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**Pages 4, 22, 23, 24, 25**

**Home Show  
exhibit space is  
going fast**

Exhibit space at the 70<sup>th</sup> Annual Rhode Island Home Show is flying off the shelves, so reserve yours now!

**Page 8**

**CRMC introduces  
new mobile app**

The Coastal Resources Management Council has introduced an app it says will save time and money for builders.

**Page 2**

**Networking Night  
set for Feb. 13**

Generously sponsored by Versatex®, here's your monthly opportunity to network with your fellow members, enjoy some great food and drink, find out about products and services, and introduce your non-member colleagues to RIBA.

**Page 10**

## RIBA Job Training Facility up and running in Central Falls

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

There's a new pipeline into the residential construction industry for skilled workers: The Rhode Island Builders Association's Central Falls Vocational Training Center (CFVTC) is up and running!

Thanks in part to a grant from the Centreville Bank Charitable Foundation, the CFVTC opened on December 9<sup>th</sup>, welcoming its first class, consisting of 21 Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) basic carpentry students. That class actually began September 30<sup>th</sup> at the Segue Institute for Learning in Central Falls, and is scheduled to conclude on February 13<sup>th</sup>.

Also supporting the CFVTC are the City of Central Falls, Mayor James A. Diossa (*related interview on page 26*), and Gov. Gina Raimondo's Real Jobs Rhode Island program.

The 2,500 square-foot building, located off Higginson Avenue near the Lincoln town line, has been rehabilitated by RIBA member volunteers over the last



**Members of the September-to-February Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) carpentry class and their instructors move into RIBA's new Central Falls Vocational Training Center December 9<sup>th</sup>. At center are Central Falls Mayor James A. Diossa (see page 26) and project manager Robert J. Baldwin (see page 12).**

few months. Robert J. Baldwin of R.B. Homes acted as project manager, with Alexander Mitchell of Meridian Custom Homes Inc., Jhonny Leyva of Heroica Construction, James Deslandes of Deslandes Construction Inc., Betty Bernal of the RIBA staff, Thomas Furey of

*see CENTER...page 33*

## RIBA to launch podcasts this winter

Like to hear the latest news that can affect the residential construction industry and your business – while you drive to and from the jobsite, over lunch, or whenever you like?

Just when you thought the Rhode Island Builders Association's information services couldn't be better, here come the podcasts!

Beginning soon, and as an extension of the news you receive in *The Rhode Island Builder* magazine, RIBA will broadcast news stories on all the major podcast platforms, according to Executive Officer

John Marcantonio.

"At the convenience of members, 24/7, they can tune in to interviews with the movers and shakers in Rhode Island's residential construction industry, the latest legislative and regulatory news, and information about coming events at RIBA," Mr. Marcantonio said.

Initially, the podcasts will be monthly and will be about half an hour long. But the possibilities for expansion are endless, Mr. Marcantonio indicated.

*see PODCASTS...page 33*

# CRMC: Free mobile app projects storm, sea-level damage on every R.I. property

App can save builders money on engineers, agency says.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

In a move that should save time and money for builders, the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) has introduced STORMTOOLS, a mobile app that estimates flood damage to structures in the Rhode Island coastal zone, including the effects of sea level rise.

"We believe that Rhode Island is the first state in the nation to develop and make such an app publicly available," said Malcolm L. Spaulding, professor emeritus of Ocean Engineering at the University of Rhode Island (URI), who helped develop the app,



**The STORMTOOLS app projects storm damage and sea level rise for every property in Rhode Island.**

whose full name is the STORMTOOLS Coastal Environmental Risk Index (CERI) Risk and Damage Assessment App.



Grover Fugate

CRMC Executive Director Grover Fugate sat down with *The Rhode Island Builder* to explain the app, developed at URI in collaboration with CRMC, with funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

"We've done a lot of modeling work, right down to the individual property level in Rhode Island. That's unprecedented in

the United States," Mr. Fugate said.

"The tools we've developed in this app allow builders and property owners to look at sea-level rise, and at storm conditions from anywhere up to a 500-year event. It then allows us to look at combined events."

Mr. Fugate and his colleagues believed that boiling all this information down to a portable app would make it the most useful to the most people.

"It's great for property owners or builders who are trying to understand the risk to a given property and how to best go about addressing that risk rate," he added. "In fact, the app allows us to do that calculation for every structure in Rhode Island. It's a huge leap forward."

Mr. Fugate cited the example of a builder

*see APP...page 33*

## The Rhode Island Builder

Official publication of the  
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## RIBA welcomes these new members and thanks their sponsors!

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### **Correction**



Jerry Zarella Jr.

In the January issue of *The Rhode Island Builder*, a photo of Jerry Zarella Sr. appeared in the page 2 article on East Greenwich Cove Builders winning two national design awards for the Castle Street Cottages on Rope Walk Hill development in East Greenwich, Rhode Island's first "pocket neighborhood." The photo should have been of Jerry Zarella Jr. We regret the error.

Look for more about this member's national honors in our March issue.

For RIBA  
membership information  
contact Elise Geddes  
401-438-7400  
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## LOOKING AHEAD!

♦February 6<sup>th</sup>: **Meet & Greet with Current Class of Vocational English as a Second Language Carpentry Students** - 5:30 to 8 p.m., Central Falls Vocational Training Center, 10 Higginson Ave., Central Falls. *Related story on page 1.*

🔧 ♦February 7<sup>th</sup>: **Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Conflict Resolution in Construction.  
*Details on page 22.*

🔧 ♦February 10<sup>th</sup>: **Continuing Education for Contractors - 2½ Credit Hours** - Topic is Exterior Wall Siding. *Details on page 22.*

🔧 ♦February 11<sup>th</sup>: **Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Understanding Quickbooks Online®.  
This is not an online class. *Details on page 23.*

🔧 ♦February 12<sup>th</sup>: **Continuing Education for Contractors - 2½ Credit Hours** - Topic is Roof Framing and Systems. *Details on page 23.*

🔧 ♦February 12<sup>th</sup>: **Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Understanding Your Construction Business Model.  
*Details on page 24.*

♦February 13<sup>th</sup>: **Networking Night** - 4:30 to 7 p.m, sponsored by Versatex®. Rhode Island Builders Association Headquarters, East Providence. FREE for members and their guests. *Related story on page 10.*

🔧 ♦February 14<sup>th</sup>: **Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topics are Deck Codes and Construction.  
*Details on page 24.*

🔧 ♦February 26<sup>th</sup>: **Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Contract Law. *Details on page 25.*

🔧 ♦February 27<sup>th</sup>: **Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Trade Contractors Managing and Scheduling. *Details on page 25.*

🔧 ♦February 28<sup>th</sup>: **Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Advanced Framing. *Details on page 25.*

♦March 1<sup>st</sup>: **Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) - Basic Carpentry** - Recruiting continues for a class to begin March 1<sup>st</sup> at the Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island, 220 Elmwood Ave., Providence. For details, contact Betty Bernal at (401) 500-9146 or bbernal@ribuilders.org, or register online at <https://ribuilders.org/vesl-training-program-details>.

**March 18<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>: JLC LIVE 25** - Sponsored by the Journal of Light Construction, Rhode Island Convention Center. *Details on pages 18 and 19.*

♦March 19<sup>th</sup>: **Networking Night** - 4:30 to 7 p.m, sponsored by Andersen Corp. Rhode Island Builders Association Headquarters, East Providence. FREE for members and their guests. *Related story on page 10.*

♦April 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>: **70<sup>th</sup> Annual Rhode Island Home Show, Featuring the Rhode Island Flower & Garden Show and The Energy Expo** - Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence. Call (401) 438-7400 or e-mail [homeshow@ribuilders.org](mailto:homeshow@ribuilders.org) for more information. Exhibit space is now available. *Details on page 8.*

♦April 16<sup>th</sup>: **Networking Night** - 4:30 to 7 p.m, sponsored by Stormtite. Rhode Island Builders Association Headquarters, East Providence. FREE for members and their guests. *Related story on page 10.*

**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 and/or Massachusetts continuing education credits. Contact RIBA for confirmation.

