODUCTS AND  
SERVICES FOR  
SEPTEMBER**  
*Center Section*

**RIBA wins  
national honors**

The Rhode Island Builders Association has won the National Grand Award for Numerical, Percentage and Retention for membership in 2016.

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**RIBA Annual  
Meeting set for  
October 3**

All members are urged to attend RIBA's 2017 Annual Meeting at Quidnessett Country Club in North Kingstown, beginning at 6 pm. Contact Elizabeth Carpenter at (401) 438-7400 or [ecarpenter@ribuilders.org](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org).

**RIBA Golf Classic  
is October 16**

RIBA's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Classic is set for Wannamoisett Country Club, Rumford. Watch your mail for details. Be a sponsor! Contact Robin Barlow at (401) 438-7400 or [rbarlow@ribuilders.org](mailto:rbarlow@ribuilders.org).

*Page 2*

**Building code  
changes pending**

Proposed changes to the Rhode Island Residential Code are minor but will affect contractors.

*Page 22*

*Education is front and center at RIBA*

# Continuing education rules clarified, online courses up and running

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Among contractors, there has been some uncertainty about who must take the state-mandated continuing education courses, and when they must be obtained.

The Rhode Island Builders Association has taken steps to clarify this. Please see the chart below to find out when you must have your five credit hours completed, as mandated by the Rhode Island Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board (CRLB).

As indicated in the chart, if you are a new con-

tractor (registered in July 2015 or after), you need to obtain your five credit hours of continuing education by the time of your 2017, and all future, renewals.

If you registered *before* July 2015, you must have your five credit hours by the time of your 2019 renewal.

If you registered from April 2016 through December 2016, you must obtain your five credit hours by the time of your 2018 renewal.

If you registered from January 2016 through March 2016, you must obtain your five credit hours by the

*see EDUCATION...page 14*

## WHEN DO YOU HAVE TO HAVE YOUR CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS?

Your most recent  
contractor registration

Credit hours  
required

Date  
required by

New contractor - registered in July 2015

5

All 2017 and future renewals

Registered before July 2015

5

2019 renewal

April 2016 through December 2016

5

2018 renewal

\*January 2016 - March 2016

5

2020 renewal

\*Education credits won't meet the requirements if they are obtained *more than 2 years* prior to your registration renewal.

*This Old House in Rhode Island*

## Sweenor-built 'Idea House' debuts



This Old House's 2017 Idea House, "The Beach House at East Matunuck," was the scene as hundreds of visitors toured during an open house on August 5th. General contractor for the project was Rhode Island Builders Association member Sweenor Builders. Visitors came from as far away as Maine and Pennsylvania.

*Story on page 9.*



# RIBA Golf Classic set for Oct. 16

*All net proceeds to benefit RIBA's charity, Builders Helping Heroes*

**WHEN:** Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, registration and lunch 11 to 11:45 a.m. Modified scramble will be at noon. Dinner, awards and raffle prizes will be a 6 p.m.

**WHERE:** Wannamoisett Country Club, Rumford Country Club, 96 Hoyt Ave., Rumford, RI 02916

**COST AND DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** \$185 per person

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Robin Barlow at (401) 438-7400 or [rbarlow@ribuilders.org](mailto:rbarlow@ribuilders.org).

It's the Rhode Island Builders Association's 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Classic, to benefit the association's charity, Builders Helping Heroes!

Enjoy a day of great golf, fine food and valuable networking at one of the state's most beautiful courses, designed by Donald Ross. At the same time, support RIBA's non-profit work to help wounded veterans and their families.

Cart, greens fees, lunch, dinner and a raffle ticket are included

in the full registration fee. There will be prizes for first, second, third and last-place teams, along with awards for longest drive and closest-to-the-pin on numerous holes.

### Be a sponsor!

Please consider a sponsorship! In doing so you will generate great exposure for your company with tee signs, and you will be mentioned in *The Rhode Island Builder*. Top sponsorships offer you complimentary registrations at the event. *See below.*

In addition, you provide extra direct support for Builders Helping Heroes. Many veterans have returned home with life-altering injuries sustained while defending our country. These young men and women must now relearn skills we take for granted. Their homes are now filled with barriers that make it difficult to complete the simplest tasks. Builders Helping Heroes helps turn these heroes' homes back into places of comfort.

As a sponsor, your generosity enables RIBA to offer our Annual Golf Classic at a reasonable cost, and you help support our Builders Helping Heroes projects.



## The Rhode Island Builder

Official publication of the  
Rhode Island Builders Association  
since 1951

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Vice President..... Timothy A. Stasiunas  
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### The Rhode Island Builder Report

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

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## Golf Classic Sponsorships

### PRESENTING

Includes two complimentary players, nine tee signs, dominant signage at lunch and dinner, hat giveaway and mention in *The Rhode Island Builder* **\$2,000**

### PREMIER

Includes two complimentary players, six tee signs, signs at lunch and dinner and mention in *The Rhode Island Builder* **\$1,000**

### SUPPORTING

Includes one complimentary player, two tee signs, signs at lunch and dinner and mention in *The Rhode Island Builder* **\$500**

### PATRON

Includes two tee signs and mention in *The Rhode Island Builder* **\$300**

### FRIEND

Includes one tee sign and mention in *The Rhode Island Builder* **\$75**

**Contact Robin Barlow**  
**at (401) 438-7400 or [rbarlow@ribuilders.org](mailto:rbarlow@ribuilders.org).**



**The Rhode Island  
Builders Association  
welcomes these new members  
and thanks their sponsors!**

**Builder/Remodeler**

Alex Daluz

**DLS Construction LLC**

448 Hooper St., Tiverton, RI 02878

Sponsor: David A. Caldwell Jr. – Caldwell and Johnson Inc.

Keith Leonard

**Keith's Contractors & Landscaping**

15 School St., Warwick, RI 02889

Sponsor: Carol O'Donnell – CRM Modular Homes

Robert Hohler

**Little Rhody Restorations LLC**

23½ Shippee Schoolhouse Rd., Foster, RI 02825

Sponsor: Steven Gianlorenzo – Gianlorenzo & Sons Const.

Zacarias Hernandez

**ZMH Construction LLC**

42 High St., Cumberland, RI 02864

Sponsor: Timothy A. Stasiunas – The Stasiunas Companies

**Supplier**

John Roy

**Atlas Scaffolding & Equipment Co.**

80 Gilbane St., Warwick, RI 02886

Sponsor: Carol O'Donnell – CRM Modular Homes

**Subcontractor**

Christopher Campagnone

**CJ's Plumbing & Heating Specialists LLC**

81 Indian Run Trail, Smithfield, RI 02917

Sponsor: David A. Caldwell Jr. – Caldwell and Johnson Inc.

Glen Rodrigues

**Construction Maintenance Service Inc.**

P.O. Box 254, Lincoln, RI 02865

Sponsor: Carol O'Donnell – CRM Modular Homes

*see MEMBERS ...page 28*

**DEADLINES FOR THE OCTOBER ISSUE**

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

**Friday, Sept. 1**

**E-mail material to [builder@newriverpress.com](mailto:builder@newriverpress.com)**

**Fax: (401) 356-0913**

[www.ribuilders.org](http://www.ribuilders.org)

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## LOOKING AHEAD!

♦ **September 5<sup>th</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.

