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Center Section

**First Networking
Night of 2019 set
for February 28**

The Rhode Island Builders Association will welcome members and guests for refreshments and networking, generously sponsored by Taylor Forest Products.

Page 10

**Get your Home
Show exhibit
space now!**

The clock is ticking! Reserve your exhibit space now for RIBA's 69th Annual Home Show! Members get discounts and design help.

Page 9

**RIBA offers
combined R.I/
Mass. class**

A class fulfilling both Rhode Island and Massachusetts education requirements is set for March 13th and 14th.

Page 14

**We look at
the housing
affordability crisis**

Both nationally and in Rhode Island, there is demand, but potential home buyers are being priced out of the market.

Page 2 and 29

Industry career training program to see huge expansion in 2019

"Exceeding expectations" is the best way to describe the demand for, and the quality of, the Rhode Island Builders Association's current Real Jobs Rhode Island-funded Carpentry Career Training Program.

Based on that success, the program has been given the ability to double in size this year and will expand from two 26-week sessions to four.

In addition, RIBA will branch out to offer electrical and HVAC pre-apprenticeship training programs, and expand the Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) offerings.

"Our career training will expand to meet the demand, but its success will still rely on firms using this resource to grow their workforce," said RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio.

"If you have prospective employees you want to hire, or current employees you want to upskill, you need to call us and get them into the program. You recruit, we



Donald Hamel of Andersen Corp. reviews window components with students during a Carpentry Career Training Program class in Woonsocket on December 11th.

train, you hire! That's the easiest way to sum this up."

Mr. Marcantonio also added: "If you're wondering what your industry colleagues think, the feedback from the current training program has been tremendous!"

Here are some comments from employers who have
see CCTP...page 32

Customized job training now available for individual firms with specialized needs in the industry

If you have current or prospective employees who need training in carpentry, electrical or HVAC, you can benefit by sending them for training in the programs outlined in the above story.

However, if your company focuses on other areas of the residential construction industry that require customized training, RIBA, in collaboration with the state Dept. of Labor and Training and Real Jobs Rhode Island, is now making this specialized training available for individual companies.

To see if your company qualifies, and how a program can be designed to train your prospective employees or upskill your current employees, contact Training Specialist Robin Barlow at RIBA: (401) 438-7400 or rbarlow@ribuilders.org. to discuss this opportunity.

Let's grow your business!



Robin Barlow
Training Specialist



Continuing affordability crisis in R.I. and nationally seen as big issue this year

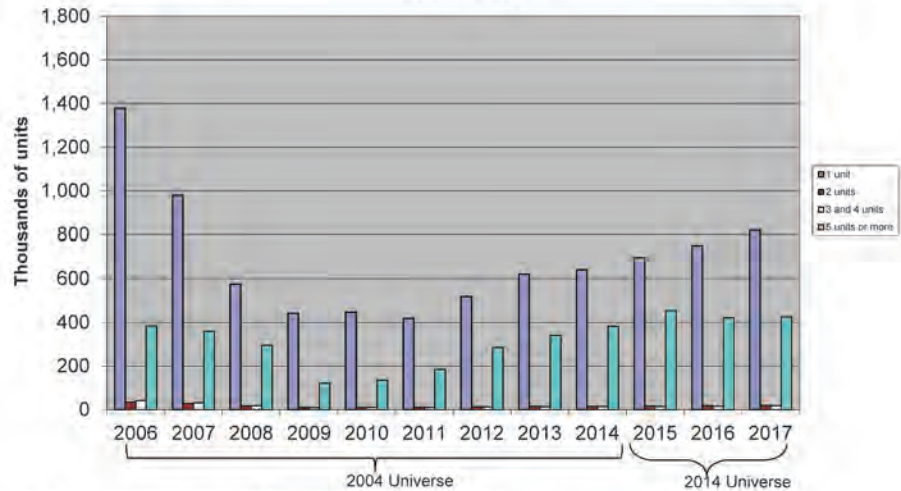
By Paul F. Eno Editor

The housing market nationally will slow down in 2019, not because of low demand but because of high prices caused by lack of supply. That's the prognostication from *USA Today*, at least.

"Forget fevered bidding wars and snap homebuying decisions. Slower and steadier will characterize (the 2019) housing market," wrote Janna Herron, personal finance and real estate reporter, in the national newspaper's December 21st edition.

"That follows a 2018 that started off hot but softened into the fall as buyers - put off by high prices and few choices - sat out rather than paid up," Ms. Herron continued. "Affordability issues will remain a top concern going into 2019, exacerbated by rising mortgage rates."

New Privately-Owned Housing Units by Structure:
2006 - 2017



Source: 2017 Annual Building Permits Survey, <http://www.census.gov/construction/bps/>

Production of housing units is creeping upward from its peak in 2006, but it isn't nearly enough to keep up with demand and make housing attainable, experts say.

At the same time, she predicted that one tough issue the housing industry faced in 2018 will ease, but that more cash-strapped first-timers will be priced out of the market. Meanwhile, some current homeowners will postpone moving up, opting to stay in their existing homes, remodeling instead of buying, she predicted.

"The volume of for-sale homes is expected to rise and diversify, while the number of buyers is forecast to shrink."

Related story on page 29.

Another prognostication is that inventory will rise 10 to 15 percent this year. For this, Ms. Herron cited the opinions of Lawrence Yun, *Forbes* magazine's real estate guru, and Danielle Hale, chief econo-

mist of Realtor.com. But "the increase will be skewed toward the mid-to-high end of the market - houses priced \$250,000 and higher - especially when it comes to newly built houses."

Interestingly, Ms. Herron cites the new attraction of alternative housing, especially for first-timers.

"The volume of shipments for manufactured houses - also known as mobile homes - is expected to finish above 100,000 (for 2018), up from 93,000 in 2017, according to Robert Dietz, chief economist of the National Association of Home Builders. The trend is expected to continue (in 2019)."

Over at MarketWatch, real estate re-
see HOUSING...page 30

The Rhode Island Builder

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since 1951

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President Timothy A. Stasiunas
Vice President..... Carol O'Donnell
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Editor Paul F. Eno

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DEADLINE FOR THE MARCH ISSUE

All copy, ads and photos must be to us by

Friday, February 1

E-mail material to

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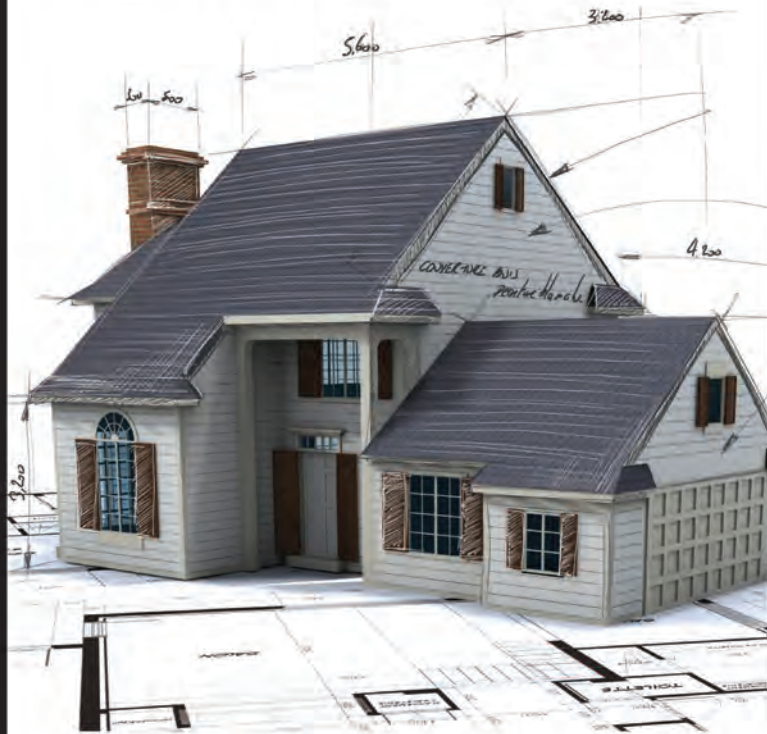
see MEMBERS..page 30

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LOOKING AHEAD!