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

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 onsite courses, online courses are **FREE** of tuition charges for members and their employees. Just use your code at the online checkout. **NEED A CODE?** CALL RIBA AT (401) 438-7400. Non-members: \$12 per credit hour. For information about online or on-site courses: Contact Bob Salvas, [bsalvas@ribuilders.org](mailto:bsalvas@ribuilders.org), or call (401) 438-7400.



Timothy A. Stasiunas

# President's Message

## At last! A glimmer of hope for an R.I. housing policy

At last, housing, or in this case lack of housing, finally seems to be on the proverbial front burner of issues at the state level.

I've been talking about affordable housing for years, and it has always seemed to fall on deaf ears. Fact is, I've been building affordable/workforce housing for years, until regulations, zoning, no comprehensive public housing policy, and other roadblocks became so enormous that affordability fell by the wayside.

This certainly is not just a state problem. It's a national problem as well. But for the sake of this message, I'm focusing on Rhode Island in particular. I was pleasantly surprised when Gov. Gina Raimondo stated, in the Providence Journal, that Rhode Island has joined its Northeast neighbors at a "tipping point" of high housing costs, announcing her intention to make the construction of more new homes in the state a priority in 2020.

She went on to say, "You can't have a healthy community and thriving children and a healthy economy unless you have a sufficient amount of affordable, secure housing in every community."

To highlight how severe the problem has become, Rhode Island Commerce Secretary Stefan Pryor noted in a presentation that developers built an average of 2,500 units per year between 1997 and 2007, and a decade later annual production is hovering between 1,000 and 1,500 units per year.

As the Rhode Island housing market has improved after the recession, home prices have risen, while construction of new housing units has been muted.

One fundamental issue driving the state's housing shortage is simple: zoning. Municipal opposition and the NIMBY (not in my back yard) mentality when it comes to new construction and new residents is one of the major hurdles to building more housing.

### *Devil is in the details*

Another is state regulatory barriers. On the one hand, you have the governor wanting to promote housing. On the other, you have the "regulators" creating new and more restrictive regulations that are contrary to good public policy, and to a state that is economically viable. Every time I see a new regulation, I think to myself, "The bureaucracy is working with blinders on, and working against each other."

And as the governor acknowledges ... "The devil is in the details. However, I do agree that one of the many barriers to more housing can be municipal zoning and municipal resistance, and we need to find solutions to break through that."

So, I applaud Gov. Raimondo and support her willingness to move this issue forward. But she's going to need help. Our legislators need to be part of the solution. All involved need to make a concerted effort, a strong, meaningful push to get this done for our state.

So, as members of the Rhode Island Builders Association, I encourage making your voice heard. Call your representatives; let them know we can't put this off any longer. At long last there may finally be "A glimmer of Hope."



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# Board okays ambitious business plan for 2020

New RIBA model aims for 'contractor development.'

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

An ambitious plan for 2020, along with a new business model for the Rhode Island Builders Association were among the agenda items during a busy first meeting of the year for the RIBA Board of Directors.

First, however, David W. Wright of Morgan Stanley and Michael S. Ouellette of the Angell Pension Group offered a presentation on new possibilities for multiple employer retirement plans (MEPs), based on a federal law signed by President Donald Trump in December. *Story on page 9.*

The new business model, as outlined by RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio, involves moving beyond a 1950s model of member benefits for established contractors, and into a 2020s model of contractor development.

"The older model worked well for nearly 70 years, but now members of the residential construction industry are aging, and retiring in increasing numbers," Mr. Marcantonio said. "In fact, there are fewer builders and remodelers, and more specialized contractors and subcontractors."

There is also less "generational transfer" to younger members

of contractor families, he noted.

"Our new model allows RIBA to connect with new contractors and subs as they enter the industry with limited skill sets, then train them from the beginning about what they can do and what we can do for them to make them better contractors and develop their business skills."

RIBA's Contractor Training Program, with nine new classes launched in January and 120 participants registered, has this new business model in mind, Mr. Marcantonio said. *See pages 4, 22, 23, 24 and 25.*

## Other matters

The 2020 Rhode Island Home Show, RIBA's 70<sup>th</sup>, will feature the same popular attractions as in the past few years, with an increased emphasis on home technology, Mr. Marcantonio reported.

The executive officer also reported on progress of the Builders Insurance Group, along with the association's legislative agenda for the 2020 General Assembly session, which has begun, and RIBA's expanding workforce development action.

RIBA members are invited to attend the public portion of the monthly Board of Directors meetings, which usually take place on the first Tuesday of each month at RIBA's East Providence headquarters. Please contact Elizabeth Carpenter at (401) 438-7400 or [ecarpenter@ribuilders.org](mailto:ecarpenter@ribuilders.org) for more information.

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## Professional Women in Building: PWB NEWS



***Thank you to all our members, guests and supporters for making this year's Annual Holiday Brunch one for the books! With over 170 attendees, we were able to donate many toys to our friends at the YWCA of R.I. and R.I. Children's Friend. We look forward to next year!***



***April 2-5, 2020 - 70th Annual Rhode Island Home Show, Providence Convention Center***

### ***PWB Officers***

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

**Want to learn more about the PWB?**

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



# Sellout expected: Reserve your exhibit space now!

**WHEN:** Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, through Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>  
**WHERE:** Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence  
**FOR INFORMATION & TO EXHIBIT:** Contact Bob Yoffe at (800) 963-3395

It's 2020, and almost time for the newly renamed Rhode Island Home Show, featuring the R.I. Flower Show, the Garden Experience, Energy Expo, Home Tech & the European Manufactured Home!

This is the 70<sup>th</sup> year the Rhode Island Builders Association has presented the Home Show, the biggest member marketing opportunity of the year. And exhibit space is going fast!

As a member of the residential construction industry, whether you're a contractor, supplier, architect, lender or any other related profession or provider, here are a few things to consider.

- Attendance at the 2020 Home Show is expected to surpass historic levels, with over 20,000 visitors keeping those turnstiles whirling. The U.S. economy is roaring, and the demographics are as strong as in any of the show's previous 69 years.

- For years now, RIBA's exit surveys have clearly shown 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.

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

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

- It's expected that space at this show will sell out. Even though

exhibits have now expanded out into the Convention Center concourse, space is still at a premium.

You can even benefit from the Home Show setup days

Several days before the Home Show, setup begins. This includes the participation of hundreds of career and technical education (CTE) students from around the state.

RIBA members who volunteer as supervisors not only get to work with these dedicated young people who will be the core of our industry's future workforce, but can and do find skilled future employees for their own businesses.

## *Big attractions*

Highlighting the Home Show this year will be the European Manufactured Home, open for public tours and demonstrations.

Other attractions for 2020 will include an expanded and interactive home-technology section, and the popular Energy Expo will highlight zero-net energy for homes.

In addition, prime attractions will feature outdoor living concepts, and there will be plenty of interactive seminars. The Rhode Island Flower and Garden Show segment comes back finer than ever in 2020.

"With so many features, the Home 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.

"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."



## Customized job training at RIBA




Robin Barlow

Do your current or prospective employees need specialized job training in areas not covered by the Rhode Island Builders Association's complimentary carpentry, electrical or HVAC programs?

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Find out more from Robin Barlow at (401) 438-7400 or [rbarlow@ribuilders.org](mailto:rbarlow@ribuilders.org). Let RIBA help grow your business! 

## Interested in a MEP?

The SECURE Act, signed into law on December 20<sup>th</sup> by President Trump, authorizes "open" multiple employer plans (MEPs).

An open MEP is a retirement savings plan adopted by two or more unrelated employers.


Previously, the federal Dept. of Labor and the IRS mandated that MEPs had to be "closed": that all employer members must have a nexus or common interest in addition to participation in the retirement savings plan.

In the opinion of David W. Wright of Morgan Stanley and Michael S. Ouellette of the Angell Pension Group, who presented on the subject of MEPs at the Rhode Island Builders Association's January 7<sup>th</sup> Board of Directors meeting, open MEPs could provide retirement plans to small contractors who might otherwise be unable to afford them.