 ♦ **September 7<sup>th</sup>: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topic is OSHA Safety Review. *Details on Page 14.*

 ♦ **September 19<sup>th</sup>: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 2.5 Credit Hours** - Topic is Construction Contracts. *Details on Page 19.*

♦ **September 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>: OSHA 10-Hour Course** - 7:30 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](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 19.*

 ♦ **September 26<sup>th</sup>: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topic is OSHA Safety Review. *Details on Page 14.*

♦ **October 3<sup>rd</sup>: RIBA Annual Meeting and Election of Officers** - Quidnessett Country Club, North Kingstown. 6 p.m. Contact Elizabeth Carpenter at (401) 438-7400 or [ecarpenter@ribuilders.org](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org). *Information on page 1.*

 ♦ **October 5<sup>th</sup>: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topics are Confined Spaces, Asbestos Awareness, Mold Awareness. *Details on page 20.*

♦ **October 16<sup>th</sup>: 27<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). Supporting and Premier Sponsors will have exhibit space at the event. *Details on page 2.*

♦ **December 5<sup>th</sup>: RIBA Christmas Party** - Squantum Association, East Providence. *Details TBD.*

**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.

**Visit [RIBAEducates.com](http://RIBAEducates.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 14, 19 and 20), 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

## A development tale from East Williamstown, Rhode Island *An Allegory, Part 2*

*This story is fictional.  
The setting is an imaginary  
municipality. Location: East  
Williamstown Town Hall*

“There are a great many things that must be accomplished, yes,” said Michael Arcanum, director of development in East Williamstown, Rhode Island, “a pro-business town.”

“Of course, I understand,” replied John Publius of Amalgamated Widget and Bearings, which wants to build a new headquarters and manufacturing facility in East Williamstown. “But I was unable to find a flow chart or document on your website that outlines the steps for what we are attempting to achieve. I’m at a loss as to where to begin.”

“Mr. Publius, East Williamstown is a very special and unique place. It would be impossible for us to have any boilerplate, one-size-fits-all process. We treat each applicant as special and unique, to determine the fit for our municipality.”

“That’s admirable, Mr. Arcanum. But how can businesses looking to move or expand in the town move through this process quickly and efficiently if we don’t even know what the process is?”

“The process is quite simple, Mr. Publius. Our stated goal is to encourage harmonious development, environmentally sound neighborhoods and businesses through land-use variety, and the preservation of our unique assets. We have provisions in our zoning and planning ordinances for over 300 types of special-use permits that can be applied for by applicants such as yourself.”

“Three hundred? How do I know where to begin the process?”

“First, you would need to ensure the appropriate environmental regulations are followed,” said Mr. Arcanum.

“Okay, I feel much better now. We are well versed in EPA regulations, and I’m proud to say that Amalgamated is a very environmentally conscious company. We’ve done some preliminary analysis with both EPA and your state Dept. of Environmental Management, and it appears quite clear that our intended use of the site complies well within federal and state environmental regulations.”

“That very well may be the case,” replied Mr. Arcanum. “But we need to also ensure compliance with our municipal environmental regulations, which are in many cases much stricter than state standards.”

“Local regulations? I’ve never heard of local environmental standards, much less local standards stricter than the statewide regulations,” Mr. Publius declared.

“The State of Rhode Island has historically allowed local regulations that exceed the state standard. East Williamstown has a special and unique environment, and we, at the local level, must manage

such things, and not leave a matter so important as environmental regulation merely to the trained scientific experts at DEM who impartially conduct permit reviews,” Mr. Arcanum declared. “Our Planning Board will handle this aspect of the application.”

Mr. Publius was perplexed.

“It seems that trained scientific experts would be the people to do such work, rather than members of a local planning board. Nevertheless, what else would we need to do to move forward for my building permit?”

“Since you are merging the two lots, you will need to go to the Planning Board first.”

“That sounds simple enough. How long will that take?”

“Mr. Publius, your continual reference to speed is not a matter of consideration for East Williamstown. We’ll take all the time necessary to make the best decision for the town. Merging the two lots will be the first issue that needs to be addressed.”

“That should certainly be simple, shouldn’t it?”

“That will depend on a number of factors. Currently, neither lot is zoned for your intended use,” Mr. Arcanum replied,

“But isn’t the current zoning for light industrial/office?”

“Well, yes, Mr. Publius, but that’s only part of the consideration.”

“What other considerations are there besides those?”

“There are many other approvals that must be evaluated as part of the application. First, we need to evaluate the intended use in consonance with the Comprehensive Plan, the Main Road Corridor Visioning Plan, the East Williamstown Economic Development Plan, and the East Williamstown 2050 Plan. And, of course, each step will involve meetings and public comment.”

“I have to confess, Mr. Arcanum, that I’m unfamiliar with all these rules. And I’m unsure about how this is relevant to our desire to build an 80,000 square-foot facility to employ 100 people.”

“It’s my duty to make sure that any new development fits properly into East Williamstown. We can’t just let anyone build anything they want in this town.”

“How does this effect my application?” Mr. Publius asked. “You said East Williamstown is eager to attract businesses! I’m sure that Rhode Island is eager to add businesses that provide good jobs with benefits.”

“We’re definitely interested in attracting businesses here in East Williamstown. But they need to be the right kind of development.”

“How do you know what the right kind of development is, and how does this affect me?”

“A very good question, Mr. Publius. We wouldn’t deign to tell applicants what to propose. It’s a free country. But we definitely know what we don’t want here in East Williamstown.”





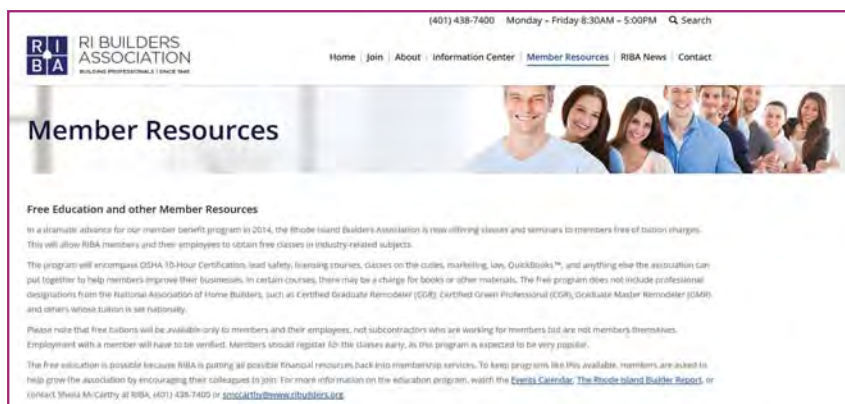
## RIBA wins national honors for recruiting, retention

Membership drives certainly pay off.

The Rhode Island Builders Association's efforts in this direction for the last several years have resulted in the National Grand Award for Numerical, Percentage and Retention increase for membership in 2016. The award is presented by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

"Your association recruited and retained more members than any other state association in Group D!" an NAHB statement said, referring to home builders associations of similar size.

The Grand Awards are given each year to honor one home builders association (HBA) from each group size with the greatest recruiting and retention accomplishments during the previous year. Each winning association is awarded a plaque, as well as acknowledgment by NAHB for its accomplishments.



The Member Resources page from RIBA's website" [RIBuilders.org](http://RIBuilders.org).

RIBA also was to be recognized in communications with the executive officers and at the Association Management Conference (AMC) in August.

## Your best year-long ad venue: RIBA's 2018 Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide

Preparation for the Rhode Island Builders Association's 2018 *Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide* is about to begin, and members will soon receive a survey form to confirm the accuracy of their information for RIBA's use in the printed *Directory* and the online directory at [RIBAlist.com](http://RIBAlist.com).

For additional information, contact Elizabeth Carpenter at (401) 438-7400.

### Advertising campaign under way

Members also will receive a mailing from RIBA with information about advertising in the 2018 *Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide*. There's no better venue to showcase your business to an enormous audience, including contractors and the general public.

The low advertising rates remain the same as last year.

The *Directory* will be printed, and distribution will begin, before the ever-expanding Rhode Island Home Show, now including the Garden and Flower Show, and will be an excellent introduction to your business, especially if you are a show exhibitor at the 2018 event.

It will be distributed to thousands of show visitors as well.

