

**FEATURED
PRODUCTS AND
SERVICES
FOR JUNE**
Middle Section

**RIBA Guidelines
for Jobsites**
Pull-Out Section at Center

**Housing
economist:
Contractors must
expand skill sets**



Nationally known economist Elliot Eisenberg spells out the current state of the housing market, and what contractors must do to prosper.

Pages 29

**RIBA launches
news podcast for
members**

In a new, members-only service, the Rhode Island Builders Association has launched a regular podcast to keep members updated on crucial issues.

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**Grads of RIBA job
training are ready
to work for you**

COVID-19 can't stop RIBA's dynamic job-training programs. Recent and soon-to-be graduates of the carpentry, plumbing and electrical programs are ready for hiring!

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A MEMBER'S GUIDE TO NAVIGATING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Information on Inspections during the Crisis.....2

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How Members are Adapting in the Age of COVID-19.....9

This information was current as of May 21, 2020.

The Key for Contractors

Education, training are vital to survival, growth during pandemic, say economists

The Rhode Island Builders Association is already prepared to provide these services.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

In a down economy, career training and further education for all contractors and their employees are crucial to staying in business and growing that business. That's the word from two eminent economists who spoke with *The Rhode Island Builder* over the past few weeks. *See below and page 29.*

As it happens, long before any of us had heard of COVID-19, the Rhode Island Builders Association was positioning itself to provide those very opportunities.

"Over the past four years, RIBA has revised its business model precisely to serve this need: Training and retraining our contractor base and their employees," said RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio.

"RIBA has always been a huge information resource, and it's now a huge training resource. According to economists, this is the way out of the crisis for members of the residential construction industry," Mr. Marcantonio added. "So your membership and benefits are even more valuable than before."

Contractor Training Program

In January, RIBA introduced a vastly expanded curriculum of tuition-free classes for contractors and

see TRAINING...page 35

Lardaro: Contractors who expand skills, reinvent themselves, will prosper in 'new normal'

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

The COVID-19 crisis is giving both Rhode Island and members of the residential construction industry an important opportunity: a chance to reinvent themselves. And the key to that for contractors is all the education they can get.

"The key to surviving, then prospering in the post-pandemic economy, is for individual contractors, and individual workers for that matter, to redefine their niches," said Leonard Lardaro, professor of economics at the University of Rhode Island.

see LARDARO...page 35



Dr. Leonard Lardaro

Officials: Reviews, inspections proceeding despite crisis

Procedures modified but delays are minimal, building officials say.

By Paul F. Eno Editor

Judging from reports from local building officials, local inspections and plan reviews are proceeding with delays that are usually minimal, despite social distancing and other modified procedures, reduced staff hours in some areas, and a "new normal" in the age of COVID-19.

Keeping both eyes on the whole process is Deputy Director Julietta Georgakis of the Dept. of Business Regulation.

"The first few weeks of the pandemic aside, when everyone was scrambling to figure things out, I've heard only a very few complaints about people not getting

their projects permitted or inspected by the municipalities, in a timely fashion," Ms. Georgakis said.

"It's actually quite easy to continue doing so in a safe manner, particularly for those municipalities that offer online permitting, where person-to-person contact is very limited or even completely unnecessary," she added.

"To address the challenges posed by COVID-19, we in the State Building Office have made adjustments to our typical workflow and inspection protocols to incorporate all requirements set forth in Gov. Gina Raimondo's executive orders, as well as all Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Rhode Island Dept. of Health (RIDOH) guidance. By doing so, we have been able to continue reviewing plans, and permitting and inspecting the projects under our purview, safely."

Inspectors working remotely was one step, according to Ms. Georgakis.

"Back in March, all our inspectors began working remotely. They use the capabilities our online permitting software offers. Since then, when visiting jobsites, we have asked that inspections be limited to those who are absolutely necessary. This is not the time to have onlookers hanging around!"

Inspectors follow the current guidelines, she stressed.

"Our inspectors adhere to social distancing protocols, wear cloth face coverings, and sanitize hands before entering and upon exiting a site; we call it (without wanting to advocate for a certain brand) 'Purell® in, Purell® out,'" Ms. Georgakis declared.



Julietta Georgakis

"If an inspector witnesses any unsafe or unhealthy conditions during an inspection, they share the CDC and RODOH recommendations for keeping a safe and healthy work environment with the management team on-site. Overall though, they report that compliance has been fantastic."

As some local building officials have told *The Rhode Island Builder*, photographs and videos have been allowed in place of physical inspections.

"In some cases, we have also allowed the submission of photographs and videos to limit the time our inspectors have to be physically present at an inspection," Ms. Georgakis explained.

"Implementing these modifications has allowed us to minimize the risk of exposure to our inspectors, as well as the population we serve, while continuing to operate our office in a productive and ef-

see *INSPECTIONS...page 37*

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DEADLINE FOR THE JULY ISSUE

All copy, ads and photos must be to us by

Friday, May 29

E-mail material to

builder@newriverpress.com or fax: (401) 356-0913

RIBA launches news podcast for members

In its newest member benefit, the Rhode Island Builders Association has launched a regular, half-hour audio podcast to keep members updated on the latest developments in the residential construction scene in the Ocean State.

Hosted by *Rhode Island Builder* Editor Paul F. Eno and featuring an interview with RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio, the first podcast offered the latest updates on the COVID-19 situation as it relates to the industry in Rhode Island, along with tools RIBA offers to help contractors deal with the crisis.

Podcasts will be numbered for easy reference. Podcast #1 was posted on May 7th. Subsequent podcasts will be posted at least once



The RIBA podcast portal as it appears on the Spreaker® site.
see PODCASTS...page 34

RIBA thanks these members who recently renewed!