RIBA would like to gauge the interest of members in a MEP as a possible mem-



**Michael S. Ouellette** the Angell Pension Group, left, explains multiple employer plans (MEPs) to the RIBA Board of Directors on January 7<sup>th</sup>. With him is **David W. Wright** of Morgan Stanley.

ber benefit. Please contact Elise Geddes at RIBA with your opinion: (401) 438-7400 or [egeddes@ribuilders.org](mailto:egeddes@ribuilders.org). 



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## January Networking Night draws crowd, next event set for February 13

**WHEN:** Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 4:30 to 7 p.m.

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

**SPONSOR:** Versatex®

**COST:** FREE for members and their guests

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

Members and guests had a grand old time at Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters on January 16<sup>th</sup> during the association's first Networking Night of 2020!

Those who stopped by from 4:30 to 7 enjoyed refreshments, hobnobbing with fellow members and potential members, taking in information on supplemental insurance by the generous sponsor: Aflac®, and meeting representatives Kevin McCarthy and Huascar Beato from Aflac's office in Warwick.

Kevin made a brief presentation on the supplemental insurance offered by Aflac for small businesses, including disability, accident, cancer and hospital.

Now a monthly happening, RIBA offers events where members and guests can network, mingle and enjoy food and drink, while at the same time learning something about products, services and the residential construction industry itself.

For those of you who haven't attended one of our monthly networking events, why not stop by? You never know whom you'll meet!

Ask them! You might be surprised how many of your fellow members will tell you that they met their best subcontractor or a colleague who helped them grow their business.

Your next chance to do this will be at RIBA's next Networking Night, set for Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, at RIBA headquarters! Stop by the Networking Night to see how Versatex® products can be used on your next job.

The evening is FREE for members and guests. Stop by anytime between 4:30 and 7 p.m. to relax and network with your fellow RIBA members, and the RIBA staff. There will be a variety of tasty refreshments, along with beer, wine and soft drinks.

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 (401) 438-7400 or e-mail [egeddes@ribuilders.org](mailto:egeddes@ribuilders.org).



*Here we have Scott Harnois of Pinnacle Glass of New England, and Jenn Pezza of Cumberland Glass Co. of Rhode Island, with Evan and Ryan Finnegan of Coventry Lumber.*



*With Jack Bentz and the famous Aflac duck at center, here are representatives Kevin McCarthy, left, and Huascar Beato.*



*Here are new members/potential new members, from left, Wayne Lewis of WJL LLC, with Nick Lancione and Evan Shockley of Resource Options.*



# Mike DiBenedetto, 46

Michael Thomas “Mike” DiBenedetto, junior member of the father-son team who ran Johnston-based DicRis Builders since he and his dad, Richard (“Dick”), merged their two companies in 2014, died unexpectedly on December 14<sup>th</sup>. He was 46.

Mike, a 1993 construction technology graduate of the Cranston Area Career & Technical Center, worked with his dad off and on since boyhood. When custom home building was slow during the Great Recession, Mike started his own company, Lot Maintenance by Mike, in addition to working with DicRis.

Mike once told *The Rhode Island Builder* that he never considered doing anything with his life except construction.

DicRis joined the Rhode Island Builders Association in 1976. The DiBenedettos, father and son, were active members, and it was unusual not to see them at networking nights, the Annual Clambake, classes and many other RIBA meetings and events.

In fact, Dick and Mike have been favorites of the RIBA staff for years, stopping by the association’s headquarters for events or just to say hello.

Along with his dad, Mike is survived by his mother, Cristal McNulty; brother Nikolas; niece Brooke; longtime girlfriend Maria Buccieri; and many friends.

“Mike was a friend to all who knew him, and could light up a room with his smile and laugh,” a family member was quoted as saying.

“Mike loved his construction equipment and his trucks, working in his yard and tending to his gardens in the summer. He would help anyone who needed it, at a moment’s notice, and gave the best hugs. To know Mike was to love him and he will be dearly missed by all who knew him.”

Past RIBA President Steven Gianlorenzo added some thoughts.

“Mike and his dad were always great supporters of RIBA. They were always



Mike DiBenedetto

at the social events, and everybody liked them,” Mr. Gianlorenzo recalled. “When I went to the wake, I gave a RIBA pin to Dick and it was pinned on Mike’s lapel. I felt very humbled.”

To share online thoughts and condolences, see the Michael Thomas DiBenedetto obituary at Legacy.com.

RIBA

## Robert M. 'Bob' Picerne



Robert Picerne

Robert M. “Bob” Picerne, son of Ronald R.S. Picerne (president of the Rhode Island Builders Association 1984-1986), died January 5<sup>th</sup> in Winter Park, Florida.

Mr. Picerne, father of two children and the adoptive father of 16 others, was known for his love of family. Despite his many business and community activities, his children say he was a hands-on father and always present.

He worked in the business started by the Picerne Family in 1925 – Picerne Development, one of the nation’s leading commercial development companies. He also owned a wide variety of business

ventures and served on the boards of a number of corporations.

The Picerne companies have built thousands of affordable and market-rate apartments in Florida and across the United States.

Mr. Picerne graduated from Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire in 1976, then went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in Organizational Behavior from Brown University. His first venture into entrepreneurship took place when he was 16 and established his own house-painting business.

Also a philanthropist, Mr. Picerne loved donating anonymously to charities and to individuals in need.

He is survived by his children, two grandchildren, his father, and siblings David Picerne, Donna Picerne Uritescu, Jeanne Picerne, Ken Picerne, John Picerne; and wife Josephina Noelle Picerne. Funeral services took place on Friday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, at First Baptist Orlando. To share memories and online condolences, visit the Robert Michael Picerne obituary at Legacy.com.

RIBA

## Diane Smith, 76, of C&L Builders

Diane A. (Nobbman) Smith of Weekapaug, wife of Richard A. Smith of C&L Builders, died in Westerly on October 20<sup>th</sup>. She was 76.

A native of Nebraska, she attended a prairie schoolhouse, often riding her horse to school, and later graduated from the Pius X School in Lincoln.

She moved to the Northeast and had a 30-year career as a commercial artist, graphic designer and art director.

She and Mr. Smith married in 1978.

At age 46, she graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Connecticut.

Ms. Smith is survived by her husband, two children and five grandchildren. Donations may be sent to the Diane A. Smith 1989 Scholarship Fund (0031444), The UConn Foundation, 2390 Alumni Drive, Storrs, CT 06269, or The Westerly Hospital Foundation, 25 Wells Street, Westerly, RI 02891.

RIBA

## Member Profile: Bob Baldwin of R.B. Homes

# A dynamic RIBA leader, scion of a century-old home-building family

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

When it comes to residential construction and the Rhode Island Builders Association, Bob Baldwin has just about done it all.

A Providence College graduate and a third-generation contractor in a family that has been building homes in Rhode Island for over a century, Bob has been president of RIBA (2010-2012), chairman of the Workforce Development Committee, co-chairman of the Legislative Committee, and more. Today, he's as busy as ever: as president of RIBA's charity, Builders Helping Heroes; as RIBA's state representative to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB); and as a point man for RIBA's legislative agenda and workforce development program - for 22 years.

"I was born and raised in Johnston, in a family that has been involved in agriculture (dairy farming) and home building for over 100 years," Bob recalls. "My grandfather actually started building houses in Cranston right after World War I. We believe that he and his cousin built their first house around 1919."

That continued through the "Roaring '20s," but the Great Depression that followed put the brakes on construction, and the family returned to dairy farming, but stuck with site work and excavating. In the 1970s, however, Bob and his brother, Bill, also a past RIBA president (1995-1996), as Baldwin Corp., got back into residential construction.

"As for as helping with the family business, we did everything as kids," Bob says. "When it came to excavating, I had my eye on those amazing machines. But my father handed me a shovel and said, 'If you can grade with that, I'll let you on the machine!'"

Bob and Bill learned, and worked their way up.

"Ultimately, I got on all the machines," Bob declares. "I myself have been building since 1976. We joined RIBA in 1978 and never looked back."

In fact, it's believed that Bob (then 21 years old) and Bill (19 years old) were the youngest members ever admitted to RIBA in their own right.



Bob Baldwin

In the late 1980s, Bob and Bill went their separate ways, but both remained active in RIBA. Today, Bob heads R.B. Homes Inc., based in Lincoln, along with Trinity Excavation. The companies serve Rhode Island, nearby Massachusetts and, occasionally, eastern Connecticut.