Once again, RIBA will have a drawing for one advertiser to win an additional ad: free, full-page and full-color. Any advertiser who has purchased their *Directory* ad by November 1<sup>st</sup> will be eligible for the drawing. The final deadline for *Directory*

AD RATES: 2018 DIRECTORY	
CENTER SPREAD, FULL COLOR	\$2,200
INSIDE COVER, FRONT, FULL COLOR	\$1,925
INSIDE COVER, BACK, FULL COLOR	\$1,925
BACK COVER, FULL COLOR	\$2,200
FULL PAGE, GLOSSY, FULL COLOR	\$1,650
FULL PAGE, GLOSSY, BLACK + ONE COLOR	\$825
FULL PAGE BLACK & WHITE	\$550
HALF PAGE BLACK & WHITE	\$385
ONE-THIRD PAGE BLACK & WHITE	\$330

advertising is November 10<sup>th</sup>.

### Discounts available

RIBA once again offers advertising "package deals" with the *Directory* and the award-winning *Rhode Island Builder* monthly magazine. Advertisers who opt for both publications will earn a 5 percent discount on their total advertising cost.

Use the advertising information package you received from RIBA. Advertising information also is online at [www.NewRiverPress.com/ribaads](http://www.NewRiverPress.com/ribaads), or call Paul or Jonathan Eno at (401) 250-5760, ext. 1.

Logtime member, past Women's Council president**Pauline H. Forlingieri, 89**

Pauline H. Forlingieri, a longtime member of the Rhode Island Builders Association who was active in the former RIBA Women's Council and the Professional Women in Building Council (PWB), passed away on Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, surrounded by her family. She was 89.

Mrs. Forlingieri was president of the Women's Council from 2001-2003, and chaired the Programs and Events Committee until her retirement. She also belonged to the Italian-American Historical Society, the Western Cranston Garden Club, the Bonnet Shores Beach Club, and the Cranston Golf League. She loved the theatre, had a passion for cooking and travel, and loved getting together with her family and friends.

She was a devoted member of Immaculate Conception Church in Cranston. Her favorite charity was the National Down Syndrome Society.

"Pauline was dedicated to helping others, doing charity work, planning all Women's Council programs and events,"



**Pauline H. Forlingieri**  
**PJ's Flooring & Window Fashions**

recalled RIBA Marketing Director Cheryl Boyd. "She was a mentor, friend, and dedicated to the success of PWB. She was very active playing cards and golfing. She loved garden clubs and was a very happy person. She could make anyone smile!"

Mrs. Forlingieri was the widow of John Forlingieri. Born in Providence, she was the daughter of the late Rinaldo and Jenny DiBiasio.

She was a co-owner, with her husband, of PJ's Flooring & Window Fashions in East Providence for many years, until their retirement. PJ's joined RIBA in 1993.

Mrs. Forlingieri is survived by daughters Deborah DeCristofaro, a RIBA member who owns DeCristo Designs; Cheryl Celeste, and Kimberly Ferro, all of Cranston. Mrs. Forlingieri also leaves two sisters, seven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her siblings Ernest, Anthony and Anita DiBiasio.

Her funeral took place on July 27<sup>th</sup>. 

**The Rhode Island Builders Association thanks these Andersen® Excellence Dealers for being prime sponsors of our support for career and technical education in Rhode Island in 2017.**

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## Member Profile: Tim Stasiunas of The Stasiunas Companies

# Born to be a builder!

By Paul F. Eno Editor

Whether because of his dad, financial necessity or sheer inclination, Tim Stasiunas was born to be a builder.

"It seemed like it was always meant to be. I've been involved in the business since I was a kid," says Tim, a native of Waterbury, Connecticut, who planted his flag in Charlestown when he was 13 and never looked back.

"My father was a siding contractor in Waterbury, and I often went to jobsites with him after school. But my folks had a summer place in Charlestown, and we moved there just in time for me to go to high school."

Tim not only attended Chariho High School but also enrolled in its celebrated career and technical program, where he studied electronics. From Chariho, Tim entered the mechanical engineering program at the Community College of Rhode Island.

"During that time, I found I had a knack for carpentry. So, from about 1978 on, I did carpentry to support myself," Tim recalls.

It didn't take him long to realize that he could make a lot more money in the construction trades than he could in engineering.

"With engineering, I'd have to travel to get a job. With the construction trades, there was plenty of work right here," he says. "And my projects got bigger and bigger."

Tim had worked for himself all this time and, by 1980, he decided to branch out. With a friend, he founded Wakefield Floor Covering.

"That's when I joined the Rhode Island Builders Association, in 1981. To tell you the truth, I needed to join so I could get health insurance through the group," Tim says.

Tim and his partner sold the floor-covering store in 1999, and Tim went into construction full-time, becoming a full-fledged RIBA builder member.

"One thing led to another, and my business got bigger and bigger. There were additions, then spec houses in the mid-1980s," Tim remembers. "It was a busy time. You couldn't get site guys, you couldn't get form guys.... So, we ended up buying all our own equipment, and we learned to do everything ourselves."

When the economy tanked in the early 1990s, Tim continued



Tim Stasiunas

to expand his operation, but by working for other people.

"Everything kind of snowballed into what The Stasiunas Companies are today."

Specifically, that's anything to do with building and developing, including excavation and onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS). Today, there's still some spec building, but Tim concentrates a great deal on working with customers and pre-selling homes. His latest project is the 56-unit Village Farm in Charlestown, "Our New Neighborhood Where You Can Walk to Anything!"

It's one-stop shopping at The Stasiunas Companies, where there are now seven employees, and success has led Tim into some busy "extracurricular activities."

"Back in mid '80s, it made sense to get my (septic system) designer and installers licenses. Back then, as I said, you couldn't get anybody to your jobsite without a long wait, so you had to rely on yourself."

As OWTS technology changed in the mid '90s, people in the know were talking about alternative systems.

"I'd been involved with guys at DEM, and I did alternative systems for, among other people, the late Joe Frisella, PE, an active and prominent RIBA member. Joe got me involved with the Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM) and its Technical Review Committee (TRC) in 1996."

TRC had to approve alternative technologies before use.

As current vice president of RIBA, a longtime member of the Board of Directors and co-chairman of the Environmental Committee, Tim is involved with these issues to this day.

"Larger projects like Village Farm have been real learning experiences," Tim states. "I started planning that in 2004, and it took five years to get approvals! But I got a real education in bureaucracy. I saw how slowly the wheels turn within our state system, how one agency can impede another, and I got the municipal angle. I saw how the costs that mount up will lead to unaffordability."

A firm believer in giving back to the community – the entire human community – Tim is active in a very unusual charity. He goes to Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, several times a year on behalf of a Richmond-based not-for-profit group, Helping Haiti's Orphans (HHO).

"The founding members and the directors (of HHO) have had a ministry in Haiti since before the 2010 earthquake. The mission on my December trip was to follow up on the hurricane that devastated the country."

"If you're in business and successful, it's important to give back to the community. Haiti is outside the community we usually think of, but we can still do a lot locally too. If you're blessed with good fortune, you should share it."

### ***The Stasiunas Companies***

***President: Timothy A. Stasiunas***

***RIBA member since: 1993***

***Focus: Land development and construction***

***Serves: Southern New England***

***Founded: Evolved since 1978***

***Based: Charlestown, Rhode Island***



## This Old House in Rhode Island

# Sweenor Builders showcased as 2017 'Idea House' debuts

Visitors come from as far away as Maine and Pennsylvania.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Hundreds of visitors turned out to visit a new home on a quiet *cul-de-sac* in South Kingstown on August 5<sup>th</sup>. The big draw: This is the “2017 Idea House” from *This Old House*. And it was built by none other than Sweenor Builders, a longtime member of the Rhode Island Builders Association.

Every year, *This Old House* teams up with popular home-improvement brands to build an Idea House.

“Our 2017 Beach House at East Matunuck...will give you some serious summer goals!” said Claudia Jepsen, *This Old House* spokeswoman.