Atlas Insulation Co.
Brunetti Home Inspections LLC
Castle Builders Inc.
Concrete Products Inc.
CV Home Improvements LLC
Cypress Design Co.
Devine Building & Remodeling Inc.
Diamond Painting & Home Imp. Inc.
DicRis Builders Inc.
DiStefano Brothers Construction Inc.
East Coast Interiors
Elco Painting Inc.
Elmdale Building Service Inc.
Emidy Bros. Construction

Paul Catanzaro
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Karin Schwer
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Looking Ahead

June 2020

♦ **Ongoing: Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) - Basic Carpentry** - Recruiting continues for a VESL class to begin in September. For details, contact Betty Bernal at (401) 500-9146 or bbernal@ribuilders.org, or register online at <https://ribuilders.org/vesl-training-program-details>. Current classes continue online.

♦ **POSTPONED: June 4th: Seventh Annual Networking Barbecue** - WATCH FOR UPDATED INFORMATION.

♦ **June 10th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Job Scheduling is the Key to Success. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 15.*

♦ **June 11th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topic is Residential Blueprint Reading. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 15.*

♦ **June 12th: RIBA Contractor Training** - Topic is Construction Accounting Software. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 27.*

♦ **June 15th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2½ Credit Hours** - Topic is Accounting and Cash Flow. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 16.*

♦ **June 16th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topic is Deck Codes and Construction. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 16.*



♦ **June 18th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2½ Credit Hours** - Topic is Foundation and Floor Codes. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 16.*

♦ **June 19th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 1 Credit Hours** - Topic is the Residential Energy Code on Envelope and Building Science Essential for Zero Energy Homes and Roofs. *Details on page 16.*

♦ **June 22nd: RIBA Contractor Training** - Installing a Site-Built Under Deck Drainage System. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 27.*



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 continuing education credits. Contact RIBA for confirmation.

  **June 24th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topic is Residential Estimating. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 26.*

  **June 25th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2½ Credit Hours** - Topic is Wall Coverings and Sheathing. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 26.*

  **June 26th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 3 Credit Hours** - Topic is Kitchen Design and Installation. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 26.*

  **June 29th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 1 Credit Hour** - Topic is Construction Safety Protocols for COVID-19. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 27.*

  **June 30th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2½ Credit Hours** - Topic is Roof Assemblies. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 26.*

April 2021

 **April 8th-11th: 70th Annual Rhode Island Home Show, Featuring the Rhode Island Flower & Garden Show and The Energy Expo** - Call (401) 438-7400 or e-mail homeshow@ribuilders.org. *Details on page 7 and at RIBAHomeShow.com.*

Take more RIBA classes online at RIBAEducates.com

Visit RIBAEducates.com for access to 24-7 continuing education not listed above!

Online courses include Scaffold Safety, Workplace Safety, Confined Spaces, Ladder Safety and more, each worth one credit hour of state-mandated continuing education. All RIBA 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, or call (401) 438-7400.



Timothy A. Stasiunas

President's Message

Through RIBA's efforts, we are among the lucky

what has been deemed a global pandemic.

When I sit down to come up with a monthly message for members of the Rhode Island Builders Association, I have to look ahead to what the events of the subsequent month might be. For June 2020, I would have hoped that this entire COVID-19 crisis would be in the rear-view mirror. But, as I write this in May, it seems this will all be with us for a bit longer.

Already, most of the events we look forward to, and that make up our summer traditions, will most likely be canceled, if they haven't been already. I have trouble with that; part of me acknowledges that the health of our citizens here in Rhode Island and across the country, for that matter, is a big concern. The other part of me already sees what will be a trying or, in some cases, fatal year for local businesses.

Here in Rhode Island, we depend on tourism to a large extent. It's one of the fundamental industries in the state. As of now, many local restaurants certainly feel the pinch. If not closed, they're trying to survive by providing takeout meals. I encourage everyone: If

When I wrote last month's message, I never thought in a million years I'd be writing about something related to

you can, support your local restaurants at this time of need, please do so. But they may be some of the lucky ones.

I think of all the other businesses that have been closed altogether, and I'm not sure who, why or how those decisions were made. They are staffed by our friends and neighbors and, like a lot of our citizens, need our help and support while we are struggling as communities, as a state and as a nation.

Through the strenuous efforts of RIBA and its dedicated staff, we are among the lucky ones as well. Considered essential services, we have been able to maintain a certain level of work and keep our jobsites open.

We need, however, to do our part to provide a safe work environment with all our employees and sub-contractors by following the guidelines set before us, all spelled out in the May issue of *The Rhode Island Builder*.

I'll leave you with this thought: If we as a country, after all that we've been through these last few months, learn anything, it must be that we as a people have to rely on ourselves. We can no longer look outside our borders for the things we need. America is the greatest country on earth, flaws and all, and we need to start acting like it. I look forward to peace and prosperity for all our RIBA members!



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THE RI HOME SHOW MOVES FORWARD TO APRIL 8 - 11, 2021

with an Enhanced Marketing Program!

WE'LL BE PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS ALL YEAR LONG!

- The RI Home Show is offering a year-round marketing plan for all show exhibitors who renew their booth space for the 2021 show
- The RI Home Show's marketing team will begin sharing Facebook posts from each exhibitor's business page to the RI Home Show Facebook page which has over 7,000 followers! This will begin in May 2020 and run through April 7, 2021
- Up to 3 of your own Facebook posts will be shared by the RI Home Show's Facebook page May 2020 - April 2021
- A new exhibitor directory will be developed on RIBAHomeShow.com which will categorize exhibitors by industry and service-type. Each exhibitor will have the opportunity to provide a brief description, as well as social media handles for their directory listing and promote your show specials
- The website floor plan will transition to a new interactive floor plan that will allow users to interact with each exhibitor's booth space and learn more about the services, products and promotions that you will be offering at the show.

For those exhibitors moving forward to the RI Home Show in 2021, and who want to be a part of the exhibitor social media campaign, please contact Robert Yoffe at 781.639.5200 or email bob@yoffeexpo.com to secure your participation. Then, visit ribahomeshow.com/program to fill out the form to begin.