"I've built custom homes all over Rhode Island, in at least two-thirds of the cities and towns, mostly in the central and northern parts of the state," Bob reports.

The company's creed, as Bob states it, is "Don't be afraid of design. Give me a challenge to build just about anything, and we'll put a team together that knows how to do it."

Bob is also a longtime proponent of green building.

"I've been an advocate of energy-efficient construction as far back as the gas shortages of the late '70s," he says. "I've been building Energy Star® homes for quite a while."

R.B. Homes usually has about 12 employees, along with subcontractors. And Bob Baldwin is serious about current and future employees – and everyone else's in the residential construction industry.

"I got involved with RIBA's Workforce Development Committee in October 1988," Bob remembers. "The objective back then was to get the NCCER (National Center for Construction Education & Research) core curriculum adopted by the state for all career and technical education (CTE) programs, because there was no uniformity among these programs."

It's not like Bob worked his way up in RIBA as he did in the industry. RIBA's first executive director, the legendary Ross Dagata, who served from 1955 to 1997, saw his potential.

"A few months after I joined, Ross called and said he had the perfect project for me to get my feet wet in the association," Bob recalls. "I was thinking maybe the committee that planned the clambake or the Christmas party. But no! Ross puts me on the committee with (state building officials) Joe Cirillo and Dan DeDentro to create the state building code!"

Bob describes that entire experience as his "baptism by fire."

"There were towns where you couldn't get a permit if you were a Democrat, or, in other towns, if you were a Republican. Talk about turf battles! It was just a brutal process."

There was success in the end, as we all know, and Rhode Island got its statewide building code.

Meanwhile, battle honors and all, Bob Baldwin has not slowed down, and has no intention of doing so.

"I've always been in RIBA for the long haul," he says.

### ***R.B. Homes Inc.***

***President: Robert J. Baldwin***

***RIBA member since: 1978***

***Focus: Custom Homes***

***Founded: 1976***

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# Net Zero Energy development marks grand opening in Warwick

Wynfield Place, a new neighborhood of energy-efficient homes being built to the U.S. Dept. of Energy's (DOE's) Zero Energy Ready standards is currently under construction in Warwick.

H.a. Fisher Homes' Wynfield Place will consist of nine DOE Zero Energy Ready certified homes (<https://www.energy.gov/eere/buildings/zero-energy-ready-homes>). As this neighborhood comes to life, the project team has welcomed the public to visit their site for a special preview of the first set of three homes, each in a different phase of construction: a fully furnished model, and two other homes at various stages of construction. The remaining six homes in the neighborhood broke ground in 2019 and expect to be completed by the end of 2020.

Throughout the month of November industry professionals were invited to a series of interactive trainings and tours, highlighting the best practice strategies for Zero Energy building assemblies, equipment design and installation, and the techniques and technologies used to achieve low load homes.

The workshops covered hands-on blower door and duct testing, high performance building envelopes and electric HVAC solutions for energy efficient homes.

The official Grand Opening took place in December during which the homes were showcased to a broader audience including prospective homebuyers.

Preliminary energy modeling and performance testing indicates these well-insulated, fossil-fuel-free homes will save the property owners over 40 percent in energy costs compared to similar homes built to current building code specifications.

However, there is more to these homes than saving on the utility bill or reducing a carbon footprint. DOE's Zero Energy Ready certification also supports indoor air quality and healthier living.

The Wynfield Place homes have energy recovery ventilators (ERV) that introduce and circulate fresh outside air into the home in addition to capturing pollutants, allergens and pollen to maintain healthy indoor air quality.

The project is being built in collaboration with National Grid's Residential New Construction and Zero Energy Pilot Programs



**Here are the first of nine homes to be completed at Wynfield Place in Warwick. The grand opening took place in December.**

([www.ngrid.com/save](http://www.ngrid.com/save)) that provide incentives and no-cost design review, in-field training, verification testing and certification to help building professionals achieve Zero Energy homes. For more information about National Grid's new construction programs please call (888) 887-8841.

According to Hugh Fisher, president of h.a. Fisher Homes and a longtime member of the Rhode Island Builders Association, deposits on five of the nine homes were received during December's Grand Opening.

Find out more at [Hafisherhomes.com/Wynfield-Place](http://Hafisherhomes.com/Wynfield-Place).

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# Featured Products & Services for February 2020



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In the six short years since Shawn and Diane took over the business, they have replaced the storefront sign to more accurately reflect Fagan Door's Custom Harbour Series garage door line.

They also added additional employee and customer parking on site for easier access to the showroom, and developed a mobile app so that customers can schedule service appointments right from their smartphones. Additional services include custom paint colors on the entire line of garage door offerings, and same-day garage door service.

While they are well known for their Custom garage doors, Fagan Door also offers a wide selection of contractor-grade garage door and garage door opener products at affordable prices. No matter your budget, Fagan Door has the right product for you. Visit [fagandoor.com](http://fagandoor.com) or call (401) 821-2729 to find out how we can help.

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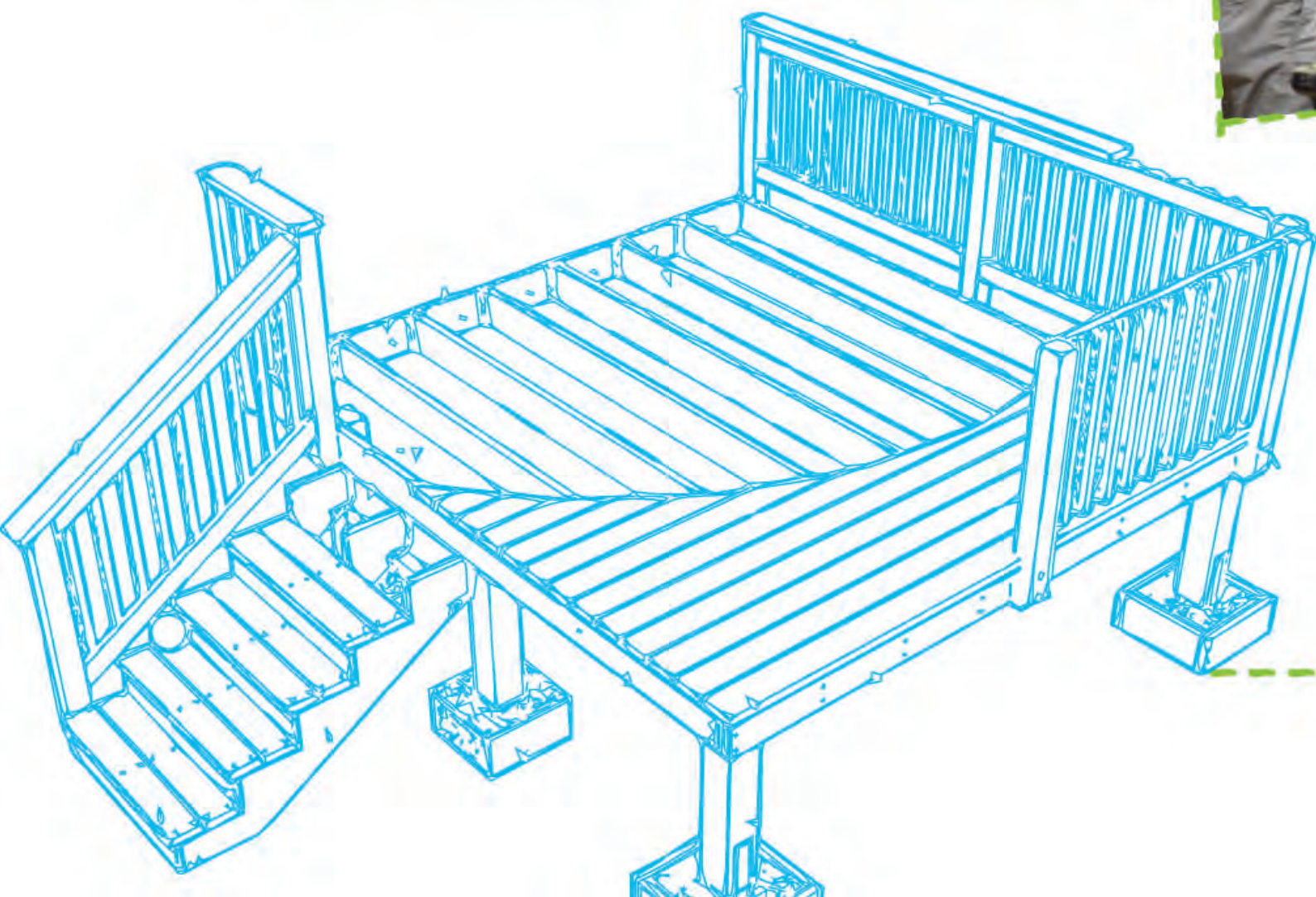
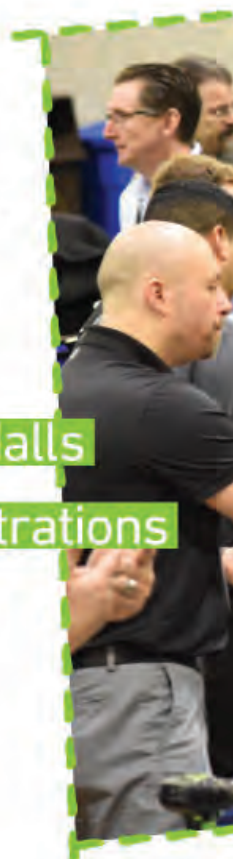
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## Continuing Education for Contractors