### *A traditional beach home*

The Idea House is a 3,200 square-foot, three-story, shingle-style home that very much fits the look of a traditional, high-end Rhode Island beach house. The house boasts a deck, a wraparound porch, a patio and an outdoor shower. Inside, there’s an open floor plan and three bedrooms, including a ground-floor master suite, a game room and a study.

The combination laundry and mudroom even includes a dog-washing station

“This year, we’re excited to be partnering with Union Studio Architecture and Community Design, Sweenor Builders, and Denise Enright Interior Design for our 2017 Idea House. We’re incorporating smart-home tech, weather-resistant, energy-efficient

*see IDEA HOUSE ...page 29*



On August 5<sup>th</sup>, visitors from as far away as Maine and Pennsylvania tour This Old House's 2017 Idea House in Matunuck, built by Sweenor Builders.





## Member News



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**RCWPJOBS.COM**

## Statewide Planning offers tour of American Tourister mixed-use project in Warren

Want to learn more about mixed-use developments?

You'll have a chance on Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, as the Division of Statewide Planning offers a tour of the American Tourister mixed-use development project in Warren from 2 to 4 p.m.

"We'll talk to the project's developer about the challenges and opportunities of redeveloping a large mill building, and hear from the town planner about this and other economic development efforts underway in Warren," a statement from the division said.

Development partners, including Brady Sullivan Properties of Manchester, New Hampshire, and Boston-based Starr Development, bought the 14-acre riverfront site in Warren's Waterfront Historic District in March 2013 for \$2.6 million.

The former American Tourister factory, a mill complex built in 1896, has five primary buildings. Plans call for renovating three of the buildings, demolishing two, and constructing one new apartment building. Phase one of the project will create 190 apartments on the upper floors of the main building, with 89,000 square feet of the ground floor converted for commercial use.

For more information or to register for the tour, contact Benny. Bergantino@doa.ri.gov.



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## Members receive discounted exhibit space

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Fall is just about upon us, so it's high time to start planning your participation in the Rhode Island Builders Association's premier marketing event of the year: The Rhode Island Home Show in the spring!



Since 1948, RIBA has presented this landmark regional event, which today takes place every Spring at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence.

The Home Show is attended by thousands of your potential customers from all over southern New England, all interested in building or buying a new home, or in remodeling or deco-

rating their existing homes.

Hundreds of companies have exhibited their products and services, and have met thousands of new clients, at the Home Show. RIBA members who exhibit receive a 5 percent discount on booth rates!

### **Garden & Flower Show Now Included**

As of 2017, the Home Show now incorporates the Rhode Island


Garden and Flower Show. That, along with many other new and exciting attractions, has drawn more and more visitors, many of whom need your products or services.

Attractions in recent years have included The Home Technology Experience; the 12-room Designers Show House, Landscape Solution Centers, a solar-powered greenhouse, a Kitchen and Bath Showcase, and the Energy Expo. There are myriad demonstrations and seminars, from cooking to art and furniture, to interest visitors.

There are new attractions every year.

RIBA offers help with exhibit design, and there's a special section for members who would like to just "get their feet wet" and exhibit for a day or two rather than for all four days.

As an added bonus, you can meet and greet your future employees. Under the eyes of their instructors and trade professionals, hundreds of career and technical education (CTE) students of all trades (*Related story on page 12*) engage with the show. They not only build many of the primary attractions, but they also serve as guides during the event.

It's not too soon to start planning your exhibit at the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Home Show in 2018. Visit [RIBAHomeshow.com](http://RIBAHomeshow.com) for information, or call Under Home Show – the last sentence should be changed to...for more information, call Bob Yoffe at 800-963-3395. 

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# CTE students in Woonsocket spend summer remodeling at school

One project: Preparing facility to enter P-Tech program, where students will earn an associate's degree upon graduation.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

The “lazy days of summer” might be down on the beach at Narragansett or Matunuck, but they’re nowhere to be seen up north, at the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center (WACTC).

On a hot July 18<sup>th</sup>, *The Rhode Island Builder* found 12 WACTC students at the school, building a new lumber shed, doing landscaping, and painting and otherwise preparing their school for the forthcoming academic year. The year will be highlighted by WACTC’s entry into the Pathways in Technology Early College High School Initiative (P-Tech), beginning this fall.

WACTC will join the Providence Career and Technical Academy, Rogers High School in Newport, and Westerly High School, the only current P-Tech schools in Rhode Island. North Providence High School also joins P-Tech this fall.

P-Tech involvement is coordinated through the Rhode Island Commerce Corp. The program creates long-term partnerships between high schools, colleges, industry associations and businesses to provide students with the education and skills they need to succeed and get jobs. It provides employers with a pipeline to their future workforce.

Students enrolled in P-Tech take college-level courses while in high school, benefit from internships and mentoring, and graduate with a high school diploma and an industry-approved associate’s degree. According to the P-Tech plan, businesses that partner with the initiative help design the program and ensure that changing industry needs are addressed in the curriculum. Meanwhile:

“Our construction technology students are working here at the school as part of an annual paid internship program,” WACTC Instructor Charles Myers told us. “There are 12 to 14 students participating on any given day.”

Part of the summer’s work is to prepare two rooms that will be the center for the P-Tech program at WACTC. The students receive academic credit, along with job experience and hands-on training. As they work, students are supervised by Mr. Myers and WACTC Instructor William Esser.

Another student summer project is rebuilding the lumber-storage shed inside the construction technology workshop.

“They began tearing down the old shed in mid-July,” Mr. Myers said. “They’ll be enclosing a new area that will have true lumber racks. This will increase our storage capacity and take up less floor space.”



***These students at the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center spent their summer in a paid internship that not only prepared the school to enter the P-Tech program but earned them academic credit as well. Instructors William Esser (far left) and Charles Myers (far right) supervised the students.***

Across the hall, students had already cleaned and painted the classrooms that will be used for P-Tech: a larger room for classes and a smaller one for conferences and break-outs.

“Students are also renovating the teachers’ lounge, which will be a little smaller, along with painting the hallways. There is a lot to do!” Mr. Myers added.

Assistant Principal William Webb, director of WACTC, was just as enthusiastic about P-Tech.

“What it means for our students is that they’ll come into ninth grade, then earn an associate’s degree by the time they leave high school,” Mr. Webb said. “The idea is to create and condense learning opportunities the student normally wouldn’t have in high school.”

College credits will be earned through the Community College of Rhode Island, and will be transferable to senior colleges, according to Mr. Webb.

“P-Tech is a pathway for 50-54 students coming into WACTC this fall. They will be working in a cohort,” he added. “They’ll take their English, math and workplace learning, and probably their science, together, all the years they’re here.”

In education terms, a cohort is a group of students working toward the same specific goal at the same time.

“There will also be periods open, so individual students can participate in other academic interests, band or similar activities. And our construction students have done an awesome job prepping our facility. I don’t think we could have hired a contractor who would have done such a great job!”

Find out more about P-Tech at [Commerceri.com/ptech/](http://Commerceri.com/ptech/).



Some 14 construction technology students worked at their school, the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center (WACTC), in Woonsocket, this summer. They were part of a paid internship program that earned them academic credit and jobsite experience, and renovated parts of the school to improve their own workshop and to prepare for WACTC's entrance into the Pathways in Technology Early College High School Initiative (P-Tech) this fall. Here, Kyle Khamvongsa helps rebuild the lumber storage area in July.

Also working on the lumber storage area are Lewis Morena and Steven Rogers.



WACTC students work on the building exterior. Other students did landscaping, and renovated and painted the rooms that will form the heart of the P-Tech program.



The result: As August began, students had finished renovating the new heart of the P-Tech program at WACTC.

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## Continuing Education for Contractors

*Courses headlined in **RED** on the Education Pages qualify for state-mandated continuing education requirements. See the chart on page 1 to find out when you must fulfill your continuing education requirements.*

### **EDUCATION**...from page 1

time of your 2020 renewal.