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Navigating the Crisis

From the Dept. of Business Regulation

Notice to the Construction Industry

On April 20th, DBR's Division of Building, Design & Fire Professionals released the following statement:

Gov. Raimondo's Executive Order 20-14 prohibited all non-critical, retail businesses from conducting in-person operations. The construction industry, like other industries, remains open. As we learn more about COVID-19, it is important that we take that knowledge and put in place the policies and procedures to keep employees who are physically present at work, safe. On April 3rd, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended that citizens wear "non-surgical, cloth masks" to help prevent the spread of coronavirus. In Rhode Island, on April 18th, it became mandatory for all construction workers on a jobsite, who cannot easily, continuously, and measurably maintain a six-foot distance from all other persons, to wear a cloth face covering, per Gov. Raimondo's Executive Order 20-24.

The term "cloth face covering" means a cloth material that covers the nose and mouth and reduces the release of infectious particles into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes. The term should not be interpreted to mean a disposable surgical face mask or a N95 mask. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders.

To ensure all employees have a cloth face covering, businesses must, at their expense, provide their employees with a cloth face covering that covers the nose and mouth, or the materials to create a face covering

For information on cloth face coverings, see:

- [Commerceri.com/masks](https://commerceri.com/masks)
- [CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html)
- [CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-faq.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-faq.html)

Employees whose health or safety would be negatively impacted by wearing a cloth face covering are exempt from this requirement. Examples where the covering may negatively impact the safety of the worker or others include but are not limited to: When other respiratory protection is required, or when operating heavy machinery and the covering impairs hearing or communication.

Employees may, if they choose, fashion their own cloth face covering, or wear other more protective face covering if they are already in possession of such. If the employer is required to provide its employees with more protective face covering equipment due to the nature of the work involved, employees must continue wearing the more protective face covering

Please remember that cloth face coverings are not a replacement

see **NOTICE TO INDUSTRY...page 34**

For most RIBA members:

Business is proceeding, but with due caution

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Members of the Rhode Island Builders Association continue to step up when it comes to working safely, continuing to serve customers under the current bizarre circumstances, and taking care of their employees.

EnviroClean Restore

Eric S. Anderson of EnviroClean Restore, based in Smithfield, not only finds himself busy, but able to render an invaluable service when it comes to the public health crisis.



Eric S. Anderson

“We think of ourselves as a 24/7 emergency, disaster-restoration company,” Mr. Anderson said. “So, with respect to the COVID-19 situation, we’ve handled biohazard response in the past. We did this for Bryant University during the norovirus outbreak on campus a few years ago.”

He noted that understanding how to disinfect facilities is critical.

“We have what’s called a disaster enterprise resource program (ERP). We have clients already signed up and, in the event of an emergency, EnviroClean is notified so we can respond immediately. We have a lot of people calling us now to enroll in the ERP. They either want to be prepared when they reopen, or are functioning now with essential staff.”

There is “cautionary cleaning,” where there have been no known COVID-19 cases, he explained. If one or more people at the facility have tested positive, there are more steps.

In the current crisis, many companies are finding that they weren’t as prepared as they thought they were, according to Mr. Anderson. Another wrinkle is that “pop-up” companies have been spawned by the crisis and that “just come in and spray.”

“That isn’t good enough,” Mr. Anderson said.

“We serve Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut, and we have to comply with each state’s jobsite protocols so we can keep our own employees safe. We’re still open for non-COVID-related emergency services for commercial facilities and homes, such as fire or water damage.”

LOPCO Contracting

Thomas J. Lopatosky Jr. of Providence-based LOPCO Con-

tracting, was finding indoor work a little slow in April, but believes painting and other forms of remodeling will be booming in coming months.

“Our business actually tends to pick up in recessions because people are less likely to do that new home or big addition, but more likely to do a smaller remodeling project,” Mr. Lopatosky said. “They’ll do the painting on the outside, or fix this or that - just to shore things up until the economy improves and they can do the bigger projects.”

He also noted that LOPCO has a backlog, so there will be plenty of work.

“Some folks have asked to postpone their interior work, but nobody has actually canceled,” he stated.

“At the same time, we have to protect our clients and employees in this health crisis. But it’s one of the weird parallels that it goes along with our seasonal workload, when we start doing more outside-oriented projects.”

Whether inside or out, LOPCO is being meticulous in enforcing social distancing, face coverings and other jobsite protocols.

“All the guidelines are in place on our jobsites.”

Michael R. Guertin Inc.



Mike Guertin

“It’s just me and one other guy, and we’ve been working as usual,” commented Mike Guertin of Michael R. Guertin Inc., based in East Greenwich.

“Most of the work I had lined up for spring is exterior, so we’re just going along. I



Making lemonade out of lemons, Thomas J. Lopatosky of LOPCO Contracting has turned the required face covering into a marketing tool as he works a painting project at Church and Benefit Streets in Providence recently. Photo by Steve Mason.

see **REPORT FROM THE MEMBERS...page 34**

Member Profile: Jerry Zarrella Jr. of East Greenwich Cove Builders

The risk of a lifetime pays off!

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

"I never had any inclination to do anything else but be a builder my whole life."

That's the story hands-down from Jerry Zarrella Jr., one of the Rhode Island Builders Association's younger members, a second-generation contractor, both of whose parents were home builders.

"When I was a little kid, I didn't see my father much because he was always working in his foundation business. But we went to church together on Sundays. Then he'd put me in the front seat of his car, and we'd drive around and look at jobsites," Jerry recalls.

"He'd say, this is our business, and someday it could be yours. And I learned from a young age about helping out."

So, once Jerry was a little older, and whenever he wasn't at school, even on snow days, he was working with his dad, whose company at the time was Allied Concrete Forms.

"This started off as something like a punishment, but it ended up being a good thing! Over those early years, I had a lot of odd jobs, but I always knew I would end up being a builder."

Jerry started off by breaking the snap ties on foundations, sweeping, then stacking the lumber. One day, when he was 14, the excavator didn't show up.

"I just jumped on the backhoe and started running it!"

If you want to know where Jerry gets that kind of drive, just look at the rest of his family. His dad, Jerry Sr., eventually became a home builder and has owned a dizzying number of companies. His mom, Debra, became a builder in her own right and now heads Zarrella Development. Brother Paul became a successful real estate agent, and Brother Michael is a lawyer.