♦ **February Ongoing: Carpentry Career Training Program, Southern Rhode Island Session** - FREE, 26-week, pre-apprenticeship carpentry training program continues at Chariho Area Career and Technical Center, 459 Switch Rd., Wood River Junction, RI 02894. *Related story on page 1.*

♦ **February Ongoing: Carpentry Career Training Program, Northern Rhode Island Session** - FREE, 26-week, pre-apprenticeship carpentry training program continues at Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center, 400 Aylsworth Ave, Woonsocket, RI 02895. *Related story on page 1.*

♦ **February 7th: 8 Hour Lead-Safe Remodeler/Renovator Course** - 7:45 a.m. to 4 p.m., RIBA Headquarters, East Providence. Course is FREE for members with a \$40 materials/registration fee, \$135 for non-members with a \$40 materials/registration fee. *Details on page 22.*

February 19th: FREE 18-Week Vocational English Language Learners Course Begins - Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island. *Details on page 32.*

February 19th-21st: International Builders Show and National Association of Home Builders Convention - Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nevada. Visit Buildersshow.com for information and to register.

☞ ♦ **February 21st: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topics are Confined Spaces, Asbestos Awareness, Mold Awareness. *Details on page 14.*

♦ **February 28th: Winter Networking Night** - 4:30 to 7 p.m., sponsored by Taylor Forest Products. Rhode Island Builders Association Headquarters, East Providence. FREE for members and their guests. *Details on page 10.*

March 5th: 2019 Trade Show - Sponsored by Riverhead Building Supply, Mystic Marriott Hotel, Groton, Connecticut. *Information on page 29.*

☞ ♦ **March 13th-14th: State-Mandated Continuing Education for Contractors FOR RHODE ISLAND AND MASSACHUSETTS - 12 Credit Hours** - Topic is Energy Codes. This course will provide 12 credits for those who need to fulfill their Massachusetts licensing requirements (renewal every two years). Of the 12 credits, five (presented on March 13th) will count for Rhode Island continuing-education requirements for registration renewal (every two years). *Details on page 14.*

♦ **April - 4th-7th: 69th Annual Rhode Island Home Show, with the Garden & Flower Show** - Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence. *Details on page 9.*

♦ **June 6th: Sixth Annual Networking Barbecue** - 4-7 p.m. at RIBA headquarters. Sponsored by Douglas Lumber, Kitchens & Home Center. FREE for members and non-members thanks to Douglas, but registration is required. For information and to register, contact Elise Geddes at (401) 438-7400 or egeddesribuilders.org. *Watch for details.*

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

♦ Indicates a RIBA-sponsored event.

☞ Designates a course eligible for Rhode Island and/or Massachusetts state-mandated continuing education credits. Contact RIBA for confirmation.
(S) Class will be taught in Spanish.

Take RIBA classes online at RIBAEducat.es.com

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

Online courses include Scaffold Safety, Workplace Safety, Confined Spaces, Ladder Safety and more, each worth one credit hour of state-mandated continuing education. Just as with RIBA's onsite courses (see pages 22-23), online courses are FREE of tuition charges for members and their employees. Just use your coupon at the online checkout.

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



Timothy A. Stasiunas

President's Message

Housing must become attainable in R.I.!

Well, it's already February, and time certainly goes by rapidly!

First a quick mention of our Annual Christmas Party, which took place at the Squantum Association on December 5th. We had a great turnout, and my understanding is that over 160 members and guests attended the event. That level of participation speaks volumes about our organization and the membership support we receive.

But on to my main message. For the past several months I've been jawboning about our affordable-housing crisis and the remedies that could turn it around. Also, I thought it was important to shed some light on just how prevalent the issue is. It's not only here in Rhode Island but across the country as well. *Related stories on pages 2 and 29.*

I was reading the weekly "Monday Morning Briefing" from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). As a Rhode Island Builders Association member, if you're not receiving this e-mail newsletter, contact our office at (401) 438-7400 to find out how you can receive these important updates.

The article I refer to was entitled "Most Americans Cite an Affordability Crisis," and it highlighted a new nationwide survey conducted on behalf of NAHB.

"These poll results confirm what builders from across the nation have been warning about — that housing affordability is an increasingly serious problem in communities across America," NAHB Chairman Randy Noel was quoted as saying.

fordable to low- and moderate-income families."

The poll cut across partisan, regional, demographic and socio-economic lines. Among its key findings:

- 73 percent of all respondents believe that a lack of affordable housing is a problem in the U.S.
- 68 percent believe this is an issue in their state, and 54 percent cite housing affordability as a concern in their own neighborhoods.
- 58 percent said that if they decided to purchase a home in the near future, they would have trouble finding one they could afford in their city or county.
- Breaking down the problem by community types, 68 percent reported a dearth of affordable housing as a problem in urban communities, 64 percent said it was an issue in middle-class neighborhoods, and 56 percent cited a problem in rural areas.

Mr. Noel went on to sum it up: "Housing is vital to the economic health of our nation. This poll should serve as a wake-up call to policymakers at all levels of government to ease regulatory burdens that needlessly drive up the cost of housing, and to enact policies that will encourage the production of badly-needed affordable housing units."

So, as you can see, we in Rhode Island are not alone, but that doesn't make me feel any better here at home. This is just the latest wake-up call for us to push the envelope, together with all parties concerned about putting this issue behind us.

RIA

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Board gives nod to RIBA Business Plan, 2019 budget, new programs

Proposed Safety Program expected to be popular with members.

By Paul F. Eno Editor

More member services, wider recruiting, better use of social media, expanded educational offerings, and much more highlight the Rhode Island Builders Association's Business Plan for 2019, as approved by the Board of Directors on January 8th.

The Business Plan also embraces the growing Home Show/Garden and Flower Show (*related story on page 9*), legislative and political action, workforce development, a new RIBA safety program, and combines several committees.

The Board also approved the RIBA 2019 budget.

Dan Abramson, Northeast regional sales manager for Nortek™, a company actively involved in the 2019 Home Show, offered a presentation on home automation technology.

Job training to expand

RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio presented a detailed report on grants that currently fund some of the association's educational programs and workforce-development efforts, and presented possible paths for future progress.

Mr. Marcantonio encouraged potential employers to visit a class in the ongoing Carpentry Career Training Program (CCTP), now taking place in Richmond and Woonsocket. For information on visiting, contact CCTP Program Manager Cheryl Boyd at (401) 255-5910 or e-mail cboyd@ribuilders.org. *Related stories on page 1.*



The Rhode Island Builders Association's Board of Directors met for the first time in 2019, on January 8th, dealing with a full agenda on the RIBA budget, 2019 Business Plan, legislation, the Home Show and much more.

Home Show plans

Plans for the Home Show/Flower Show also featured in the discussion, and Mr. Marcantonio highlighted new attractions and other developments. *Related story on page 9.*

To promote membership and member businesses, Mr. Marcantonio outlined detailed plans to expand RIBA's presence on social media, especially Instagram™.

Plans for RIBA's new Safety Program are moving forward as well.

"We will have a safety officer who will visit members' jobsites at no charge, to provide the advice you need to lower your mod rate (experience modifier rate, or EMR) and help you lower your workers' compensation premiums," Mr. Marcantonio said.