"There has been some confusion about when contractors have to fulfill these requirements. At RIBA, we're here to help members understand the requirements and fulfill them," said RIBA Executive Director John Marcantonio.

RIBA offers all the courses you need to fulfill the requirements. If you have further questions, and for information about all RIBA classes, contact Sheila McCarthy at RIBA, [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org) or (401) 438-7400.

### Online courses available

Education is always a headliner at the Rhode Island Builders Association, but especially in September, when RIBA's education program unveils fully-functional online courses, all of which fulfill the state-mandated continuing education requirements for contractors.

The association's on-site course schedule continues to grow as well, with courses FREE of tuition charges for members and their employees. *See complete information on pages 14, 19 and 20.*

RIBA will soon mail information about the online courses, which can be found at [RIBAEducates.com](http://RIBAEducates.com), and how members in good standing, and their employees, can also take these courses FREE of tuition charges.

The mailing will include a coupon code for members to take the courses, and will include easy, three-step instructions to get started. For non-members, there will be a charge of \$12 per credit hour.

### What courses are offered online?

Courses do, or soon will, include: Fall Protection, Scaffold Safety, Workplace Safety, Confined Spaces, and Ladder Safety.

Visit [www.RIBAEducates.com](http://www.RIBAEducates.com) for further details or contact Ms. McCarthy at (401) 438-7400 or [smccarthy@ribuilders.org](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org) with any questions.



## Five Credit Hours: OSHA

## Safety Review

***September 7<sup>th</sup> & September 26<sup>th</sup>***

**WHEN:** Thursday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, and Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>, 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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

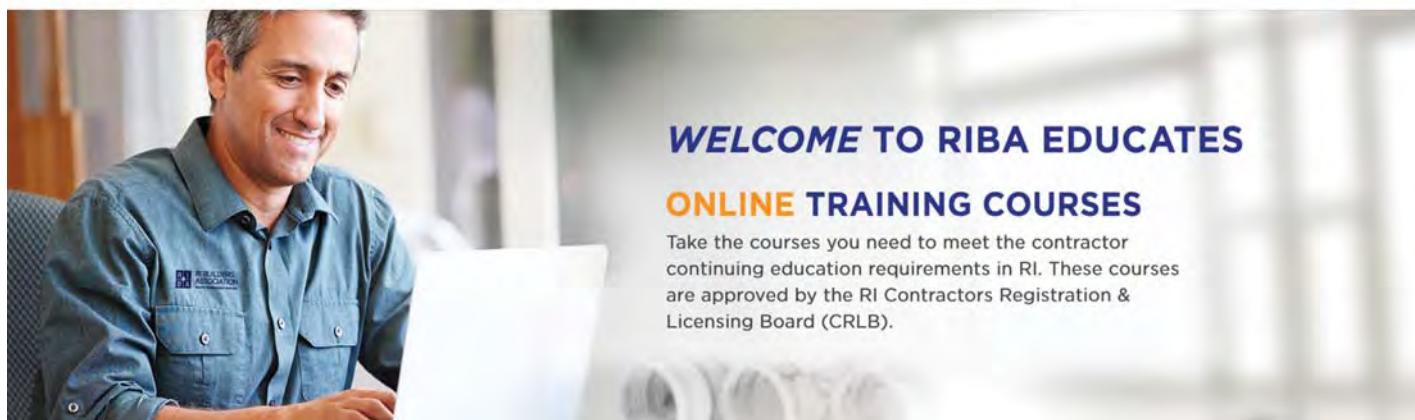
**COST:** FREE for members and their employees, with a \$15 materials/registration fee. A \$150 charge for non-members and a \$15 materials/registration fee.

**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](mailto:smccarthy@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400.

Join instructor Scott Asprey 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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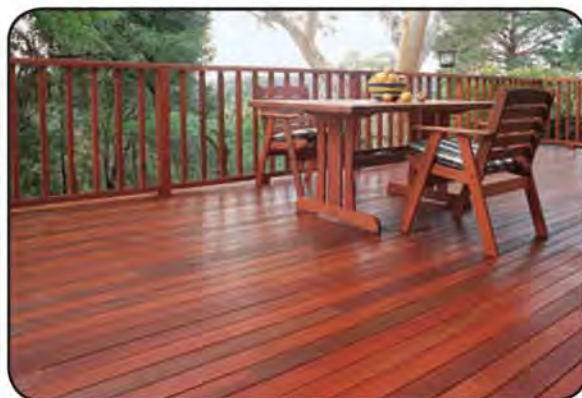
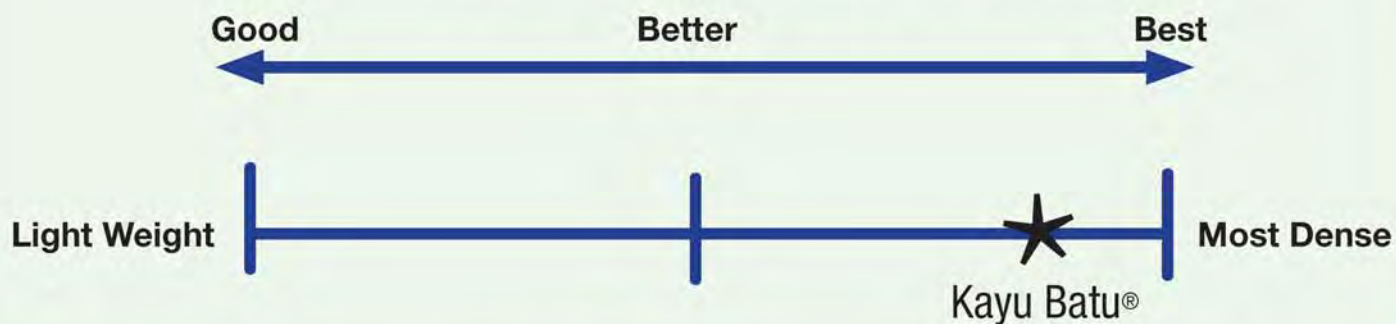


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## Two and a half Credit Hours: Construction Contracts September 19<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 5-7:30 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. \$75 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:

- The basic elements of a contract,
- Mediation/arbitration,
- Insurance requirements,
- Warranties, as well as other relevant topics.

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.

Refreshments will be served





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## OSHA-10 Course September 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>

**WHEN:** Thursday and Friday, September 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 8 a.m. to 1:30 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. This requirement includes "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.



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June 2016

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## Five Credit Hours: Confined Spaces, Asbestos, Mold October 5<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pky #301, East Providence 02914  
**COST:** FREE for members and their employees, with 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](mailto: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.

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



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### NOTICE TO MEMBERS ON RIBA CLASSES AND SEMINARS

*The Rhode Island Builders Association reserves the right to limit the number of attendees from a single company at courses taught on-site. For all courses, employees must provide proof of employment with a member company upon registration for class to be free of tuition charges.*

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# 'Time-table' law will cut permit times, lower cost of construction in R.I.



**Steven Carlino**

Whether you've been a builder or developer in Rhode Island for five years or for 50, you know that one of the most expensive factors when it comes to adding cost to a home purchase is the time it takes for applications to be acted on.

Thanks to legislators who know that housing is the key to a good economy, and backed by the Rhode Island Builders Association, several laws important to our industry were enacted during the 2017 General Assembly session. Top among

these was an amendment to the subdivision enabling law that shortens the time periods allowed for municipal decisions on major land developments and subdivisions, including certifications, decision-making and recording of those decisions.

Applications for master and preliminary plans must now be certified as complete or incomplete, in writing, within 25 days, as opposed to the previous 60 days. In addition, decisions on

these master and preliminary plans must now be made within 90 days, as opposed to the previous 120 days, unless the applicant agrees to a longer period.

Taking a look at the numbers, we see that this legislative action alone can cut over 100 days off the planning process for major developments and subdivisions. This is a good step toward easing Rhode Island's affordable housing crisis.