Fast forward to 2016, after degrees from Tulane University and the Wentworth Institute of Technology, and we find East Greenwich Cove Builders.

"As Zarrella Associates, I was building 10 houses a year, a foundation every month, always spot lots around the state and



Jerry Zarrella Jr. displays two of the three Best in American Living™ Awards East Greenwich Cove Builders received at the 2020 International Builders Show.

always spreading the risk," Jerry says. "But they were all starter homes."

Jerry was making money, but it soon became like being "on cruise control."

Then he hatched an idea for what was becoming known as a "pocket neighborhood," a planned community of smaller homes of varied kinds, grouped around a common outdoor area.

It would become Castle Street Cottages on Rope Walk Hill in East Greenwich, the first pocket neighborhood in Rhode Island.

Jerry Sr., his partner at the time, wanted nothing to do with it. So Jerry took a heavy step and decided to go it alone with his life savings, and a new partner: Chris Santilli, a builder of similar age and background.

The rest, as they say, is history, and you can read about it in the January and March issues of *The Rhode Island Builder*.

The success of Castle Street Cottages was immediate. Not only did it sell out, but it won three Best in American Living™ Awards at the 2020 International Builders Show.

Jerry was saved, and in a big way! East Greenwich Cove Builders continues to acquire

lots in the East Greenwich waterfront area, and Jerry plans to keep on growing. Today, success attained, Jerry joins the rest of us in facing the challenges of COVID-19.

"Along with making sure our crew follows all the safety protocols, Chris and I decided to switch off for our on-site work, two weeks on for him, two weeks for me. That way, if something happens to one of us, sickness or injury, the other will be able to keep things running," Jerry explains.

Through all his experiences, some of them hair-raising, Jerry has learned that a general contractor has to be just that: a general.

"On the jobsite, you have to be like Alexander the Great. You can't sit in the back and be soft, especially when you're the youngest guy on the job, and the people working for you have more experience. I lead from the front line."

COVID-19 shouldn't be a hindrance to the construction industry, Jerry says.

"It's an opportunity to organize jobsites the way they should be organized, and to establish discipline and the best safety protocols."

Jerry joined the Rhode Island Builders Association in 2017 after being deeply impressed by the International Builders Show.

"I like everything about RIBA. The free classes for members are a great service, the annual *Directory* is a tremendous resource. But what I like most is the monthly magazine!"

Find out more at Eastgreenwichcovebuilders.com/

East Greenwich Cove Builders

Principal: Jerry Zarrella Jr.

RIBA member since: 2017

Focus: Custom Homes

Founded: 2016

Based: East Greenwich, Rhode Island

A bright, airy dining room with a wooden table, wicker chairs, and large windows. The room features a wooden dining table with a thick top and turned legs, surrounded by dark wicker chairs. On the table are four glass candle holders with white candles. A potted plant sits on a small stand behind the table. To the right, a red wooden console table holds a teapot, plates, and a vase with flowers. Large windows with white frames let in natural light, and a patterned rug covers the floor.

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Professional Women in Building : PWB NEWS

*We want to wish our members a wonderful Summer Season!
We look forward to networking again soon.*

*Please enjoy these photos from past events and know we
are stronger together! Stay safe. Be well.*



Smithfield Plumbing Networking Event

Fall 2020 Date 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>



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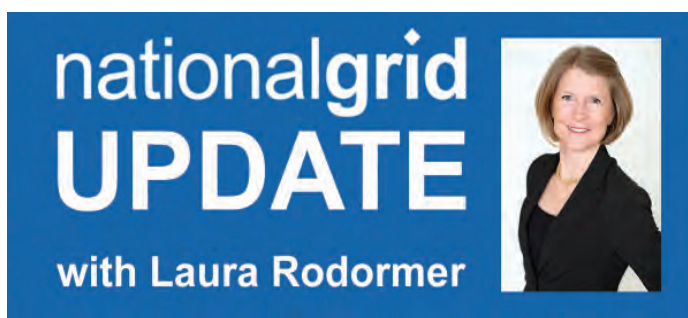
Energy efficiency in a pandemic

In March 2020, upon Rhode Island's quick response to the COVID-19 pandemic, National Grid suspended on-premise energy-efficiency activities as well as the associated incentives for equipment and appliance upgrades. Exceptions to this suspension are considered on a case-by-case basis and only for safety or emergency situations. For a list of frequently asked questions, go to Nationalgridus.com/RI-Home/COVID-19-EE.

During this time, new, remote energy-efficiency opportunities are being tested to provide customers with resources without in-person interaction. These include:

- Online Virtual Home Energy Assessments (VHEAs) for residential and small business (888) 633-7947;
- No-cost energy saving products will be shipped directly for customers to install;
- ENERGY STAR® LED light bulbs;
- Advanced power strips;
- Low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators;
- 100 percent off approved insulation (up to \$15,000), no-cost air sealing, and additional rebates toward qualifying energy-efficient heating, cooling and water heating equipment;
- Online marketplace incentives (Marketplace.nationalgridus.com);
- Upstream point of sale incentives;
- Connected solutions – incentives to reduce electric use during periods of high energy demand (Nationalgridus.com/RI-Home/ConnectedSolutions).
- Refrigerator recycling only if the old refrigerator is left outside. (877) 889-4762;
- HEAT Loan for energy efficient upgrades;
- Evaluation, measurement and verification data collection for high priority studies;
- Trade ally driven C&I incentives;
- Case-by-case basis, virtual pre- and post-inspections for C&I projects.

The VHEAs were first offered to customers who had their Home Energy Assessment postponed because of COVID-19 and subsequently have been marketed to new customers. Through the



VHEAs, a pipeline for ongoing work, delivery and installation is being created for when in-person work resumes.

To further build a pipeline of work, customers who complete the VHEA and their home needs insulation, will receive 100 percent incentive for insulation services up to \$15,000 maximum incentive. Call (888) 633-7947 to schedule your no-cost virtual assessment.