*Courses headlined in **RED** on The Education Pages qualify for 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.*

2 Credit Hours:

### Conflict Resolution in Construction

February 7<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Friday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, 8 to 10 a.m.

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

**COST:** FREE for members and their employees. Non-members, call for pricing options.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One day before class

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Bob Salvas at bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Instructor Jeff Deckman will give you the tools to limit unproductive conflicts, resolve conflicts and maximize your ability to keep your teams focused and working together. Pre-registration is required.



2½ Credit Hours:

### Exterior Wall Siding

February 10<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2:30 to 5 p.m.

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

**COST:** FREE for members and their employees. Non-members, call for pricing options.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One day before class

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Bob Salvas at bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

This course will teach you about the different systems available for the siding of homes. Matt Karl will be the instructor.

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



2 Credit Hours:

### Understanding Quickbooks® Online

February 11<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 3 to 5 p.m.

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

**COST:** FREE for members and their employees. Non-members, call for pricing options.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One day before class

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Bob Salvas at bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Instructor Bill Cunningham will help you achieve a better understanding of QuickBooks® Online, the most popular bookkeeping software used by construction companies.

The class also will deal with good bookkeeping practices, essential for any business.

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



2½ Credit Hours:

### Roof Framing and Systems

February 12<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 8 to 10:30 a.m.

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

**COST:** FREE for members and their employees. Non-members, call for pricing options.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One day before class

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Bob Salvas at bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Join instructor Tim Collins for an examination of the basic design for residential roof framing systems. The class will also take you through the most effective roof framing techniques.

Roof framing can be simple or complex, depending on the roof. Overhangs, hips and dormers can add greatly to the complexity of the framing.

You must pre-register for this course. There will be no admittance without pre-registration.

For non-members, payment is due upon registration.

Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



2 Credit Hours:

## Understanding Your Construction Business Model

February 12<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 3 to 5 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pky #301, East Providence 02914  
**COST:** FREE for members and their employees. Non-members, call for pricing options.  
**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One day before class  
**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Bob Salvas at bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

To grow a business to the next level, you need a good understanding of your business model. Instructor Bill Cunningham will help you understand what a business model is and how to use it to best advantage. The class also will discuss the nine building blocks to a repeatable and scalable business.

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



5 Credit Hours:

## Deck Codes and Construction

February 14<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 8 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. Non-members, call for pricing options.  
**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One day before class  
**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Bob Salvas at bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

This course with instructor Mike Guertin will cover: "Deck Construction Codes: Sorting Out Codes and Solutions."

Deck codes have had more changes in the past four code cycles than any other portion of the residential code; and building officials take decks more seriously than ever before. Learn what you need to design and build code-compliant decks using prescriptive measures and alternative details.

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



2 Credit Hours:

## Contract Law

February 26<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 8 to 10 a.m.  
**WHERE:** Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pky #301, East Providence 02914  
**COST:** FREE for members and their employees. Non-members, call for pricing options.  
**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One day before class  
**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Bob Salvas at bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Join instructor George Lough for an important and informative look at contract law in Rhode Island, a vital study for any contractor.

Learn about the elements of contracts, when they must be used, the right of rescission, and more.

You must pre-register for this course. There will be no admittance without pre-registration. For non-members, payment is due upon registration.

Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



2 Credit Hours:

## Trade Contractors Management and Scheduling

February 27<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 8 to 10 a.m.  
**WHERE:** Rhode Island Builders Association headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pky #301, East Providence 02914  
**COST:** FREE for members and their employees. Non-members, call for pricing options.  
**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One day before class  
**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Bob Salvas at bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

This course will provide an overview of what should be considered when scheduling trade contractors to perform work when you are the general contractor.

Justin Zeller is the instructor.

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





## RIBA Contractor Training

2 Credit Hours:

### Advanced Framing

February 28<sup>th</sup>

**WHEN:** Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 8 to 10 a.m.

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

**COST:** FREE for members and their employees. Non-members, call for pricing options.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** One day before class.

**FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER:** Contact Bob Salvas at bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Join instructor Mike Guertin to learn simple, field-applied, code-compliant details to reduce material and labor costs without reducing home frame strength.

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



*RIBA reserves the right*

*to limit the number of attendees from a single company at courses taught on-site.*

*For all courses, employees must provide proof of employment with a member company upon registration for class to be free of tuition charges.*

*For information, contact Bob Salvas at (401) 438-7400 or bsalvas@ribuilders.org*

*As an added benefit to RIBA's*

*Education Program, our instructors are happy to speak with class attendees by phone, after class, if they have additional questions or issues to discuss.*

*For information, contact Bob Salvas at (401) 438-7400 or bsalvas@ribuilders.org*

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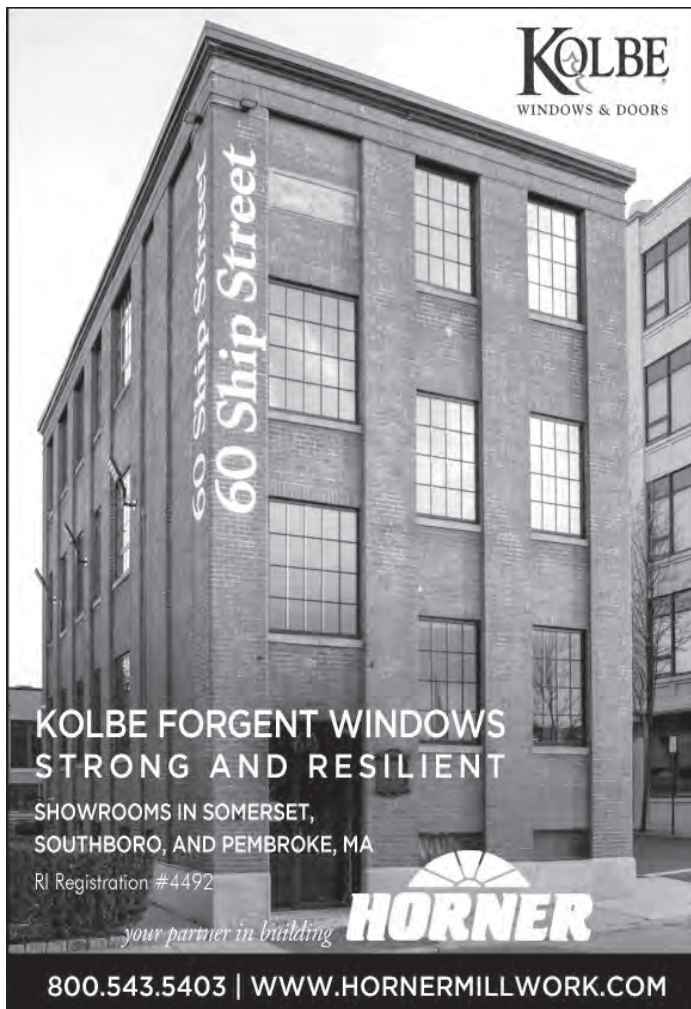
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# James A. Diossa

## Mayor of Central Falls

*Mayor James A. Diossa was born and raised in Central Falls. Elected to the City Council in 2010, one of Mr. Diossa's stated early goals was to help create more opportunities in the city so that more young people would stay. He ran for mayor and was elected in 2012, with Central Falls in fiscal crisis. During his tenure, he has worked to restore financial health to the city, and Standard & Poor's has raised Central Falls' long-term bond rating to "BBB" investment grade. Mayor Diossa is now in his second and final term.*

**THE BUILDER:** Given the fact that Central Falls is somewhat unique in Rhode Island because of its size and density, does the city want more residential growth?