Committees combined

To increase efficiency and maximize time and effort, several RIBA committees have been combined. The Land Use Committee and Environmental Committee have merged, as have the Legislative Committee and the Build PAC. And the Membership Committee has combined with the Latino Outreach Committee to become the Membership and Outreach Committee. *Related story on next page.*

Mr. Marcantonio also updated the board on the significant progress at the Builders Insurance Group, legislative priorities, political action activities, solar-farm siting, and the progress of statewide freshwater wetlands regulations and overall permitting reform.

The Board approved 11 new members.

RIBA members are invited to attend the public portion of the monthly Board of Directors meetings, which usually take place on the first Tuesday of each month at RIBA's East Providence headquarters.

Please contact Elizabeth Carpenter at (401) 438-7400 or ecarpenter@ribuilders.org for more information.

Home Repair Contractors Needed

The Johnston-North Providence Home Repair Program seeks proposals and qualifications from contractors of all trades. Visit: www.northprovidenceri.gov/purchasing/ for bid package and qualification statement, or call 232-0900, ext. 236. Responses due: 10 am, Tuesday, February 12, 2019. Johnston-North Providence Home Repair welcomes RIBA members' proposals and proposals from veteran, minority and woman-owned enterprises.

Marcano, Leyva head new committee to bring in Latino members

Jose Marcano of Jomar Painting LLC and Jhonny Leyva of Heroica Construction, both members of the Rhode Island Builders Association's Board of Directors, have been named co-chairmen of RIBA's new Membership and Outreach Committee (MOC).

"We are reaching out to more minority contractors, especially in the Latino community," Mr. Leyva said. "We also hope to bring in others who have a relationship with the residential construction industry, such as lenders."

The MOC's first meeting took place at RIBA headquarters on December 5th. Along with Mr. Marcano and Mr. Leyva, in attendance were RIBA Vice President Carol O'Donnell, Immediate Past President David A. Caldwell, Elvis Ruiz, Gonzalo Cuervo, Jasón Hernandez, Maria Takuma, Oscar Mejia, Paola Fernández, Ryan Finnegan, Steven Carlino, Terry Meyer, Tomas Avila, RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio and RIBA Diversity Outreach and Educa-



Jhonny Leyva, left, and Jose Marcano

tion Coordinator Betty Bernal.

Also attending was Rhode Island Secretary of State Nellie Gorbea. Additional MOC members include Margarita Robledo, Sandra Cano, Rep. Shelby Maldonado (D-Central Falls) and Tony Mendez.

Along with members of the RIBA Board, the group included Latino elected officials, business owners and related professionals,

as well as community leaders representing financial institutions.

The initial discussion identified several points:

- The residential construction workforce is changing.
- RIBA needs to become known as the resource for this changing demographic.
- This is especially true when it comes to education and compliance information for new members of the industry in Rhode Island.

• RIBA will use social media and the Latino media in particular to become better known among new members of the industry.

The MOC met again on January 9th and plans to meet monthly.

For more information, contact Mr. Marcantonio at (401) 438-7400, e-mail jmarcantonio@ribuilders.org, or Ms. Bernal at (401) 438-7400, e-mail bbernal@ribuilders.org.



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Professional Women in Building : PWB NEWS



In December, PWB members joined NAWIC No. 1 of R.I. for the Annual Holiday Brunch, held at the Providence Biltmore's Grand Ballroom. Over 160 were in attendance, and an abundance of toys were collected and donated to our local YWCA of R.I. and Children's Friend.



From left to right, Cosimo Delia, Pella Windows; Kris & Melissa Lawson, Lacuna Design; Jose Marciano, Jomar Painting; Carol O'Donnell, CRM Modular Homes; Nellie Gorbea, Secretary of State; Peter DiStefano, Kristin Logo & Rebecca Downing, DiStefano Brothers Construction; Janelle Blakely, Blakely Interior Design.

**Upcoming Events: January 28th – Joint NAWIC Meeting with PMC Media Group
6-8pm RIBA Headquarters – 450 Veterans Memorial Pkwy, East Providence, RI**

February – The Tile Shop – TBD

March – Strategic Planning - TBD

PWB Officers

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

Want to learn more about the PWB?

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

New features will bring the crowds! Get your Home Show exhibit space now



WHEN: Thursday, April 4th, through Sunday, April 7th
WHERE: Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence
FOR INFORMATION & TO EXHIBIT: Contact Bob Yoffe at (800) 963-3395

April isn't far away, and the clock is ticking.

Exhibit space is going fast for the 69th Annual Rhode Island Home Show, the Rhode Island Builders Association's biggest event of the year, so now's the time to reserve your exhibit space if you haven't already done so.

Especially if you're a contractor or supplier, and most especially if you have never exhibited before, here are a few things to think about.

- For years, RIBA's exit surveys have clearly indicated that visitors want to see more contractors exhibiting, so they can meet them and talk with them about construction or remodeling projects they have in mind for the subsequent year.

- Attendance at the Home Show is now back to historic levels, with some 20,000 visitors keeping those turnstiles whirling. The demographics are as strong as in any of the show's 69 years.

- RIBA members have first opportunity as exhibitors, and they get discounts on exhibit space.

- RIBA works with member exhibitors to design a great booth and to make the most of your space.

- Space is going fast, and it's expected that this show will sell out. Even though exhibits have now expanded out into the Convention Center concourse, space is still at a premium. So, make your move now!

- Show attractions for 2019 include a much larger and more interactive home-technology section. Aging-in-place will be the focus for Rhode Island's career and technical education (CTE) students as they plan their exhibit-construction projects for the show. And the popular Energy Expo will highlight zero-net energy for homes.

- In addition, other prime attractions will feature outdoor living

concepts, and there will be plenty of interactive seminars.

- The Flower and Garden Show comes back bigger and better than ever in 2019, with the garden section sponsored by Central Nurseries, and the flower displays sponsored by the Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs.

Nine major show features

"With nine major features, the Flower and Garden Show promises to exceed even last year's amazing display," said RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio.

"Take advantage of this while there's still space available. We expect that it will sell out quickly," Mr. Marcantonio said. "Be aware the Home Show visitors consistently tell us they want to see more contractors and suppliers exhibiting."

Truly, the Home Show is the annual showcase that's been vital for some members of the Rhode Island Builders Association to build their businesses.

So, get your exhibit space now. Call Bob Yoffe at (800) 963-3395 today!






RIBA's Winter Networking Night slated for February 28

WHEN: Thursday, February 28th, 4:30 to 7 p.m.

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

COST: FREE for members and their guests

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

Mark your calendars for the Rhode Island Builders Association's first networking event of 2019, set for Thursday, February 28th, at RIBA headquarters! Taylor Forest Products, a new member, has generously offered to sponsor the evening.

Taylor Forest Products is known for fine exterior cedar, fir and mahogany building products. They also distribute a wide variety of supplies such as PVC trim boards and moldings, composite decking and railings, fiber cement siding, and more.

Stop by the Networking Night to see some samples, pick up some literature, or just say hello and meet Steve Bator and Len Taylor.

The evening is FREE for members and guests. Stop by anytime



Attendees hobnob at a typical Networking Night at Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters.

between 4:30 and 7 p.m. to relax and network with Steve and Len, fellow RIBA members, and the RIBA staff.

The Networking Night is a perfect opportunity to introduce a non-member to the benefits of RIBA membership. If you plan on attending, or if you have questions, please call Elise at 438-7400 or e-mail egeddes@ribuilders.org.

-Elise Geddes

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Member Profile: Carol and Tom Marsocci of ProPaint Plus

Making their company a 'Plus'

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

In the Marsocci family, the building bug skipped a generation.