On-line training and workforce development are continuing to be offered online through a regional effort across Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire. Contractor/vendor resources can be found at Greentrainingusa.com/ngridri.html. Examples of trainings include:

- Building Operator Training (BOC);
- Design Lights Consortium (DLC) Networked Lighting Controls;
- BPI Building Science Principles;
- BPI Building Analyst, Envelope Professional and Infiltration and Duct Leakage trainings;
- ResCaz Simulation;
- OSHA Confined Space: Attics and Crawlspace.

National Grid's goals during this time focus on public health concerns, transparency, contractor support and impact mitigation, and preparing for the future. Website resources:

Frequently Asked Questions NGRID.com/covid-19-ee

Contractor Resources Portal NGRID.com/businesshelp

Rhode Island's Energy Efficiency Programs Nationalgridus.com/RI-Home/energy-saving-programs/.

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Though classes have temporarily moved to Zoom online conferencing (see page 1), the Rhode Island Builders Association continues the Contractor Training Program in June, expanding its educational offerings for members and their employees! Call for details and to register, contact RIBA Professional Development Manager Robert Salvas at (401) 438-7400 or e-mail bsalvas@ribuilders.org.

Continuing Education

Courses headlined in **RED** on The RIBA Contractor Training 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:

Job Scheduling is the Key to Success June 10th

WHEN: Wednesday, June 10th, 8 to 10 a.m.
WHERE: Online via Zoom
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 Justin Zeller to learn about the effect of job scheduling on making money, client happiness and professionalism.

You must pre-register for this course. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. There will be no admittance to the Zoom session without pre-registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



5 Credit Hours:

Residential Blueprint Reading June 11th

WHEN: Thursday, June 11th, 8 to 1 p.m.
WHERE: Online via Zoom
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 students with an introduction to the area of residential blueprint reading, construction documents, calculations and project specifications. Carlos Lora is the instructor.

You must pre-register for this course. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. There will be no admittance to the Zoom session without pre-registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



***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,
bsalvas@ribuilders.org
or call (401) 438-7400.***

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

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



RIBA Contractor Training

2½ Credit Hours:

Accounting and Cash Flow

June 15th

WHEN: Monday, June 15th, 8 to 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Online via Zoom

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 David Lucier for this course, which will help a contractor understand the basics of accounting and how to manage cash flow.

You must pre-register for this course. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



1 Credit Hour:

The Residential Energy Code on Envelope and Building Science essential for Zero Energy Homes

June 19th

WHEN: Friday, June 19th, 8 to 9:30 a.m.

WHERE: Online via Zoom

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 take you into a variety of subjects, including: Air Barriers, Air Sealing, Vapor Retarders, Thermodynamics, Windows, U-Values, R-Values, Average R-Values, Moisture, Best Practices, Blower Door Testing and Requirements, Material Selection, Quality Insulation Installation, Common Failures, Health and Safety Concerns, Code Updates, the Rhode Island Stretch Code, and Zero Energy Homes.

The instructor is Jeremy Dagold of CLEAResult.

You must pre-register for this course. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. There will be no admittance to the Zoom session without pre-registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



5 Credit Hours:

Deck Codes and Construction

June 16th

WHEN: Tuesday, June 16th, 8 to 1 p.m.

WHERE: Online via Zoom

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.

Deck codes have undergone more changes than any other portion of the residential code. Learn what you need to design and build code-compliant decks using prescriptive measures outlined in the code and code-compliant standards.

Mike Guertin is the instructor.

You must pre-register for this course. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. There will be no admittance to the Zoom session without pre-registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



2½ Credit Hours:

Foundation and Floor Codes

June 18th

WHEN: Thursday, June 18th, 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Online via Zoom

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 Jack Leyden will provide a detailed look into Chapters 4 and 5 of the Rhode Island One and Two Family Dwelling Code for foundations and floor construction.

You must pre-register for this course. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. There will be no admittance to the Zoom session without pre-registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



*For RIBA
membership information
contact Elise Geddes*

401-438-7400 • or egeddes@ribuilders.org

June 2020

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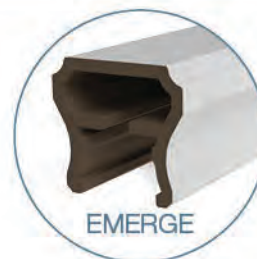
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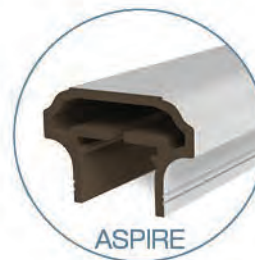
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Rhode Island Builders Association

Member Benefit Guide

2019-2020



Member Solution Services

•
**Tuition-free Education for
Members and their Employees**

•
Vital Information Resources

•
**Powerful Advocacy at
the State House**

•
**Award-Winning
Monthly Magazine**

•
**Unique Marketing
Opportunities, including
the R.I. Home Show
and RIBAlist.com**

•
**Member-to-Member
Reference Services**

•
**Complimentary
Customized Job Training**

•
**Full-Service, in-house
Insurance Agency**

•
Medical & Dental Plans

•
Complimentary Jobsite Safety Service

•
Discounts and Rebates

•
Monthly Networking Events

RIBA Offers an Unprecedented



Find Work/Hire Members

Services include member-to-member referrals, the new and improved RIBAlist.com consumer website, the huge, consumer-based Rhode Island Home Show, held every year since 1948, and the annual *Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide*.



The Education Benefit... It's Tuition-Free!

Online or in person, take Massachusetts and Rhode Island continuing-education courses, with professional-development classes and seminars for owners and all employees within your firm. Subject matter includes codes, safety, estimating and so much more!



RIBA Helps You Hire & Train

Our complimentary workforce-development program includes custom training initiatives for your company and/or a 26-week comprehensive pre-apprenticeship program where you can send current or prospective employees for carpentry, electrical or plumbing training. Spanish programs are also available.