**DIOSSA:** Absolutely. We've been known for our density, and I think that density has made our city very vibrant over our city as it was in the past, even as it was during the mill times. Today's vibrancy also comes from the many different investments people are willing to make. So, of course, I would always welcome more housing in the city.

**THE BUILDER:** Do you see that happening mainly through new construction or through rehabs of aging housing stock?

**DIOSSA:** I think both. We've been rehabbing old mills, turning them into lofts. We've removed old housing structures and built new ones. I'd love to see all new construction, but I'm also a realist and understand that the City of Central Falls has about 97 percent of its land already built upon.

That's unless I wanted to take over the parks, which I would never do.

**THE BUILDER:** So, what's your overall vision for the growth of Central Falls, including commercial development?

**DIOSSA:** Well, we always have to maintain strong financial practices, making sure we're budgeting appropriately, and holding the line on the budget so you can maintain a business-friendly environment. You keep taxes reasonable, streamline the processes for anyone who wants to build in the city...make it easy and fast.

With the coming of the Pawtucket/Central Falls Commuter Rail Station and Bus Hub, we're preparing to improve infrastructure, whether it's sidewalks, roads, and more.

We've also seen results from seven years of investing in our police department. We saw a crime reduction of 30 percent in the last 10 years, which is significant.

So, all these investments, including in education, will continue



to make Central Falls exciting and attractive to anyone who wants to come into the Blackstone Valley region.

Finally, I'm sure your readers are aware of development that's happening in our neighboring City of Pawtucket. That's just going to spill over into Central Falls.

**THE BUILDER:** What is the city's infrastructure situation regarding drinking water and sewers? In other words, how much upgrading is needed and where will the money come from?

**DIOSSA:** We no longer own our drinking water infrastructure. That's all handled by the Pawtucket Water

Supply Board, so you might say we're regionalized. That helps facilitate upgrades in a timely manner. And the people at the Pawtucket Water Supply Board are real professionals. They know how to handle infrastructure, the water quality and the connections for new residents, businesses, etc.

As far as sewers, we know we have old lines, and we're upgrading them as needed. We've done a few already. Central Falls is only one square mile, but we have a lot of pipes and infrastructure that we've been adjusting in the last seven years. Hopefully, we're able to pass a better product on to the next mayor, who will take office in December.

**THE BUILDER:** So you must be an advocate of the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, established by the General Assembly but not yet funded.

**DIOSSA:** Yes, absolutely. That needs to be funded. Any municipality understands how advantageous is it to have access to funds for projects of that kind. We all have a list of projects to get done. Having funding and accessibility makes those projects a reality.

**THE BUILDER:** Central Falls is one of the few communities that meet the 10 percent affordable housing stock goal set in the now 28-year-old Low and Moderate Income Housing Act. What is the city's current percentage of affordable housing as defined by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development?

**DIOSSA:** We're now between 11 and 12 percent. Central Falls has always been a place for folks who are new immigrants, who come for a job and to make a new life. The city is very walkable, and transportation is very accessible. So it's very attractive for people to come and live. We have to maintain a commitment to that.

Not everyone has access to a middle-class job, or will go to col-

see INTERVIEW...next page

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

lege or adopt a profession. So having that affordability percentage keeps everyone on their toes about what we're doing with development. What do we do to maintain it? How do we increase it?

We work with Rhode Island Housing, the Pawtucket Central Falls Development Corp. and other partners who value the fact that Central Falls is committed to this goal.

### **THE BUILDER: What developments, residential or commercial, are pending in Central Falls?**

**DIOSSA:** On Dexter Street, one of our oldest restaurants, Village Pizza, which employs 30 or more people, is expanding. There's a former clothing store that's being redeveloped, with opportunities for new businesses to move in. We're also developing another mixed-use property there that had been dilapidated.

In the middle of the city, we're building two brand new condos where three-deckers had been knocked down. These will provide better access to homeownership opportunities.

There's a lot on top of that. We just opened the Blackstone Valley Neighborhood Health Station, unique in the United States. With the help of Rhode Island Housing, Rhode Island College is opening their Dexter Adult Learning and Workforce Development Hub in the old Dexter Credit Union building.

As small as Central Falls is, these projects will make a huge difference for the Blackstone Valley.

**THE BUILDER: The Rhode Island Builders Association**

just opened the Central Falls Vocational Training Center off Higginson Avenue. (Story on page 1), with your support.

**DIOSSA:** That to me is a game-changer. When I was approached with the idea, I knew right away that this had to be done in Central Falls, where we have individuals who can start their own firms, build their own construction companies, people who can master the construction trades.

I literally didn't sleep until I found a location for that facility!

It's a small step right now, but over the years to come, this relationship with RIBA will benefit all residents of the city.

As your readers know, the average age of construction workers is advancing. The Training Center will bring in younger people and more diversity to the industry, and give them a shot at moving into the middle class.

**THE BUILDER: Many Rhode Island cities and towns are losing school population. Is that the case in Central Falls, where the schools are being administered by the state, and does the city welcome families with children?**

**DIOSSA:** This year, Central Falls saw an increase of 300 students. As long as we can support it, we welcome all people.

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

**DIOSSA:** It's a simple one: Central Falls is open for business. If there are ideas for any developments and special projects, we want to hear them!



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# CRLB announces new licensing for trades: Deadline is April 1

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Commercial roofing contractors, home inspectors, associate home inspectors, well drilling contractors, pump installers, water filtration/treatment-system contractors, and water filtration/treatment installers have until April 1<sup>st</sup> to become licensed through the Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board (CRLB)

That's the word from Julietta T. Georgakis, deputy director of the Dept. of Business Regulation, Division of Building, Design & Fire Professionals.

"These licenses were mandated by the General Assembly years ago, for the building and construction industries," Ms. Georgakis said.

"They follow a complete updating of the

CRLB's promulgated rules and regulations, and they will promote public safety, health, and welfare by providing a mechanism to ensure that all persons conducting business in the regulated disciplines within Rhode Island have the requisite skills, training and experience necessary to safely and adequately conduct those activities within the state."

According to the rules, contractors who

are already required to be registered with the CRLB will still have to be registered even if they are licensed.

The rules took effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

For more information, visit the CRLB website at [CRB.ri.gov](http://CRB.ri.gov). The site contains complete information on licensing requirements, costs, and all relevant applications. Contact the CRLB by phone at (401) 921-1590.

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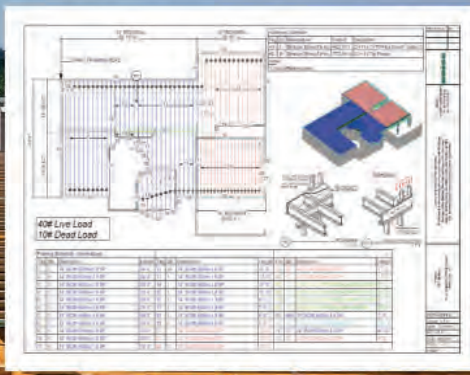
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# State seeks senior building code official, other positions open as well

The Dept. of Business Regulation, Division of Building, Design & Fire Professionals, has posted three full-time job openings of interest to people with experience in the construction industry.

## ***Senior State Building Code Official***

This position involves inspections as mandated by the Rhode Island Building Code and under the jurisdiction of the state building commissioner. It also involves out-of-state travel to inspect Rhode Island-approved modular homes or mobile homes in accordance with the state's contract with the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the National Conference of States on Building Codes and Standards.