"Our grandparents were all in the business," says Carol Marsocci, president of ProPaint-Plus Inc., based at the Quonset Business Park in North Kingstown. "But when World War II started, our parents' generation had other things on their minds."

So, when Carol and her husband, Tom Marsocci, became painting contractors, then moved into remodeling as well, they were starting from scratch. That start came in the early 1980s, when Tom was a physical education teacher.

"I was already working in the trade part-time, so we really got serious when I took a paternity leave from teaching in 1988, when our second child was born," Tom recalls.

Getting serious meant incorporating ProPaint, then moving into the business full-time. Carol and Tom always had an interest in building, too, so the company later took on remodeling, to become the ProPaint-Plus we know today.

"We do a lot of remodeling today," Carol reports. "It's about 50 percent painting and 50 percent remodeling."

Of that, 5 to 10 percent is commercial work, according to Carol.

"We developed a philosophy early on: Rather than being a one-time contractor, who zips in and out of a customer's home, we take a 'whole-house-effect' approach. We find out the customer's goals, look at the project, and discuss ways to make it the best it can possibly be," Tom explains.

The company tagline is: "We are more than swinging a brush!"

As members of the U.S. Green Building Council, ProPaint-Plus uses sustainable building concepts to boost energy efficiency.

With its three current employees, the company ranges Rhode



Carol and Tom Marsocci

Island, but most of the work is within a 10-mile radius of its headquarters, much of that in South County. And it's been an interesting 30-plus years.

For example, there was the "full-circle job," as Tom describes it, a commercial project at Seafreeze Ltd., a large fishing company based in Davisville.

"A few years ago, I did a job for them. When I went to check out the site, it turned out I was dealing with a former high school phys-ed student," Tom remembers. "In fact, it turned out that all the people in the fisheries part of the company were former high school students of mine!" he added.

"It was a real buddy-buddy job! They were all great kids in high school 20 years before, and they were great adults!"

It seems that no-one makes more connections than a teacher.

"I had another student who ended up going to Texas and getting into the LNG (liquefied natural gas) business. We

reconnected, and he's having me work on all the rental properties he owns in Narragansett," Tom says.

ProPaint wasted no time in joining the Rhode Island Builders Association, doing so in 1989, within a year of its founding.

"Like many other members, we joined to take advantage of the health insurance and to be part of a professional group," Carol says.

Also like many other RIBA members, ProPaint Plus is working to get full momentum back in the wake not only of the Great Recession but of the high cost of construction in Rhode Island.

"It's a tough climate here," Carol states.

But belonging to RIBA helps a great deal, she adds. Especially as a full-service company today, ProPaint-Plus still takes advantage of the insurance offerings, as well as the classes, tuition-free for members and their employees.

"We can't attend every year, but we've enjoyed networking events, especially the Annual Clambake over the years," Carol notes.

The Marsoccis support RIBA's workforce-development programs as well.

"We want to educate our workforce, guiding people in the construction/painting industry," Tom says.

Carol and Tom have no children who are likely to take over the business, but they have plenty of years ahead, along with lots of determination, experience and confidence, especially in each other.

Find out more at Propaintplus.com.

ProPaint Plus Inc.

President: Carol Marsocci

Vice President: Thomas A. Marsocci Jr.

RIBA member since: 1989

Focus: Painting and Remodeling

Serves: Rhode Island

Founded: 1988

Based: North Kingstown, Rhode Island

Home Repair Program seeks contractors

North Providence's deadline for new contractor applications is February 12th at 10 a.m.

The Towns of North Providence and Johnston are looking for contractors to participate in the Johnston-North Providence Home Repair Program.

That's the word from program spokeswoman Kathy McCabe.

"The Home Repair Program works with area contractors to assist low-and-moderate income families on needed home repairs, code compliance, roofing, furnace or boiler replacement, and handicapped access," Ms. McCabe told *The Rhode Island Builder*.

"Johnston and North Providence are two of many cities and towns in Rhode Island that are using Community Development Block Grant funds, administered by the state Dept. of Commerce's Office of Housing and Community Development, to help make sure residents have safe homes."

Many people this program assists are senior citizens or working families who are struggling to get by, Mayor Charles

A. Lombardi of North Providence has pointed out.

"This program has been a lifeline for local residents," Mayor Lombardi said.

The Home Repair Program provides zero-interest loans that are due upon sale or transfer of the property.

"Senior citizens on fixed incomes often don't have enough funds to make major home repairs, like roof repairs, and the Johnston-North Providence Home Repair Program can help out," Ms. McCabe said.

"Recently, the program aided a single mother with code-compliance issues, and it has helped people save energy with heating-system upgrades and conversions. We work with the Tri-County Community Action Agency and other programs on insulation and heating-related improvements, so residents can get the maximum benefit," she added.

Mayor Joseph Polisena of Johnston urged contractors to apply for work through the program.


"I strongly encourage Rhode Island contractors to submit their qualifications to the Johnston-North Providence Home Repair

Program. I have an enormous amount of faith and trust in Rhode Island contractors, who do great work for our communities," Mayor Polisena said.

Currently, North Providence is updating its list of eligible home-repair contractors, creating opportunities for Rhode Island builders to work on needed small projects. Interested contractors should contact North Providence's purchasing agent, Michael K. Mooney, at (401) 232-0900, ext. 236, or visit the town's purchasing website at www.northprovidenceri/purchasing for details.

Deadline for submittals is February 12th at 10 a.m.

For further information on the Johnston-North Providence Home Repair Program, contact Lou Fabrizio at (401) 231-4000, ext. 4117 or e-mail lfabrizio@johnston-ri.us.

For information on local Community Development Block Grants: For Johnston, contact Thom Deller, Town Planner, at (401) 231-4000, ext. 4021 or e-mail tdeller@johnston-ri.us. For North Providence, contact Ms. McCabe at (617) 549-7985 or e-mail mccabe@plan-do.com. 

Registration is free

RIBOA sets annual Education Expo in March

WHEN: Wednesday, March 20th, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

WHERE: New England Institute of Technology, One New England Tech Boulevard, East Greenwich, RI 02818

COST: Registration is free


FOR INFORMATION & TO REGISTER: Visit RIBOA.net

It's the 9th Annual Expo and Education Fair, sponsored by the Rhode Island Building Officials Association (RIBOA), and there's a great lineup of educational events.

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

Rhode Island Builders Association member Mike Guertin will provide the CRLB certification classes. Once again, topics will include "Deck Construction / Advanced Details" and "Advanced Framing."


The event also will feature over 20 construction-related vendors.

For details and to register, visit RIBOA.net. 

Washington Trust opens branch in North Providence

Washington Trust Co., a longtime member of the Rhode Island Builders Association as a construction lender, has opened a branch in North Providence.

Visit the new branch at 1588 Mineral Spring Avenue or call (401) 473-2921.

Founded in 1800, Washington Trust is considered "America's oldest community bank." 



offers many great networking opportunities!
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nationalgrid UPDATE

with Laura Rodormer



HELIX now allows transfer of home energy info to the MLS

Here's some essential information for your clients.

Increasingly, home buyers are seeking information to better understand the energy-efficient and sustainable components of a potential new home. In fact, according to a recent study by the Shelton Group (<https://sheltongrp.com>), 90 percent of homebuyers – if faced with a choice between two homes – would choose the more efficient one.

Since buying a home is the largest investment most of us will ever make, and energy is the highest cost of home maintenance, it's imperative to make energy attributes readily available to home buyers.

Currently, there is no system in place to automatically transfer energy attributes into the Multiple Listing Service (MLS). Until now. The answer is HELIX.