We thank the Senate sponsors who have helped make this possible: Majority Leader Michael McCaffrey (D-Warwick) and Sen. Stephen Archambault (D-Smithfield, North Providence, Johnston).

In the House, we thank Majority Leader K. Joseph Shekarchi (D-Warwick), along with Reps. Evan Shanley (D-Warwick), David Bennett (D-Warwick), Raymond Hull (D-Providence, North Providence), and Deputy Speaker Charlene Lima (D-Cranston, Providence).



**Roland J. Fiore**

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# E-Permitting in R.I. seen as national model

Two state agencies and 15 municipalities are now in the system.

By Paul F. Eno Editor

E-permitting has now expanded to two state agencies and 15 municipalities in

Rhode Island. And the whole country is watching.

"The fact is that there is no other permitting software in the country that integrates state and local permitting, and many people around the country are watching it to see whether they can do it," Elizabeth Tanner, executive vice president of client services

at the Rhode Island Commerce Corp. told *The Rhode Island Builder*.

Far from seeing pushback from municipalities, communities have been enthusiastic about getting in on e-permitting since day one, according to Ms. Tanner.

## Making the tweaks

Sandy Furtado, the state's interdepartmental project manager, is riding shotgun on the technical side of the e-permitting program, especially when it comes to working out the glitches.

"We started with Phase One, the pilot program early in 2016," Ms. Furtado said. "Communities lined up to be part of the pilot program, and by the end of June this year we had two state agencies (the Building Commission and the Fire Marshall), along with 11 municipalities, in the e-permitting system."

Ms. Furtado and her team then began customizing the system, based on feedback from homeowners, contractors and the municipalities that were using it.

By the end of July, the number of communities in the system had risen to 15: Central Falls, Cranston, Hopkinton, Newport, North Kingstown, North Providence, North Smithfield, Pawtucket, Providence, Richmond, Smithfield, Warwick, Westerly, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

Up to 16 more communities are expected to join the system by the end of 2017, according to Ms. Tanner.

As reported in prior issues of *The Rhode Island Builder*, reactions to the e-permitting system from members of the Rhode Island Builders Association have been generally positive. RIBA welcomes further comments.

## A national first

"We certainly have found and fixed glitches," said Ms. Furtado. "The original software platform wasn't built to accommodate state and municipal permitting integration, so that had to be worked out. We are the first state to integrate state and local permitting," she said.

"We work out the kinks in the platform and build it the way we need it for Rhode

see E-PERMITTING ...page 29

# R.I. Building Code changes are minor but many

By Paul F. Eno Editor

A number of minor changes to the International Residential Code (IRC), as applied in Rhode Island, are expected to be implemented soon. That's the news from Robert E. DeBlois Jr., chairman of the State Building Code Standards Committee (BCSC).



Robert E. DeBlois

"These changes are now pending approval before the Office of Regulatory Reform (ORR). If they pass muster with ORR, we will hold public hearings and take comment," Mr. DeBlois said. "Nothing can be considered a major change, but there are many small items, and contractors might want to be aware of them in advance."

Among the changes:

- Any door between the living area of a house and an attached garage will have to have a self-closing device.

This provision has been in the IRC for many years, but the BCSC exempted Rhode Island contractors from it. Such exemptions are known as "blue pages."

"The blue page on that provision has now been eliminated," Mr. DeBlois explained. "Complying is as simple as installing a spring mechanism on these doors."

- Some height requirements for interior spaces will change. For all habitable spaces, the required height would be reduced to 7' (from 7'6"). Bathrooms may be 6'8" (re-

duced from 7'). Habitable basements still would have a 7' ceiling requirement, but with 6'4" beneath beams and ducts.

- Oddly enough, bathrooms will no longer require doors for privacy, though Mr. DeBlois is skeptical that anyone will take advantage of this.

- There will no longer be a 2" step requirement between garage floors and home living spaces, though the garage floor still must be sloped.

- Residential elevators and platform lifts will no longer have to comply with the Rhode Island Elevator Code but with the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) standards. This will affect installations in the homes of some disabled people, and at raised homes in flood zones where elevators are required for ingress and egress.

- The code provision preventing water drainage across adjacent property will be eliminated. This has been in the IRC, and the BCSC is eliminating the blue page.

- There are new tables and charts regarding decks, for joists, beams and posts.

"We're trying to comply with the IRC as much as possible. So anytime it's more liberal than our state code, we try to tweak our own code," Mr. DeBlois said.

Watch *The Rhode Island Builder* for more details as this issue develops.



# Housing shortage worsens in R.I. and the nation

The solution is local, according to *Politico*. Washington's usual housing boosts can do little to help.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

You can find real estate agents, and you can get mortgages. But good luck finding a place to live – at least one you can afford.

The housing shortage, not only in Rhode Island but nationally, is getting more and more attention as President Donald Trump calls for restoring the American Dream.

“More housing supply is needed in Rhode Island, now and in the near future, to accommodate the state’s growing millennial and senior populations, members of the Senate Committee on Housing & Municipal Government were told Wednesday,” declared a May 24<sup>th</sup> lead in the *Providence*

*Journal*.

The article went on to describe testimony by Rhode Island Housing Executive Director Barbara Fields and HousingWorks RI at Roger Williams University Director Brenda Clement, in which they presented findings from their own 2016 studies. The conclusion: at least 3,500 new housing units per year must be completed in order to fill Rhode Island’s projected housing needs through 2025.

With less than 1,000 single-family building permits being issued each year in Rhode Island to this point, that goal seems like a distant dream. The seven-part “Barriers to Building” series, published in *The Rhode Island Builder* earlier this year, outlined in detail the prime causes of the housing shortage and the current lag in production.

Foremost among the culprits are high construction costs exacerbated by over-

regulation, long wait times for approvals, and local anti-growth sentiment. These factors help make affordable housing scarce and expensive.

Rhode Island’s housing situation is an especially bad example of a national problem.

## *Washington can’t solve this crisis*

“Donald Trump campaigned on restoring the American dream...but Trump faces a unique challenge delivering on that promise: The country is in the grip of a new kind of housing crisis that Washington has virtually no power to solve.”

So said a July 7<sup>th</sup> article in *Politico*, headlined “Why Washington can’t fix the new housing crisis.”

Just as in Rhode Island, the crisis nation-  
*see CRISIS ...page 28*

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# Carol Grant and Chris Kearns

Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources

*Carol Grant has been commissioner of the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) since June 2016. This followed more than 20 years in operations, strategic human resources, policy, law and communications related to the energy industry. As OER commissioner, Ms. Grant leads policy and planning for Rhode Island's clean-energy programs. Previously, Ms. Grant was a senior vice president at both SunEdison® and First Wind, which recently merged with SunEdison. She also held top executive positions at Textron and NYNEX. She holds a law degree from the University of Michigan.*



*Chris Kearns is the OER's legislative liaison and works on a variety of state energy legislation, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, natural gas and energy security. Prior to working for the OER, Mr. Kearns was Gov. Lincoln Chafee's policy and legislative analyst for transportation, environmental and energy policy matters. He graduated from the University of Rhode Island in 2008 with a bachelor's degree in environmental and economic management.*



**THE BUILDER: What state legislation passed in 2017 that encourages or streamlines the expansion of solar power in Rhode Island?**

**KEARNS:** The General Assembly passed the municipal statewide solar-permit legislation in June, and Gov. Gina Raimondo signed it into law in June. This bill requires the Office of Energy Resources (OER) to establish a statewide solar permit application, through the standard rule-and-regulation process.

The permit application will be developed in coordination with the office of Jack Leyden, state building commissioner, and his team. We plan to have this application ready by November, and it will encompass both code aspects of solar installation: electrical and building.

It will take effect statewide on January 1<sup>st</sup>. All municipalities and all solar installers doing new projects in Rhode Island will then be required to use this statewide solar permit application for all solar projects, whether small-scale, medium-scale or large-scale, residential or commercial.