Also involved would be investigations related to consumer complaints, assisting in the implementation of federal regulations required by law, and assisting municipalities with inspections in the absence of local inspectors.

Anyone applying for this position needs a thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of building construction and be able to apply such knowledge in the performance of on-site inspections for all state projects under the jurisdiction of the State Building Commission in order to determine compliance and to make recommendations to effect compliance.

Also necessary is a thorough knowledge of Rhode Island Building Code, regulations, laws, etc.; the ability to interpret and apply construction plans and specifications; the ability to instruct and train building code officials/inspectors; the ability to mediate corrections to construction problems related to consumer complaint and investigations.

This position also requires the ability to maintain inspection records and compose written reports; and related capacities and abilities.

## ***Licensing Aide***

This position involves reviewing and processing licensing and registration applications in an agency with regulatory responsibility for specific business, industries, professions/occupations or similar activities; to be responsible for the maintenance of records on both manual and computerized systems relating to licensure; to interact with the public on an ongoing basis; and to do related work as required.

The applicant needs a working knowledge of laws, policies and procedures of licensing and registration for specified business, industries, professions/occupations or similar activities; a working knowledge of office practices and use of equipment, including computers; the ability to carry out written and oral instructions



involving licensing procedures; the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with the public, licensees and agency personnel; and related capacities and abilities.

## ***Productivity Project Director***

This position involves planning, coordinating, directing and reviewing a state program designed to assist local and municipal governments in achieving maximum efficiency and productivity.

The candidate should have a thorough knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques of productivity research and implementation at the municipal and local level; a thorough knowledge of the training, evaluation and administrative skills needed to coordinate a program of increased efficiency for local and municipal government; a working knowledge of federal grant procedures and reporting requirements; the ability to plan and review the work of a staff engaged in providing productivity assistance in the public sector; the ability to assimilate technical materials from a variety of municipal sources, and to make planning and implementation decisions subsequent to suitable evaluation.

For details on these available positions, and to apply, visit <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/rhodeisland?>



## North Smithfield Superfund site is new solar farm location

A 28-acre Superfund site in North Smithfield is the location a new 12.44 megawatt "community solar farm," set to open later this year.

TurningPoint Energy and Nautilus Solar Energy broke ground for the King Community Solar Farm on November 13<sup>th</sup>, after the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) completed a five-year review of the decades-long cleanup work at the former Landfill & Resource Recovery Superfund Site, located off Oxford Road.

The EPA has placed "institutional controls" on the site, which mean it is not appropriate for housing construction.

"The Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM) is pleased that this phase of this (clean-up) project aligns with our standards for resiliency while continuing to protect human health and the environment," said DEM Director Janet Coit.

The Rhode Island Builders Association advocates siting of solar farms on tracts where housing is not feasible.

-Paul Eno

# MassHousing wraps up over \$612 million in affordable housing financing

MassHousing issued its mid-fiscal year lending report on January 7<sup>th</sup>, with well over half a billion dollars earmarked for workforce housing.

"Halfway through fiscal year 2020, MassHousing has closed \$612.4 million in affordable housing financing to ensure that more than 3,000 Massachusetts households have an affordable place to call home," a statement from the quasi-government agency said.

Multifamily lending leads the way, according to the statement.

"MassHousing has closed \$325 million in financing for 20

developments with 2,205 total units, 1,933 of which are affordable. Multifamily communities receiving MassHousing financing are located in 11 communities across the Commonwealth, and seven developments with 1,023 units (856 affordable) are located in Gateway Cities. Three developments receiving \$34.5 million in financing are new production that will create 211 new units."

As designated by MassHousing, there are 26 Gateway Cities, including Attleboro, New Bedford, Fall River and Worcester.

"Multifamily developers and property owners are facing a number of challenges in today's market, from escalating construction costs to an ongoing need for housing that is affordable to both low and middle-income households," said Mark Teden, MassHousing's Vice President of Multifamily Programs.

"Along with the continued demand for tax-exempt financing, MassHousing is working to expand our loan product offerings to meet the need for financing of mixed-income projects across the Commonwealth."

For homeowners, MassHousing has closed 1,593 loans for \$263.8 million, including down payment and closing cost assistance.

"This helped 547 households buy a home in Massachusetts. An additional 97 loans for \$23.6 million were made possible through

see MASSHOUSING...page 33

## Resources for RIBA members who work in Massachusetts

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

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

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

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

Also find information about trade licensing at this site.

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

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



## Mass. delays adoption of energy code

Discussion is taking place in the Bay State about adopting the 2018 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) with Massachusetts amendments, which were expected to be effective January 1, 2020.

The Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS) had expected to have the code ready for promulgation by that date, but "the changes have been going through a lengthy review process that has not yet been completed," BBRS said in a statement.

"The new code will not be ready for implementation by the original deadline. Since the BBRS intended the adoption process to include ample time to adjust to the new code, the BBRS has decided that users will be permitted to either utilize the existing energy code (based on the 2015 IECC) or follow the new energy code for a period of six months once the new code is approved and effective per the Secretary of State."

A public notice will be issued once an effective date for the new code is known, according to BBRS. Contact Assistant Chief of Inspections Dan Walsh at [dan.p.walsh@mass.gov](mailto:dan.p.walsh@mass.gov) or (617) 826-5236 for more information.

-Paul Eno

# Two RIBA members receive grants to build energy-efficient homes

Caldwell and Johnson Inc. and One Neighborhood Builders will construct low- and moderate-income units in North Kingstown, Providence.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Two members of the Rhode Island Builders Association are among the developers receiving grants to build energy-efficient housing for low- and moderate-income Rhode Islanders.

That's the word from Rhode Island Housing (RIH) and the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER), which recently named three recipients for funding under a new pilot program, Zero Energy for the Ocean State (ZEOS). Zeos is intended to support new zero net energy housing for

Rhode Islanders.

Both RIH and OER have committed a total of \$675,000 in funding to the three developers, who will "produce a range of building types in rural, suburban and urban parts of the state."

Caldwell and Johnson Inc., a longtime RIBA member based in North Kingstown, will build a single-story duplex rental for seniors 55-plus in that town, according to a statement from Rhode Island Housing (RIH).

"The development includes two, one-bedroom, one-bath units. Caldwell and Johnson has built this model previously, and is committed to providing much needed affordable housing for seniors in the North Kingstown area," RIH said.

Another member is Providence-based One Neighborhood Builders, slated to build

five small, single-family, solar-powered homes in the Olneyville neighborhood of Providence. Homes will be constructed as part of a training program with Providence-based, non-profit Building Futures and in partnership with the Rhode Island School of Design and the City of Providence, RIH said.

A third recipient, Newport-based Church Community Housing Corp. (CCHC) will construct eight single-family homes in Jamestown and Aquidneck Island. Seven of these will be new construction, and one includes the rehabilitation of an existing building.

CCHC will also develop a building manual that will be easily replicable by small homebuilders, according to RIH.

"ZEOS is the result of a public-private partnership between RIHousing, OER and National Grid to explore innovative, replicable solutions to utilize cost saving, clean energy technologies in homes," RIH said.

Developers will design and construct affordable, Zero Energy Buildings (ZEBs). ZEBs are any energy-efficient building with zero net energy consumption, meaning the total amount of energy used by a building on an annual basis is roughly equal to the amount of renewable energy created on the site.

In addition to meeting ZEB standards, participating developers must also be part of National Grid's Residential New Construction Program and will work closely with program partners throughout the design, construction, and data collection phases, RIH said.

See details at [NGRID.com/save](http://NGRID.com/save).

"Rhode Island Housing is committed to developing housing that Rhode Islanders can afford," said RIH Executive Director Carol Ventura.

"Energy-efficient features in these homes will result in reduced occupancy costs for residents, thereby increasing their disposable income to meet other needs in their lives."

## Registration is free

# RIBOA sets annual Education Expo in Feb.

**WHEN:** Tuesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://RIBOA.net)

It's the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Expo and Education Fair, sponsored by the Rhode Island Building Officials Association (RIBOA), and there's a great lineup of educational events for anyone in the residential construction industry.