Home Energy Labeling Information eXchange (HELIX) is a database that automatically populates online real estate listings, including Multiple Listing Service (MLS) or portals like Trulia and Zillow, with home energy information. The energy information is generated from the U.S.

Dept. of Energy's Home Energy Score, Real Estate Systems (RES. NET), Home Energy Rating System (HERS), and other sources when it's available and approved by the seller.

Earlier this year, National Grid – through its EnergyWise Home Energy Assessment program – launched a pilot program to obtain 150 home energy scores. Through this pilot, customers can opt in to share their home energy score, which will appear in the Rhode Island MLS, should the home be listed for sale. The HELIX project team is working with the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) and National Grid with the goal of expanding this to over

8,500 Rhode Island homes annually. All homes participating in National Grid's Residential New Construction Program receive a HERS, which can also be reported through HELIX.

HELIX was designed to take in many kinds of home performance data. Making these data transparent in real estate transactions will not only make the home-buying process easier, but also facilitate energy-code compliance, value solar in the marketplace, and create healthy and comfortable homes.

HELIX is a three-year, grant-funded project. For more information, visit <https://neep.org/initiatives/energy-efficient-buildings/green-real-estate-resources/helix>

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Continuing Education for Contractors

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

Five Credit Hours: Confined Spaces, Asbestos, Mold

February 21st

WHEN: Thursday, February 21st, 7:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

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

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

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

This course will cover: confined spaces, asbestos awareness and mold awareness.

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

Lunch is included.



Twelve Credit Hours: R.I. & Mass. Codes & Safety

March 13th & 14th

WHEN: Wednesday, March 13th and Thursday, March 14th, 7:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

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

COST: Day One (Six Credits) - FREE for members and their employees, with a \$50 materials/registration fee. A \$125 charge for non-members and a \$50 materials/registration fee. **Both Days (Twelve Credits):** FREE for members and their employees, with the \$50 materials/registration fee. A \$225 charge for non-members and the \$50 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.

Massachusetts construction supervisor license renewal.

If participants need only Rhode Island credits, they can take only the first day.

Day One covers home energy and solar equipment basics. Also included will be understanding insulation and stretch codes, insurance, bonds, and workers' compensation.

Day Two covers workplace safety, business practices/workers' compensation, energy codes and lead-safe practices.

The materials/registration fee is only charged once, whether you attend for Day One or both days. Lunch and snacks are included.

Call for further information.



*If there is a class you would like
RIBA to offer, contact
Sheila McCarthy
at (401) 438-7400
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This is a two-day course providing continuing-education credits required for Rhode Island contractor registration renewal and for

Featured Products & Services for February 2019





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Services page to learn more about our Contractor Referral Service, and download our “Tips on Hiring a Contractor or Remodeler” guide. Arnold Lumber has established a base of contractors and remodelers we regularly do business with and feel confident in referring to our customers. Get in touch with us to learn how to become one of those contractors.

Also visit our Online Product Selection Center by category, where you can request a quote. Visit the Project Center and ask an expert. If you can't find a product you are looking for, please give us a call and we will be happy to check availability.

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8 Hour Lead Safe Remodeler/Renovator Course *February 7th*

WHEN: Thursday, February 7th, 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. \$135 for non-members, with \$40 materials/registration fee. Lunch is included.

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

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

Learn everything you need to know to comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule (Lead Paint Removal Training Classes).

This course is required to obtain or renew a Lead Safe Remod-

elers/Renovator certification, which is necessary for work in all pre-1978 buildings. This course covers the EPA's Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) requirements in Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

A written exam is given at the end of the course. A passing grade allows attendees to apply for certification through the Rhode Island Dept. of Health and the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Pre-registration and a photo are required for your certificate. This must be a head shot only. E-mail it to smccarthy@ribuilders.org at least five days before the class.

No admittance to this class will be permitted without paid pre-registration and the required 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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Some experts fear Bay State housing bubble is in the cards

Median home price in Massachusetts is now \$393,101, above national median of \$222,800. Are housing refugees fleeing to Rhode Island?

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

"We need more (housing) production. People want to be in (Massachusetts), but there's nowhere to buy. The problem is there

are no homes for sale."

That was the word from Eric Berman, communications director at the Massachusetts Association of Realtors, as quoted in a recent article by reporter Henry Schwan in *Wickedlocal.com*.

The housing crisis in the Bay State is so severe that some in the industry see history repeating itself in the form of a housing bubble. The median home price in the state hit \$372,000, a new record, in 2016, and is now at \$393,101, miles beyond the 2018 national median home price of \$222,800.

Over the past year, Massachusetts has seen a 6.8 percent increase in home values statewide. Zillow estimates that home values in the Massachusetts housing market will increase an additional 3.8 percent each year for the foreseeable future.

"We have a very competitive market, very high demand and low inventory, said Annie Blatz, president of the Massachusetts Association of Realtors, on a report by New England Cable News (NECN).

"This is different from years in the past, when we had a different economic set of circumstances, when we had high demand and high prices, and also high inventory."

Fears about a housing bubble are surfacing because, with bidding wars and record prices, circumstances are very similar to those of a decade or more ago, just before the last housing bubble burst.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 17,728 residential building permits were issued in Massachusetts in 2017, the latest year for which data were available. The figure is well below what would be expected, given the demand.

Rhode Island faces similar housing circumstances, with rising prices because of high demand and low inventory. But some frustrated Bay State home buyers evidently see their smaller neighbor as a refuge. While there are no hard data on home buyers leaving Massachusetts, there's plenty of circumstantial evidence of housing refugees fleeing to relatively lower-cost Rhode Island border areas such as Woonsocket or Pawtucket.

"I got a real bargain with this house," LaShawn Tolentino, recently arrived from Fall River, Massachusetts, in June 2018, said after paying \$273,000 for a 2,200 square-foot, fully renovated single-family house in Woonsocket's Fairmount neighborhood.

"Compared with what I would pay even in Fall River, and the fact that my commute to work in Mendon is still relatively short, I got a deal," Mr. Tolentino added.

Build more houses!

The solution, according to Mr. Berman of the Massachusetts Association of Realtors, is simply to build more homes, something that's certainly easier said than done. There just isn't much more available land in the Route 128/Interstate 495 corridor for more subdivisions, he pointed out. And the regulatory burden continues with little relief.

"The problem is simple. The hard part is fixing it," he said. 

Resources for RIBA members who work in Massachusetts

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

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

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

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

Also find information about trade licensing at this site.

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

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



R.I. code updates in the works, but state is still a cycle behind

Rhode Island's building code standards committee (BCSC) is working to update the state's building code, guided by the 2015 edition of the International Code Council's (ICC's) model. Current Rhode Island codes still use the ICC's 2012 model.

"What is eventually adopted as part of the our state code is always a mix of the ICC code with some Rhode Island-specific amendments," said Dept. of Business Regulation Deputy Director Julietta T. Georgakis.

ICC is way ahead

The ICC has already published its 2018 model codes.

"The plan is to double efforts to get the next cycle adopted so, eventually, we are back on track again with timely adoption," Ms. Georgakis explained. "Rhode Island has always been a leader in code adoption

and, for us, 'timely adoption' means adopting codes one year after the ICC publishes their most recent edition. It will take some hard work from the BCSC, but we'll get

back on track again!"

Watch *The Rhode Island Builder* for more information.

-Paul Eno

Glocester restricts deforestation at solar-farm sites

The Town of Glocester has revised its solar ordinance to limit clearing of forested areas to 30 percent of any given parcel where a solar farm is planned.

The revised ordinance also includes standards to assess the potential impacts to wildlife habitat, establishes improved standards to screen solar development from adjacent parcels, and increases setbacks from property lines.