**THE BUILDER: How does the fee structure work, and who administers the permit application: the state or the municipalities?**

**KEARNS:** The law establishes the permit application that officials at the local level have to use, but we didn't touch the fee aspect. So, the fees are still determined by the municipalities. But, instead of having 39 different building and electrical applications, there will be one, consistent permit application for solar installations.

**THE BUILDER: In communities where e-permitting is available, will this statewide permit application be included in that service?**

**KEARNS:** The ultimate goal is to work with the e-permit team at the Rhode Island Commerce Corp. regarding this solar permit application. So it might not be right out of the gate on January 1<sup>st</sup>, as some municipalities have e-permitting. Other have distinct electrical and building permit processes, and others reference building and electrical permit requirements within their solar siting ordinances. *Related story on page 22.*

So the end game is to have solar permitting part of an e-permitting process within all 39 cities and towns, eventually.

**THE BUILDER: The statewide permit is part of a broader effort to expand solar use in Rhode Island. Does this expansion emphasize residential, commercial or both?**

**KEARNS:** In the whole process, we've agreed that, if we were going to do the statewide solar application, we wanted to have it consistent across the board, and not have different permit processes for residential vs. commercial. So, again, it's a single application for all solar projects, whether it's a 5 kilowatt residential rooftop installation or a 10 megawatt, ground-mount solar array at an industrial site.

I should mention that this legislation was developed in coordination with many different stakeholders, including local code officials, the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), the Rhode Island Builders Association, and the renewable energy industry. When the legislature had hearings on it, there was no opposition.

**THE BUILDER: What's being done to encourage use of Rhode Island (as opposed to out-of-state) solar equipment providers?**

**GRANT:** The good news is: We're seeing the growth of jobs in the solar industry in Rhode Island. As your readers know, we do the

see *INTERVIEW ...next page*



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

Clean Energy Jobs Report every spring ([Energy.ri.gov/cleanjobs](http://Energy.ri.gov/cleanjobs)). This spring we saw growth in all sectors, including solar.

So we feel that all the programs are encouraging the growth of jobs here, and we're now at 15,000 clean-energy jobs. In fact, we're constantly looking at policies and programs that will encourage people to have Rhode Island clean-energy companies start, grow and be sustainable.

This statewide solar permit application is one example of a policy that provides predictability and consistency, and that encourages clean-energy companies to come and establish a base in Rhode Island.

### **THE BUILDER: How are homeowners/business owners responding to overtures to adopt solar power?**

**KEARNS:** It's going very well. We've seen a steady increase in the renewable-energy market, not only from the job creation but in the level of participation. Homeowners and businesses ultimately have two distinct state programs to choose from when leveraging the federal investment tax credit.

One is a grant program, the Renewable Energy Fund ([Energy.ri.gov/renewable/ref/](http://Energy.ri.gov/renewable/ref/)) administered by the Rhode Island Commerce Corp. The other is the National Grid Renewable Energy Growth Program. That's a 15- or 20-year feed-in tariff (tariff is another name for contract), with a revenue stream that's paid to a particular property, whether residential or commercial (<https://www.Nationalgridus.com/RI-Home/Energy-Saving-Programs>).

Homeowners, business, farmers can all benefit from these programs. And we've seen a great increase in participation, especially from homeowners, over the last three years.

### **THE BUILDER: Are there any other financial incentives to going solar?**

**KEARNS:** The primary incentives are the two programs we've mentioned. But the thing to remember is that property owners can choose one of these programs, not both.

There's also the 30 percent federal tax credit that's in place for the next few years, although it does wind down as we approach 2020. In addition, solar equipment is exempt from Rhode Island sales tax.

As it relates to tangible taxes at the local level, we have a statewide formula for all commercial projects that are selling power back to the grid. We're encouraging municipalities to waive tangible taxes on systems that are net-metered; in other words, they're using the power on-site, to reduce their bills.

Finally, in the last legislative session, we clarified that residential solar installations are exempt from tangible taxes at the local level.

Ultimately, all the power feeds back into the grid, and the property owner is credited for that electrical generation. Depending on the state program, they're either credited for future electric bills, as in net-metering.

If it's a feed-in tariff program, it depends. Some customers receive a credit. Others prefer a cash payment. Residential customers can choose a tariff period of 15 or 20 years. Commercial customers have the option of a 20-year tariff for electricity produced by

their solar system.

**THE BUILDER: How do you respond to critics who say things like: "It's too expensive," "Solar technology isn't there yet re: efficiency," "Installing panels will put holes in my roof," or "One good hail storm and the panels will be wrecked...."?**

**KEARNS:** As for the expense, solar arrays can pay for themselves. Right now, the payback period for a residential-scale installation, depending on roof conditions, is from four to seven years. It also depends on your electricity bill in a given month. If your monthly bill is \$50, your payback might be shorter. If your bill is \$100 to \$200, it will increase the payback period.

If you pay off a car loan in three or four years, you have no more payments, and people like that. If you pay off the solar system in four to seven years, that system is operational for 20 to 25 years. Most people would consider that a good return on investment.

### **THE BUILDER: Sure, but what about the other objections we mentioned?**

**KEARNS:** That comes down to property owners doing their homework. They should get multiple quotes, from different solar companies. They need to evaluate each company's track record. And what warranties they offer.

Most installations we see are properly installed. But, from time to time, there are companies that don't do things properly. Most companies, however, will go look at the roof, check the conditions, the attic and all other relevant factors before doing the job.

**GRANT:** We have talked about this in previous interviews, but I also see more and more people using these systems. The skeptics will certainly have friends whose solar systems have survived long winters and heavy storms. These systems are very hardy. As they're used more in our climate, people become more confident in their effectiveness and durability.

**KEARNS:** It's worth getting a few bids from reputable contractors. People can save \$100 to \$150 on their monthly electricity costs.

### **THE BUILDER: On that theme, what feedback have you had from people who have "gone solar," especially from the Solarize R.I. local programs?**

**KEARNS:** The most distinct thing we're seeing is based on the newest technologies and apps. The reaction we get from homeowners who pull up their systems on apps (available from most solar companies) is very positive.

With the apps, they can see the rate of solar generation, and it becomes a bragging tool! They know they'll have a low electricity bill under one scenario. Under the feed-in tariff program with National Grid, they know they'll get a monthly check from the utility for whatever they feed back into the grid.

You might be on vacation, you check your app, and your meter is running backwards. That's a positive experience with this new dynamic.

Ultimately, it comes down to the net fiscal impact. When home-

*see SOLAR...next page*

## Need skilled employees?

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One of the toughest challenges faced by any contractor today is finding properly trained workers with the right skills and work ethic. In Rhode Island, your best bet for finding these workers is the online Jobs Bank at RCWPJobs.com!


More employers and more job candidates are discovering this online solution. In fact, the numbers continue to trend upward at the Jobs Bank, and there were signs in August that the number of job seekers' resumes and the jobs available were continuing to even out.

As of August 4<sup>th</sup>, 571 employers were registered at RCWPJobs.com, a big jump from 559 in July, 554 in early June, 548 in May, 545 in April and 537 in March. There were 274 job candidates registered (up from 267 in July, 265 in early June, 249 in May, 235 in April and 217 in March). There were 53 jobs posted (compared with 56 in July, 54 in early June, 55 in May, 59 in April and 58 in March), indicating that some job candidates who are available are being hired. There were 68 job seekers' resumes posted on the site, one more than in July.

The Jobs Bank is a tool created by the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP), with the Rhode Island Builders Association as its hub.

"RIBA and RCWP will continue to concentrate on job training,



career and technical education, and to attracting young people to choose our industry in Rhode Island for building a career," said RIBA Marketing Director Cheryl Boyd. For more information, contact Ms. Boyd at (401) 438-7400 or cboyd@ribuilders.org 

## SOLAR...from previous page


owners get that first electricity bill, they see that new line item on what their system has produced. The bill might be cut in half, or it might even have a zero balance.