Complimentary Safety Services

RIBA has a complimentary Safety Service that includes jobsite visits to guide members toward proper workforce-safety procedures, OSHA compliance and lower insurance rates. This is a totally confidential service, and it can save you thousands of dollars!

Joining is easy! Call (401)

ted Member Benefit Package!

Vital Information Resources

Members stay in the know with information they can only find through RIBA, including the award-winning, monthly *Rhode Island Builder* magazine; update e-mails from Executive Officer John Marcantonio, national updates from the National Association of Home Builders, and so much more! This is a true advantage in the marketplace!



Solution Services

Industry-based professionals are available to find answers for you and to help you with your most troubling issues – from permitting, to new-regulations compliance, to financing resources, the solutions staff at RIBA gives you peace of mind and lets you know that you're not alone out there!



Insurance & Bonding

RIBA has its own full-service, in-house insurance agency – The Builders Insurance Group (BIG). Members will find a rewarding service experience, trusted advice on insurance products, and the knowledge that the resources of this RIBA subsidiary go toward helping the industry.



Medical & Dental Plans for You and Your Employees

Speaking of insurance, RIBA offers complete health and dental plans for you and your employees. The dental plans, in particular, are the best available when it comes to cost. RIBA has its own pool and its own rate.



438-7400 • RIBuilders.org

From RIBA's Executive Officer

Dear Members of the Rhode Island Builders Association:

Please take the time to pull this special Member Benefit Guide out of the magazine. It's yours to keep, and its designed to be a resource for you to quickly reference and recognize everything you have available to you at RIBA.

From the complimentary educational services for you and your employees, the new Safety Service, customized workforce training, networking, business referrals, legislative advocacy and member solution-services, your trade association is structured to help you with every aspect of your business.

We are making it easier than ever to understand what's included in your membership. And when you have a chance, give us a call so we can get you connected to the services we have that can help protect you, make you money, improve your knowledge, keep you safe, and help your business thrive!

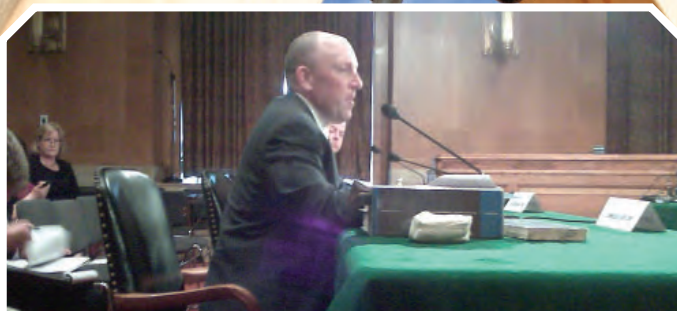
I also need your help with a larger cause. Please share this

message with your industry colleagues and ask them to join! Our services, advocacy and industry-leading resources depend on membership. With so much to offer, our goal is to reach out and serve. Helping someone join is easy, just have them call the office at (401) 438-7400 and we will take it from there!

So thanks again for being a member, for being a part of this thriving, almost 70 year old resource, and for allowing us to serve your needs. Please always feel free to call us with any issue, as we are always here for you!



All my best,
John Marcantonio *Executive Officer*



Powerful Legislative Advocacy

RIBA represents you locally, at the State House and on the federal level with all things regulatory, and with very effective political lobbying. We track every bill that affects you, and we put in legislation to help the state's housing needs. Feel free to join our committees, get updates on bills, and advocate with the executive officer on key legislation.

Socialize, Network & Enjoy!

RIBA has events! Take advantage of big, fun events like our Annual Clambake, Golf Classic, monthly network events, Christmas parties, cookouts, annual meeting.... And if you like to socialize, and make this your focus, just let us know.



Save Money Every Day

With your dual membership in RIBA and NAHB, enjoy over 20 different programs that give discounts and rebates on products you use every day. The Member Rebate Program pays thousands of dollars a year to members for products they already buy. The Member Advantage program offers discounts on major national products and services that can save you a bundle.

money saving discounts that benefit you, your business and your family nahb.org/Savings

SAVINGS

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or e-mail Elise at egeddes@ribuilders.org



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www.finetco.net • Page 18

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A MESSAGE FROM THE ARNOLD LUMBER FAMILY



To Our Family of Customers:

Our hearts are with all communities around our great country and the world. Particularly with the front line first responders, nurses, doctors, essential workers and the victims and their families who have suffered greatly during this unprecedented time.

Arnold Lumber Company's success is built upon the support and success of our customers in the professional building trade. We value the strong foundation and relationships built with our employees, industry business partners and the community. Our industry has overcome challenging recessions in the past and we, together, will do it again.

This Company has always operated with the mission to contribute to creating vibrant neighborhoods to live, work, and play. Like yours, our business has changed within the last few months. Through this, our dedicated team has demonstrated flexibility and endurance to adapt to the changing environment and we are committed to providing you with services and products, old and new, you have come to expect from us.

We are here to help, consider us an extension of your business. We are all in this together.

Sincerely,

Allison Arnold
President & COO

Kate Arnold Carret
President & CEO



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(401) 596-2806



RIBA Contractor Training

5 Credit Hours:

Residential Estimating

June 24th

WHEN: Wednesday, June 24th, 8 to 1 p.m.

WHERE: Online via Zoom

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.

Taught by Justin Zeller, this course will cover basic construction math and how it is used to estimate the labor and material costs for a given project.

You must pre-register for this class. There will be no admittance to the Zoom session without pre-registration. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



3 Credit Hours:

Kitchen Design & Installation

June 26th

WHEN: Friday, June 26th, 8 to 11 a.m.

WHERE: Online via Zoom

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.

Taught by Jason Oliveira, this class will cover the basics of designing a well-planned kitchen and how to install the cabinetry. It will cover the design process, including material choices for cabinets and counters, utility and appliance placement, traffic flow and storage.

Installation tips and tricks will also be covered.