Scott Millar, Grow Smart Rhode Island's

(GSRI's) manager of community technical assistance, assisted Glocester's town planner and planning board in preparing the revised solar ordinance, adopted by the Glocester Town Council in November.

GSRI and other groups have joined the Rhode Island Builders Association in opposing destruction of forest land for solar farms. RIBA believes the land would be better used for high-density housing, with the rest preserved as forest.

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Inspection times in Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Builders Association monitors the personnel situation in local building departments. Here is the current status, according to a recent survey by The Rhode Island Builder.

CODE INSPECTIONS IN R.I. - STAFFING BY CITY AND TOWN				TYPICAL INSPECTION TIMES	
	HAS A FULL-TIME BUILDING OFFICIAL YES (Is also plumbing/mechanical inspector)	HAS PART-TIME INSPECTORS YES (electrical)	SHARES INSPECTORS WITH OTHER TOWNS YES (Electrical Inspector shared with Warren)		
BARRINGTON					
BIRISTOL	YES	YES (plumbing, mechanical, electrical)	NO		24 hours
BURRILLVILLE	YES	YES (plumbing, mechanical, electrical)	YES (With Gloucester on an as-needed basis)		24-48 hours
CHARLESTOWN	YES	YES	NO		24 hours
COVENTRY	NO, shared with W. Warwick and Hopkinton	YES	YES		24-48 hours
CRANSTON	YES	NO	NO		24-48 hours
CUMBERLAND	YES	YES	NO		24-48 hours
EAST GREENWICH	YES	YES (electrical and plumbing/mechanical)	YES (electrical with E. Providence; plumbing/mechanical with N. Kingstown, West Warwick and Warwick as needed)		24-48 hours
EAST PROVIDENCE	YES	YES	YES		24-48
EXETER	NO	YES (all inspectors)	YES (plumbing/mechanical shared with Richmond & Jamestown)		24 hours (including weekends)
FOSTER	NO	YES	NO		24-48 hours
GLOUCESTER	YES	NO	YES (With Burrillville on an as-needed basis)		24-48 hours
HOPKINTON	NO, shared with Coventry and W. Warwick	YES	YES		24-48 hours
JAMESTOWN	YES	YES (plumbing, mechanical, electrical)	YES (plumbing/mechanical shared with Richmond & Exeter)		24 Hours
JOHNSTON	YES but shared with Schuette and N. Providence	YES	YES		24-48 hours
LINCOLN	YES	YES (plumbing, mechanical, electrical)	NO		24 hours
LITTLE COMPTON	YES	YES (electrical)	NO		12-24 hours
MIDDLETOWN	YES	YES	NO		24-48 hours
NARRAGANSETT	YES	YES (plumbing, mechanical, electrical)	YES		24 hours
NEWPORT	YES	YES	NO		24-48 hours
NEW SHOREHAM	YES	NO (BO does all inspections)	NO		48 hours
NORTH KINGSTOWN	YES	YES	YES		24-48 hours
NORTH PROVIDENCE	NO, shared with Schuette and Johnston	YES	YES		24-48 hours
NORTH SMITHFIELD	YES	YES	NO		24-48 hours
PORTSMOUTH	YES	YES	NO		24-48
PROVIDENCE	YES	Staff of 42, but short 9 as of Sept. 24	NO		24-48 hours
RICHMOND	NO, shared with West Greenwich	YES	YES (plumbing/mechanical shared with Exeter & Jamestown)		24-48 hours
SCITUATE	NO, shared with N. Providence and Johnston	YES	YES		24-48 hours
SMITHFIELD	YES	YES (plumbing, mechanical, electrical)	NO		24 hours. Tries to do "ruth" jobs the same day.
SOUTH KINGSTOWN	YES	YES (electrical, plumbing)	NO		24 hours
THURVINGTON	Vacant	YES	NO		24-48 hours
WARREN	YES	YES (plumbing, electrical, mechanical)	YES (Electrical Inspector shared with Barrington)		24 Hours
WARWICK	YES	YES (plumbing, electrical)	YES		24-48 hours
WEST GREENWICH	YES	YES	YES		"No wait, ASAP"
WEST WARWICK	YES, but shared with Coventry and Hopkinton	YES	YES		24-48 hours
WESTERLY	YES	YES (plumbing, mechanical, electrical)	YES (Electrical Inspector shared with Hopkinton)		24-48 hours
WOONSOCKET	YES	YES (plumbing, mechanical only)	Occasionally "as a courtesy" to other towns		"ASAP"

SOURCE: LOCAL BUILDING DEPARTMENTS. THIS INFORMATION IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. ACCURACY OF THIS CHART IS NOT GUARANTEED. CORRECTIONS SHOULD BE REPORTED TO PAUL F. ENO AT BUILDING@NRHVBUILDERS.COM.

Daniel J. McKee

Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island

Daniel J. McKee, Rhode Island's 69th lieutenant governor, was elected in 2015. Among his stated goals is creating a healthier small-business climate in the state. Lt. Gov. McKee chairs the Rhode Island Small Business Advocacy Council and the Long Term Care Coordinating Council. His background is in small business, and his family owns and operates a small oil company in Cumberland, where he was mayor for 12 years. He also ran a health club in Woonsocket for many years.



THE BUILDER: Why has Rhode Island historically been considered business-unfriendly?

McKEE: In some cases that reputation has been earned, and in some cases it hasn't. It's important to keep the state moving forward so we can level the playing field with our neighboring states. There's plenty to be done, but we've made a great deal of progress over the last four years.

THE BUILDER: As of 2015, Rhode Island was competing with California for 50th place on the list of business-friendly states (according to *Forbes* magazine) for the fourth year in a row. For 2018, however, *Forbes* has us at 43rd, ahead of Vermont and Maine. What has changed, and what will keep us moving up on that list?

McKEE: There's a focus on leadership throughout the state, whether from the governor's office, my office or those of the other general officers, along with the leadership in the General Assembly. We know a good, strong economy is vital, and there's been a consistent effort over the last few years to make Rhode Island more competitive so businesses, and small businesses in particular, can thrive here.

Particularly as a former mayor, I learned on the local level that we need to make sure that business is treated fairly and is welcome in our communities. There are many examples of that happening in the state right now.

THE BUILDER: As you know, the Rhode Island Builders Association consists mostly of small businesses. Business costs are of major concern to members. What's being done to lower the cost of doing business in Rhode Island?

McKEE: Lowering the costs is important, but also making sure there's work. If you don't have work, it doesn't matter what your costs are. We want an environment that encourages business and investment here in Rhode Island, and the chance for businesses to be profitable here.

As to controlling costs, municipalities must control their fees

in areas like permitting. I think local communities are trying to do that. They've been working closely with the Dept. of Business Regulation (DBR) in going to e-permitting, and in ongoing efforts to create consistency between communities to facilitate permitting.

DBR is addressing the whole regulatory structure in the state. Director Elizabeth Tanner has been working on streamlining processes and educating business people about them, such as the "How to Build a Building" lean-process exercise. They have also done an "Opening a Restaurant" educational process, and they've generally been streamlining the application process.

This gets back to the question on why we're gaining in the national business-friendly rankings.

THE BUILDER: You mentioned jobs. RIBA is working closely with Real Jobs Rhode Island on educational programs to attract and train new candidates to work in the residential construction industry. As you've already touched on, people have to have jobs in order to stay in the state. That means making it easier to build housing, but some municipalities seem to oppose that. How can the municipalities become part of the solution rather than part of the problem?

McKEE: On the jobs issue, the Real Jobs program is one of the great successes this administration has had in training, whether in the building trades or other areas. There's a new job training center in Westerly, and another opening soon in Woonsocket. So, there's been a real effort to train labor and upgrade the skills of the existing workers, and for people who want to change careers and need to be retrained.