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

Among the classes will be Rhode Island Builders Association member Mike Guertin presenting on "Deck Construction and Advanced Framing."

Contractors, students and inspectors are welcome. Proceeds will support the High School "Tools of the Trades" Scholarship Fund. Construction-related vendors will also be on hand.

For details and to register, visit [RIBOA.net](http://RIBOA.net).



# NAHB: The right kind of zoning can ease the affordable housing shortage

*National Association of Home Builders*

Media coverage recently has detailed the growing housing affordability shortage in the United States, discussing how local zoning remains a barrier to greater access to housing. Communities can work to address this shortage by updating ordinances that promote single-family detached and large multifamily buildings, with few options between.

What is needed is both more housing and more kinds of it. Diversifying housing types gives home buyers and renters more ways to meet their increasingly diverse income, household and generational needs.

State and local governments are beginning to see the value in providing greater housing diversity. Oregon, as well as Minneapolis, have recently made policy initiatives to allow multifamily units on land previously only available for single-family homes in this effort. These ordinance revisions have been misinterpreted as “bans” on single-family zoning. In reality, they provide a unique opportunity for communities attempting to provide a variety of affordable housing options.

NAHB's report, “Diversifying Housing Options with Smaller Lots and Smaller Homes,” explores the issues involved in generating a greater mix of housing types, such as smaller homes, duplexes, townhouses, small-scale multifamily and accessory dwelling units (ADUs). The report particularly offers value to those in the home building industry who specialize in relatively small builds or development, in terms of both concepts and design elements.

The following projects, taken from the 11 examples detailed in the report, provide a glimpse into how innovative ordinances can lead to successful and affordable housing.

## *Small Lot Ordinances*

**GASPAR Townhomes — Los Angeles:** Ten side-by-side townhomes in the hills of Echo Park occupy only 0.34 acres of space. This was achieved by building upward (three stories per unit) and maximizing a small lot ordinance. Each unit is detached, but only at a distance of six inches. Each unit sold within one month of opening, which is reflective of the success to create individual housing units in a contemporary, urban context.

**Danielson Grove — Kirkland, Wash.:** Innovative codes can create smaller, community-oriented homes within a single-family neighborhood. The project comprises 16 detached homes that range from 700 to 1,500 square feet. Built around a shared courtyard, the development was designed to encourage interaction between residents.

The city of Kirkland had released a request for proposal (RFP) incentivizing developments by increasing the allowable density for homes under 1,500 square feet, offering site development flexibility and providing an accelerated land use timeline. The new

code achieved a density of 7.7 dwellings per acre, compared to the previous maximum of 4.8 dwellings per acre.

## *Cottage Court Ordinance*

**Conover Commons — Redmond, Wash.:** Conover Court was the first project to take advantage of Redmond's Innovative Housing Demonstration Project ordinance, allowing double the density previously available and accelerated processing. The pocket neighborhood has two clusters of single-family cottages and houses; one cluster has 12 1,000-square-foot cottages, while the other has 13 homes ranging from 1,200 to 2,400 square feet. Professionals, empty nesters, singles and single-parent families make up the diverse community.

## *Minimum Lot Size Zoning Code*

**Denver, Colo., Amendment:** Denver saw an opportunity to address an outdated zoning ordinance from the 1950s, which created unaffordable housing and large, ill-fitting lots. In 2010, the city updated its zoning code to reduce minimum lot size of some residential areas to 3,000 square feet for single family, or 4,500 square feet for multifamily. Notably, the code does not require off-street parking for single-family homes; this gives an owner or builder further ability to reduce housing size and construction costs.

All the case studies in the report illustrate the overarching theme that a greater variety of housing, particularly with smaller lots and home options, contribute toward greater affordability and choice for a diversifying population. To explore more state and local housing affordability solutions, visit NAHB's Housing for All site, which highlights many strategies and built projects from across the country.

The full report, as well as additional resources, is available through NAHB's Land Use 101 toolkit.

This article appeared in NAHB's *Best in American Living*. 



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## **PODCASTS...***...from page 1*

Podcasts will be available on all major podcast platforms, including YouTube, Apple Podcasts, iTunes, Android, RSSRadio, Chrome, Stitcher, Spotify, and many more.

Podcasts will be created and posted during the last week of each month. Each one will be numbered, for future reference by members, and talking points/show notes for each podcast will be kept at the RIBA website, [RIBuilders.org](http://RIBuilders.org).

And this is a marketing opportunity as well.

Companies, including suppliers and subcontractors, may sponsor one or more podcasts, providing their own advertising copy, and there will be advertising packages offered to include *The Rhode Island Builder*, the annual *RIBA Membership Directory and Buyers Guide*, and Networking Night sponsorships.

Watch for more information, or contact Mr. Marcantonio at (401) 438-7400 or [jmarcantonio@ribuilders.org](mailto:jmarcantonio@ribuilders.org).



## **APP...***...from page 2*

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"A builder can play with a couple of parameters within the app itself. If they're sitting down with a client, they can show that, by elevating a structure by this amount, that can change the damage profile. Using the app, they won't necessarily have to engage environmental consultants or engineers to do this analysis."

David A. Caldwell of Caldwell and Johnson Inc. and a past president of the Rhode Island Builders Association, commended the new app.

"This is an excellent application to ensure that property owners have at their disposal all the information that they need to make informed decisions," Mr. Caldwell said.

STORMTOOLS is available free from both the Google and Apple Stores for iOS and Android devices.

Find complete information on the app and how to use it at [Beachsamp.org/stormtools/](http://Beachsamp.org/stormtools/) stormtools-coastal-environmental-risk-index-ceri.



## **MASSHOUSING...***...from page 30*

the Agency's Mortgage Insurance Fund."

Nevertheless, the housing shortage in the state continues.

According to the Massachusetts Association of Realtors®, the number of single-family homes for sale in November 2019 fell 29 percent, compared with the previous year, and the number of condominiums for sale fell almost 21 percent.

Meanwhile, median sales prices continued to climb, to \$405,000 for a single-family home and \$380,000 for a condo.

"MassHousing should be the lender of choice for first-time homebuyers," said MassHousing's Vice President of HomeOwnership Programs Mounzer Aylouche. "Our affordable mortgage loans and down payment assistance provide the additional buying power needed to compete in today's market."

Find out more at <https://www.masshousing.com>.



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## **CENTER...***...from page 1*

Furey Roofing & Construction, Terry Regan of Regan Heating & Air Conditioning all pitching in.

In particular, Mr. Leyva handled demolition, framing, drywall and painting.

## **Tours in the offing**

Going forward, RIBA members and guests will be invited to tour the facility, to meet students, and to recruit new, skilled employees.

In addition to the VESL classes, a new session of the Carpentry Career Training Program (CCTP) is planned for September. This would make the CFVTC the fifth location in the state to offer the CCTP, joining Woonsocket, Chariho, Warwick and East Providence.

## **Thanks to Centreville Bank**

"Grant funds from the Centreville Bank Charitable Foundation will equip the classroom at the newly created Central Falls facility, to support the construction trade workforce development program," said Paola N. Fernandez, vice president for community development at Centreville Bank.

"Thank you for all the amazing work RIBA does to help improve people's lives in our state," For details on the Central Falls facility and VESL, contact Ms. Bernal at (401) 500-9146 or [bbernal@ribuilders.org](mailto:bbernal@ribuilders.org).

## **VESL now recruiting**

In fact, recruitment is under way for a new VESL basic carpentry class, slated to begin at CFVTC on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Register online at <https://ribuilders.org/vesl-training-program-details>, or at the information/registration sessions scheduled in February.

Contact Ms. Bernal to RSVP for the sessions or for more information.

For complete information on RIBA's contractor training programs, continuing education, and workforce-development training in general, contact Robert Salvas at RIBA: (401) 438-7400 or [bsalvas@ribuilders.org](mailto:bsalvas@ribuilders.org).

RIBA also offers complimentary customized job training for members' potential and current employees. Contact Robin Barlow at (401) 438-7400 or [rbarlow@ribuilders.org](mailto:rbarlow@ribuilders.org) for details.

*Related story on page 9.*



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