You must pre-register for this class. There will be no admittance to the Zoom session without pre-registration. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



2½ Credit Hours:

Wall Coverings and Sheathing

June 25th

WHEN: Thursday, June 25th, 8 to 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Online via Zoom

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 Jack Leyden for an in-depth look at Chapter 7 of the Rhode Island One and Two Family Dwelling Code, with an up-close examination of the codes that cover wall coverings and sheathing.

You must pre-register for this course. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



2½ Credit Hours:

Roof Assemblies

June 30th

WHEN: Tuesday, June 30th, 8 to 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Online via Zoom

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 class will give participants a detailed look at Chapter 9 of the Rhode Island One and Two Family Dwelling Code on roof assemblies.

Jack Leyden is the instructor.

You must pre-register for this class. There will be no admittance to the Zoom session without pre-registration. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.





EDUCATES

Additional Classes
Offered by RIBA this Month

Deadline to register is one day before class.
For more information and to register: Contact Bob Salvas
at bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Construction Accounting Software June 12th

WHEN: Friday, June 12th, 8 to 9:30 a.m.
WHERE: Online via Zoom
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 Chuck Schwartz to learn the best practices for selecting and implementing the right software for your company. You'll discover the questions you should be asking and the reasons why new system purchases and implementations sometimes succeed and sometimes fail.

You must pre-register for this course. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. There will be no admittance to the Zoom session without pre-registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



1 Credit Hour: Construction Safety Protocols for COVID-19 June 29th

WHEN: Monday, June 30th, 9 to 10 a.m.
WHERE: Online via Zoom
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.

RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio will review workers' personal responsibilities, social distancing guidelines, general jobsite and office practices, personal protective equipment (PPE), along with sanitation and cleanliness. Practices for jobsite visitors, and for workers entering occupied buildings and homes will also be considered.

You must pre-register for this class.



Installing a Site-Built Under Deck Drainage System June 22nd

WHEN: Monday, June 22nd, 8 to 9:30 a.m.
WHERE: Online via Zoom
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.

EPDM roofing or pond liner is a cost-effective alternative to proprietary systems to drain water under the decking. Join instructor Mike Guertin to learn how to lay out a pattern to cut successive sheets of EPDM from, install the sheets to create sloping swales between the deck joists, and how to tie the membrane into the wall of the house and the gutter.

You must pre-register for this course. Participants will receive instructions on how to log in to the Zoom session. There will be no admittance to the Zoom session without pre-registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



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Our Future Workforce

Applications now being taken for courses beginning in September

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"We're trained and ready to work for you!"

That's the message from participants in the Rhode Island Builders Association's carpentry, electrical and plumbing programs around the state, cost-free for employers and participants.

"If an employer has a new hire who needs to be trained, needs to upskill current employees, or simply wants to hire someone who's already trained in these fields, we can accommodate," said Cheryl Boyd, RIBA's director of workforce programs.

The place for employers and potential employees to start is at RCWPJobs.com. There's full information about the programs, and free accounts are available for employers to post job openings and for



potential employees to post resumé.

Classes that began in the winter were nearly complete when they had to switch to live teleconferencing/demonstrations. Classes set to begin in September should be back at the teaching venues in Central Falls, Chariho, East Providence, Providence, Warwick and Woonsocket.

Applications are now being taken for the new classes.

At the same time, the Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) carpentry

classes continue online as well.


"VESL classes continue with a steady group of students, 19," reported Latino Outreach Coordinator Betty Bernal.

"After finishing the first part of the training on May 30th, participants will have a virtual OSHA 10-Hour course, from June 1st to 4th," Ms. Bernal added.

"The carpentry practicum that is scheduled to start on June 8th will be contingent on Gov. Gina Raimondo's plans for reopening due to COVID-19."

Contact Ms. Bernal at (401) 500-9146 or bbernal@ribuilders.org, or register online at <https://ribuilders.org/vesl-training-program-details>.

For information on RIBA job training in general and on RCWPJobs.com, contact Cheryl Boyd at cboyd@ribuilders.org.

Economists single out contractor education and job training as crucial factors in the economic recovery to follow the COVID-19 crisis. *Related stories, pages 1 and 29.* 

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Elliot Eisenberg

Internationally Known Housing Economist

One of America's most prominent housing economists, Elliot Eisenberg Ph.D. is an internationally acclaimed public speaker known for making economics fun, relevant and educational. Dr. Eisenberg earned his undergraduate degree in economics with first class honors from McGill University in Montreal, as well as a masters and doctorate from Syracuse University. Formerly senior economist with the National Association of Home Builders, today he is chief economist for GraphsandLaughs LLC, a Miami-based economic consultancy that serves a variety of clients across the United States. He writes a syndicated column and authors a daily 70-word commentary on the economy that is available at www.econ70.com.



Dr. Eisenberg has spoken to hundreds of business groups, associations and lawmakers, including members of the Rhode Island General Assembly at the invitation of the Rhode Island Builders Association. His research and opinions have been featured in Bloomberg Businessweek, Bureau of National Affairs, Forbes, Fortune, and many other publications. He is a regularly featured guest on talk radio.

THE BUILDER: How does a company in the residential construction industry position itself in times like these to survive and thrive?

EISENBERG: That's a big deal because I think everyone has to reinvent themselves, both inside and outside the residential construction industry.

Education and training to improve and expand your skill set is extremely important. You're looking to take your skill set and adjust it to the new reality and a new niche. Most people won't change their entire careers because it's just too hard to do that. If you fix cars, you probably won't suddenly decide to become a ballerina. You'll figure out how to space the bays in your shop or install wall separators for virus safety.

You'll have to get the training you need to learn new ways to do things and to develop new skills. Your readers are asking: How am I going to be a home builder or remodeler now, with this new environment? How am I going to make sure my crews don't get injured, don't get sick, don't get hurt? If they do, they and my subcontractors won't want to work for me. My jobsites have to be safe, but now I have to make sure I'm not cited for violations

of new state rules and regulations in place because of the pandemic.