Among union labor, I believe there was 23 percent unemployment a few years ago. Now it's 2 to 3 percent. That's important progress. With good jobs, people will be able to buy or rent homes, and builders will be able to build them.

On the education side, we've made a commitment on the community college level, with the Rhode Island Promise Scholarship Program. That will open some doors into the workforce, especially for recent high school graduates.

I think it's happening. I think we're building an economy that allows people to have jobs. A few years back, people were asking, "Where are the cranes on the skyline?" Well, now they're here. Whether it's the Citizens Bank expansion in Johnston, with 2,000 jobs, and new hotels being built in Providence, along with the proposed 46-story High Point Tower there, we're growing again.

All the factors work together. We need an economy that supports

see *INTERVIEW...next page*

INTERVIEW...from previous page

the construction industry, and we need a construction industry that supports the demand. The more demand you have, the better the economy, and the better off we all are.

Locally, you're right. There has to be a balance between the pressure to constrain development and the pressure to develop. We still have the NIMBY mentality in some areas, and if that's extreme, it isn't good for us. If it's protecting our landscapes in a way that makes sense, then it does.

We have to strive for that balance in the municipalities. We need growth, and I've spoken about the population issue in the state, with the population stagnant and growing older. When I was mayor of Cumberland, we established a 1 percent growth strategy, have grown that much over the last decade, and the infrastructure was able to absorb it. I hope communities around the state will look at that kind of growth model.

Losing representation in Washington is one thing, but not filling in our own population with entrepreneurial younger people concerns me more.

THE BUILDER: The issue of families with children not being welcome in some Rhode Island communities has come up. In March 2015, Cumberland Town Solicitor Thomas E. Heffner told this magazine that the town had a policy to limit housing that could accommodate families. Do you see communities in 2019 being more welcoming?

McKEE: I don't share that philosophy and I never did: That reducing the number of families saves on school costs. Every community needs families. When I was mayor, we had the first state-approved housing plan. When I left to become lieutenant governor, Cumberland was maintaining that plan, and I believe there were 76 multifamily units coming online, and we were, in fact, encouraging families to come into town.

Thinking you can build communities without families is very short-sighted. As I said, we need an economy that can support people who live here, including families. We can't build the state on an aging population.

In fact, I've been paying a great deal of attention to improving public education, and our businesses should pay more attention to the outcomes in our public schools because those outcomes affect them in the long term. They should play a role in improving the schools.

For well over a decade, we've known that the difference between Massachusetts public school outcomes and ours is costing our working families' incomes somewhere between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion a year.

So, as we talk about making Rhode Island more business friendly and build economic prosperity, public education must be part of the discussion. Just as communities can't do without families, businesses can't do without good public education.

As I said, it's all interconnected.

THE BUILDER: For both residential and commercial growth to take place, RIBA sees the need for upgraded and expanded drinking water, stormwater and sewer infrastruc-

ture. Do you see the state's new Infrastructure Grant Program being funded in 2019, and how?

McKEE: That funding is very important, as is a commitment to these infrastructure issues. In Cumberland, we invested millions to improve the drinking-water distribution system. Every community is going to need this kind of commitment, and must continue to work on it.

The Infrastructure Grant Program will be one tool that hopefully will be funded by the legislature this year, and in a way that will help communities implement improvements. And there are other infrastructure funding sources that communities can access now, primarily for water and sewer. But a community must be fiscally sound in order to use those programs, because it's a little unrealistic to rely entirely on grants.

There is a commitment on the part of the administration and the legislative leadership to invest in infrastructure that maintains safely and healthful living conditions.

THE BUILDER: We understand that legislation is in the works that would streamline utility work for new homes and developments.

McKEE: Yes, we're looking at a customer-service strategy where the utilities provide small businesses with timely service, whether they need utility poles, transformers or whatever it might be.

Of course, small business, and certainly the building industry, is impacted when there are outages. The last one cost our small businesses millions of dollars, and we're proposing legislation that would hold the utilities accountable for restoring electricity in particular, as Massachusetts and Connecticut have done.

We'll keep working on these issues and others. One of the others is that painting contractors are paying more than they should be to recycle paint. We've met with contractors who are paying thousands a year more than they should. So, we're introducing legislation to make that recycling program more competitive.

THE BUILDER: What's your overall vision for Rhode Island over the next 10 to 50 years?

McKEE: The vision is for a steady, sustainable growth in population, with an annual increase in per-capita income over time. Factors here are what we talked about: strategic planning for better public education, better job training, along with leveling the playing field for business, making us more competitive with our neighboring states.

This goes hand-in-hand with strengthening our communities, making them physically strong, safe and healthy. And we want families to be able to afford to live in this beautiful state. That helps everyone.



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RIBA seeks member input on legislative agenda

The 2019 session of the General Assembly is already under way, and the Rhode Island Builders Association will monitor hundreds of bills of concern to the residential construction industry.

Subjects of interest this year include siting of solar farms, inspections and permitting, process issues in the course of development, freshwater wetlands rules, sales tax issues for contractors, and infrastructure grant funding.

If you have legislative matters that concern you, it's not too late. Contact RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio at (401) 438-7400 or e-mail jmarcantonio@ribuilders.org.

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Small rise in home prices, mortgage rates has big effect on affordability

National Association of Home Builders

It takes only a small uptick in home prices and mortgage rates to price more than 1 million potential home buyers out of the market for a median-priced home, according to economists from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

For example, \$1,000 might sound insignificant when compared with the overall price of a new home. But that relatively small amount has a surprisingly big impact on affordability.

NAHB economists recently determined that for every \$1,000 increase in the cost of today's median U.S. home price, 127,560 American households are priced out and would no longer be able to afford it. In other words, based on their incomes, 127,560 households would be able to qualify for a mortgage to purchase the home before the price increase, but not afterward.

Those numbers are even more staggering when looking at potential interest rate increases. It takes only a quarter-point rise in the rate for a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage to price approximately 1 million households out of that segment of the market and force them to set their sights lower than a median-priced home—or delay their home purchase altogether.

NAHB economist Na Zhao provides further analysis in this "Eye on Housing" blog post: Eyeonhousing.org/2019/01/nahb-2019-priced-out-estimates.

Meanwhile, single-family housing starts dropped nationally in November as builders faced continuing affordability concerns.

According to new data from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and the Commerce Dept., overall (including multifamily units) housing starts rose 3.2 percent in November to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.26 million units

from a downwardly revised October reading. Year-to-date, new housing starts are 5.1 percent above their level over the same period last year.

The November reading of 1.26 million is the number of housing units builders would start if they maintained this pace for the next 12 months.

Within this overall number, single-family starts fell 4.6 percent to 824,000. Single-family production has now dropped for the third straight month.

Multifamily starts, which include apartment buildings and condos, rose 22.4 percent to 432,000.

"The decline in single-family production over the last few months makes sense given the drop in our builder confidence index," said NAHB Chairman Randy Noel, a custom home builder from LaPlace, La.

For information, contact Liz Thompson at NAHB (202) 266-8495.