That's what attracts people to these programs, and those are the reactions we get.

**THE BUILDER:** After they get their solar certifications, how can contractors get involved in, and benefit from, the expansion of solar in R.I. in general and your work in particular?

**KEARNS:** Rhode Island has the Renewable Energy Professional Certificate. RIBA certainly supported that law, which passed in 2014. Two Rhode Island-based companies became the first two holders of that certification, in October that year.

As of June this year, we were approaching 40 companies that were certified. There's a link on the OER website (Energy.ri.gov) that property owners can use to see the list of certified contractors.

We also have stakeholder meetings to bring contractors up to date with any developments in the solar programs and policies. In that regard, I should mention that the governor has signed legislation to extend the Renewable Energy Growth Program to the end of 2029. 




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## ATTENTION RIBA MEMBERS

**The Rhode Island Contractors Registration and Licensing Board (CRLB) is in the process of reviewing and updating its construction standards as well as its rules and regulations.**

Accordingly, CRLB is requesting input from members of the construction industry. If you have any comments or suggestions, you may submit them electronically to the CRLB via their website (CRB.ri.gov) or e-mail them to RIBA Membership Relations Coordinator Elise Geddes (egeddes@ribuilders.org) and she will forward your recommendations to the CRLB.



# R.I. construction wages among highest in the nation, but still lower than neighbors

By Paul F. Eno *Editor  
and National Association of Home Builders*

The mean wage for construction laborers in Rhode Island is \$20.45, 12<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Couple this with the belief of the Rhode Island Dept. of Labor and Training that construction demand in Rhode Island will grow by 14.1 percent by 2024, from base year 2014, and the picture looks pretty rosy for the industry. In fact, all these numbers should translate into roughly 2,887 new construction jobs.

That could be true if critical factors such as the housing shortage are overcome. *Related story on page 23.*

Still, there are many open construction jobs in Rhode Island and nationally, exacerbated by the lack of a skilled workforce. *Related story on page 26.*

Meanwhile, neighboring Massachusetts stands at number three in construction wages nationally, with a mean wage for laborers of: \$25.84

As in Rhode Island, high housing demand in Massachusetts has coupled with tight zoning and land-use restrictions to stifle building and drive up construction costs. Nevertheless, the substantially higher wages can pull skilled workers across the line from the Ocean State.

To our west, Connecticut boasts a construction laborers' mean wage of 21.47, making it the nation's ninth highest, still well ahead of Rhode Island. While Connecticut construction also struggles under over-regulation, there is a high demand for rental housing, and multi-family housing construction is strong.

The higher wages and demand for workers there also can entice workers to leave Rhode Island.

An increase in residential and commercial projects nationally, combined with an aging construction workforce, has resulted in about 200,000 open construction jobs throughout the country, according to the National Association of Home Builders' "Eye on Housing" website.

That's a concern for many employers scrambling to fill existing vacancies and complete projects, according to the NAHB. For job seekers, it's an opportunity.

There is an array of specialty jobs in construction – from laborers to workers who specialize in brickwork, framing, drywall and more. In its report, to provide a snapshot of the market in different parts of the country, NAHB ranked the states by the mean hourly wage for construction laborers, from lowest to highest, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data. A ranking of pay for specialized trade workers may line up a bit differently (and you can look up many of them on the bureau's website for more details) but this offers a big picture.

NAHB also collected news about housing, commercial construction and state economies to provide a look at which states might offer the best job prospects for construction workers.

You might ask: Which state is number one in the nation? Illinois, with a mean construction laborers' wage of \$27.01.

For more information, visit [Eyeonhousing.org/2017/06/construction-job-openings-jump-in-april/](http://Eyeonhousing.org/2017/06/construction-job-openings-jump-in-april/)



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## **CRISIS...from page 23**

ally is a shortage of houses. Across America, “the inventory of homes for sale has been shrinking for 24 straight months, stoking bidding wars for even the lowliest fixer-uppers,” the article, by Pro Financial Services Reporter Lorraine Woellert, stated.

“In January, a measure of supply hit its lowest in history, according to the National Association of Realtors. That scarcity has helped push the homeownership rate to a near 50-year low. As 83 million millennials approach homebuying age, the shortage is expected to get only worse.”

President Trump, himself a second-generation builder, remains optimistic, however, claiming that builders are building again. But his optimism doesn't match the numbers, at least not yet.

In fact, “construction is at an eight-month low and builder optimism is waning,” Ms. Woellert wrote. “There were so few houses for sale in May that buyers pushed prices to a new record high.”

Washington, “which has a century-long track record of goosing the market to encourage buyers,” can provide little help with its mortgage subsidies, tax breaks and artificially low interest rates when there are not enough homes for those buyers to buy.

The gist of the problem: National housing policy has always encouraged home ownership by as many people as possible. But land-use policy is controlled by states, counties and, especially in Rhode Island, municipalities. And, over the past two decades or so, their policy has generally been toward conservation and away from development. These policies are abetted by environmental activists and not-in-my-backyard neighborhood and community leaders.

It seems that the most desirable living areas have the most controls, and

builders who want to fulfill the demand must jump through costly hoops, often with no guarantee that they'll be able to build.


## ***What's the answer?***

“These rules are made at the micro, micro level,” said Harvard economist Edward Glaeser. “The federal ability to override local regulation is really pretty minimal.”

The crisis is only growing, according to *Politico*.

“In job centers large and small, a lack of residential construction is reaching crisis proportions, prompting workers to shun high-cost cities such as Denver and San Francisco for more-affordable living in places like Atlanta and Dallas. It's a historic shift.”

The answer lies squarely in the laps of state legislatures and local governments, according to experts like Sam Khater, deputy chief economist at CoreLogic, a housing data provider. “If we want housing to be more affordable, we need more houses. From a federal perspective, there's nothing being done.”

Read the Politico article at <http://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2017/07/07/housing-crisis-shortage-no-fix-000472>. 



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### IDEA HOUSE...from page 9

materials, and thriving-in-place products and design throughout to create an inspirational coastal home for growing families with plenty of multi-generational visitors."

Jeff Sweenor of Sweenor Builders, based in Wakefield, said that *This Old House* approached him with the idea for the house.

"*This Old House* is involved in new construction, too," Mr. Sweenor explained. "They approached us about this project last summer. We do a lot of work, get a lot of exposure, and we do a pretty good job of promoting ourselves."

The folks from the hit PBS television show, now in its 38<sup>th</sup> season, certainly noticed.

"They said they like the way we do things, and they came to a couple of our jobsites," Mr. Sweenor added. "They said we're consistent with their brand."

So construction began on East Matunuck Farm Drive in January. Work proceeded quickly, and filming for the show began in May with host Kevin O'Connor. The Idea House will feature in several 2017-2018 shows, and it will be highlighted in the October issue of *This Old House* magazine.

Project manager was Bruce Charleson, a longtime RIBA member and a past director. Mr. Sweenor maintains ownership

of the house and will sell it after the production and promotion are complete.

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, *This Old House* plans to unveil the finished house online with photo galleries, videos, a 3D virtual tour, and a sweepstakes for the chance to win prizes from the sponsors and contributors, according to Ms. Jepsen.

Among the RIBA member suppliers involved with the project were Andersen Corp. and Arnold Lumber Co.



### E-PERMITTING...from page 22

Island."

Between months of April and August, all those adjustments were to have been made, she said.

"By the end of August, we will be in good place."

Discussion of a statewide e-permitting system began around 2012, and it took some time to come up with the funding.

"At the end of 2015, Epoint, a vendor out of Boston, was chosen, and it took another six months to get things up and running," said Ms. Tanner. "In June 2016, we started with Fire Marshall's Office and the Building Commission, and we went live."

Visit the Rhode Island E-Permitting Portal at <http://permits.ri.gov/>.



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