RIBUILDERS

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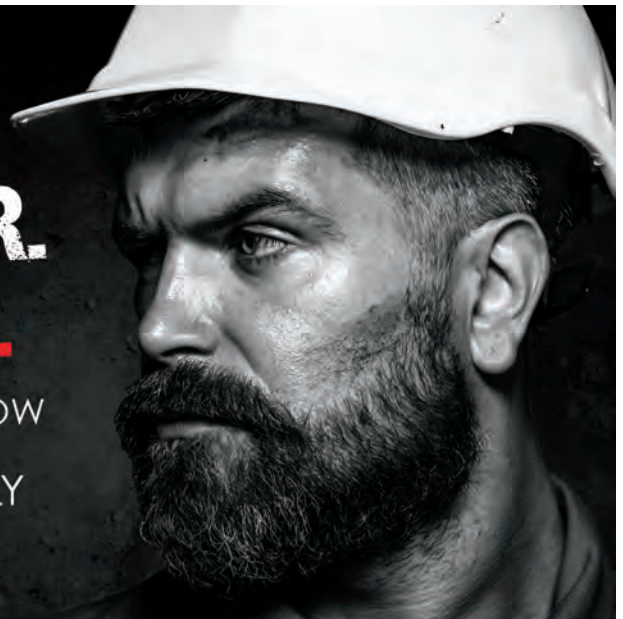
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HOUSING...from page 2

search analyst Holden Lewis sees both good news and bad news for real estate in 2019.

"It's going to be a challenging year for home buyers in 2019: They will continue to compete for a short supply of homes. Home prices and mortgage rates are likely to keep moving upward, bruising affordability," Mr. Lewis wrote.

There's also good news that disagrees somewhat with opinions cited by *USA Today's* Herron.

Wrote Mr. Lewis: "Builders are constructing more entry-level homes, lenders are gradually making it easier to qualify for a loan, and first-time home buyers are getting the attention they deserve."

In 2019, he added, expect more homes for sale in a continuing seller's market, rising housing prices and mortgage rates, an ongoing affordability crisis, smaller new homes, continued domination by first-time buyers, a slight easing of lending standards, more borrowers choosing adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs), and overconfident sellers not getting as much as they expect.

What about Rhode Island? The Ocean State often bucks national trends, so what's in store for our own housing market this year? Leonard Lardaro, professor of economics at the University of Rhode Island, paints a rather glum picture.

"Housing is weakening throughout the country. For Rhode Island, new home construction began a secular decline in the late 1980s (when we became a post-manufacturing economy) from which it has never recovered," Dr. Lardaro Tweeted in December.

Watch the March *Rhode Island Builder* for an in-depth interview with Dr. Lardaro.



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see **RENEWALS**...next page



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RENEWALS...from previous page

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CCTP...from page 1

current or prospective employees in the Carpentry Career Training Program (CCTP):

"It's real, hands-on training for our employees," said Peter DiStefano of DiStefano Brothers Construction Inc., who has people in the CCTP classes now running at the Chariho Career and Technical Center in Richmond and in the northern session, at the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center (WACTC).

"We try to teach on the jobsite, but because of time constraints and budgets, it can be difficult to do so, and achieve best practices," Mr. DiStefano added. "My crew loves (the CCTP course). They feel they're getting a great value. This will be an integral part of our training moving forward."

"It will allow us to hire people for their personality and culture, and know they will be a success."

The 200-hour CCTP is a pre-apprenticeship course, funded by state grants, and has no cost to employers or students. It's a cooperative effort by the Rhode Island Builders Association, the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP) and the Home Builders Institute (HBI), the education arm of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

Classes currently meet from 6 to 8:30 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and each student who successfully completes the course earns a nationally recognized HBI Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate, along with his or her Lead Safe RRP Certificate and OSHA-10 certification.

There are 40 students enrolled, of all ages and backgrounds, with a waiting list of almost 50, who will be accommodated by the expansion. The first CCTP session began at Chariho on November 5th, with a northern session launching at WACTC on November 13th.

At any given class, you're likely to meet not only by CCTP managers Louis Cotoia Jr. and Cheryl Boyd, but members of RIBA's Education and Workforce Development Committee, and potential employers who come in to observe the classes and meet students.

Manufacturers' representatives make in-depth presentations at some classes. For example, Donald Hamel of Andersen Corp. took students through window installations and product capabilities during the CCTP class at WACTC on December 11th (*next page*).

At Chariho on January 8th, students were taken through concrete calculations, mixing and building forms.

"Students included employees from Ken Jones Construction, who used the knowledge they acquired in the class on the job, to calculate a concrete order they needed, and they were spot on!" Ms. Boyd reported.

Mr. Jones himself is delighted with the results.

"They love it, and they're learning a lot," he told *The Rhode Island Builder*. "In fact, the class has made them more excited than ever about working in residential construction."

Another enthusiastic employer is Jeffrey Sweenor of Sweenor Builders Inc.

"We're thrilled with the class so far, based on our employee, Joe Martinez, who is attending," Mr. Sweenor said. "He has learned a lot and enjoys the class. He graduated with a teaching degree from URI, but we have been able to show him another career opportunity."

New VESL course begins in February

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FOR INFORMATION: Contact RIBA Diversity Outreach and Education Coordinator Betty Bernal at (401) 438-7400, ext. 112, or (401) 500-9146

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Applicants may apply in person at the Dorcas International Institute or call (401) 784-8602 for an appointment.



Lynn Gibbons of South County Cabinets echoed these feelings.

"I have sent one employee there so far. It's going well, as it is giving him confidence to learn the basics and beyond in regard to the carpentry" Ms. Gibbons said. "He also says the teachers are excellent."

The CCTP course covers OSHA 10 Certification and 8 Hour Lead-Safe RRP training; 148 hours of Home Builders Institute Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate Training (PACT); basic first aid; 7.5 hours of coaching on soft skills, team-building, professionalism and success in the workplace; 7.5 hours of jobsite visits; 5 hours on building codes; and 13 hours of manufacturer visits for expert installation training, techniques and tips.

Each student receives a set of basic carpentry tools to use during training and to keep upon successful completion of the course. The CCTP is funded by a grant from the Rhode Island Dept. of Labor and Training.

Employers may send current employees to be upskilled, or may send candidates for employment if they commit to a wage increase or employment upon the candidate's successful completion of the course. Job seekers may take the training course if they demonstrate a commitment to start a career in residential construction and actively seek employment through RCWPJobs.com or through other employment resources within the industry.

Applicants undergo interviews, and proof of identity and work authorization are required. A sponsor/employer is recommended for each candidate. Candidates may enroll without a sponsor, but they must first "demonstrate passion, motivation, desire and a commitment to complete training to enter the residential construction field," Ms. Boyd said.

Potential CCTP students, along with employers wishing to place potential students, should contact Elise Geddes at RIBA, (401) 438-7400 or egeddes@ribuilders.org. Also contact Ms. Geddes for general information about the program.





Participants in the Carpentry Career Training Program's (CCTP's) northern course gather at the Woonsocket Area Career and Technical Center (WACTC) on December 11th. The class featured a special presentation by Donald Hamel of Andersen Corp. (left front) on window products and installation. At center, kneeling, is WACTC Instructor Charles Myers. Ronald J. Caniglia of Stand Corp., an employer who often visits the CCTP classes, commented: "There was great synergy between the instructor, Don Hamel, (Program Managers) Cheryl Boyd and Lou Cotoia, and the students. Everyone is engaged and focused. It's great to see!" (Photo by Cheryl Boyd)



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Mr. Hamel introduces students to the complex world of windows and the importance of proper installation.



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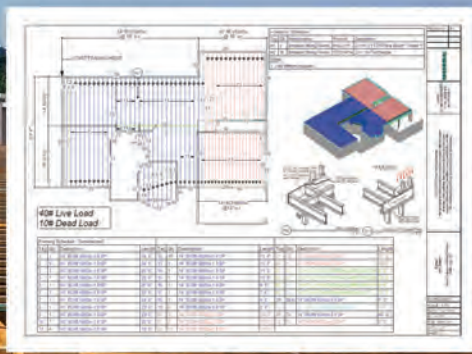
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