How do I show clients these new homes or projects? I have to have virtual tours. I have to have a website where they can change the kitchen, the bathroom, the carpeting, all online. If I'm a remodeler, I might have to go to people's houses, sit outside on their patio and talk to the client through the window or on the phone.

I have to make it increasingly easy for the buyer.

You'll need better, more talented sales people. You need sales incentives. You can't have public events in a showroom, so you can have a Zoom party and maybe offer e-gift cards for suppliers.

It's not that hard once you get into the mindset, but you need the education and training.

THE BUILDER: How is the housing market weathering the COVID-19 storm? Give us a snapshot.

EISENBERG: It's doing pretty well, considering all the problems the pandemic has brought. We haven't seen price declines to speak of, and that's pretty remarkable given the fact that the number of people who've lost their jobs is profound.

We saw declines in terms of sales volume, in both new and existing housing, in March. In April, we saw existing sales down about 7 or 8 percent, and new sales down about 15 percent. That may well be the bottom, unless things with this virus get much worse. So, I give this market a pretty good grade. In fact, I'm quite impressed: I wouldn't have thought it would be doing as well as it is.

THE BUILDER: When do you feel that a recovery will take place?

EISENBERG: There's been so much stimulus money coming into the economy – or perhaps “stimulus” is the wrong word -- just recovery money, because the economy is in a coma, a cryogenic state, to some extent. This is helping people survive in the short-term, and that money has helped tremendously.

As much as I would have preferred to see less unemployment, that's not happening, so we've had the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), but that isn't doing what we wanted it to do. However, unemployment benefits are coming through, so that's good. Interest rates are low, and the central bank is lending lots of money. It's buying lots of mortgage-backed securities and treasury bonds, so

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it has cut rates.

Some \$2 trillion has been injected into the economy to compensate for the decline in economic activity. But I think the recovery will begin very soon. We went into this recession in early to mid-March. I expect us to be out of it by the end of the second quarter.

So, it's a four- or five-month recession – short but profoundly deep, much deeper than the Great Recession of 2008, so it just can't go on that long. I mean you can't lose that many jobs for very long. If you weigh 200 pounds, then lose 50 pounds, you can't lose 100 more or you're dead. In the same way, you can only lose so many jobs, making this recession very short. When the recession ends, then by definition the recovery starts. So, if the recession ends in June, maybe July, that means the recovery begins in June or July, and the first full month of the recovery will take us into the third quarter.

Meanwhile, the job-loss numbers have been knee-buckling and eye-watering. There really aren't adjectives to describe how profoundly horrible this is, but we recover soon.

THE BUILDER: What form will the recovery take?

EISENBERG: In terms of the “shape” of the recovery, I've been thinking for the last month about the concept of a “check mark recovery,” and I think that's the right term for a quick, steep decline, then a slow, grinding recovery. It won't be a “V” shaped recovery because we won't recover very quickly. It's not even a “U” shaped recovery because we won't hang out at the bottom all that long.

People want to get back to work. In fact, the extra unemployment insurance benefits run out at the end of July. More people will be hunting for work, including recent graduates. They'll get jobs. But it will be a slow, plodding recovery. But there are no guarantees. There are threats that can derail it, such as if we don't come up with an effective vaccine for the virus.

If the virus does come back, it's going to slow everything down quite substantially. If we open up and we don't have enough testing, tracing and quarantining, that could happen. So, it's important to watch states like Georgia, which are opening early.

With pandemics like the Spanish flu 100 years ago, the second round was worse than the first.

THE BUILDER: Will the COVID-19 experience change American housing and/or smart growth trends? For example, will people want to avoid density now? Or will five-acre zoning be back in vogue?

EISENBERG: I don't think so. On the other hand, now that we see telecommuting work, it might be hard to put that particular genie back in the bottle. And I'm not convinced that we want to run away from density.

However, once some people realize they can work from home, then they realize they don't have to live downtown, for a while anyway. As long as they can connect from home, they might have to go to the workplace maybe two days a week. So, I don't think the driving force will be that they have to live in New York City, Washington, Providence or wherever. People might say they want

to live in suburbia or the exurbs, and have a monster commute, but only once or twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays or something.

They might then say ‘I need a bigger house or condo because I need a home office, a place where I can do webinars and Zoom, and get in on conference calls and have some privacy. If you live in downtown New York, downtown Boston, Washington or San Francisco, having a dedicated room for a home office is a very expensive hobby. You'll want to move to the suburbs, where real estate per-square-foot is much cheaper. That way, you could have a nice yard for your kids, have an office in your own space, and have that commute only now and then. I think that's a likely outcome of this crisis.

THE BUILDER: Will new construction do better than remodeling, much of which takes place inside people's existing homes, or will the recovery be across the board?

EISENBERG: I think the recovery will be across the board in the residential construction industry. Remodeling is very recession-resistant. It just doesn't bounce around much. Do I expect remodeling to decline a little bit? Sure, but not for long.

House prices aren't going up like they did before. They're rising 3, 4 or 5 percent a year. That's a pretty strong incentive to fix your house because you're going to get the money back. If the roof leaks, you have to fix it, you might need an addition or other alterations, driveways and swimming pools crack. People know that if they don't maintain their house and property, they will have

see **EISENBERG...page 34**

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RIBA still working on legislative agenda

By William Walsh *RIBA Government Affairs*

While suspending formal sessions because of the public health crisis, the Rhode Island General Assembly remains diligent, working on COVID-19 response and preparing the state budget.

Spending task force convened

To review emergency spending on the COVID-19 response, state lawmakers have convened a task force to review actions to date. Co-chaired by House Finance Committee Chairman Marvin Abney (D-Newport) and Senate Finance Committee Chairman William Conley (D-East Providence), the panel examined the

timeline and authority for emergency declarations, expenditure and encumbrance data, along with the prioritization process and distribution of resources.

Director of Administration Brett Smiley testified to the task force and received questions from the co-chairs and members, who include: Sens. Sandra Cano (D-Pawtucket), Erin Lynch Prata (D-Warwick), Joshua Miller (D-Cranston), Thomas Paolino (R-Lin-



William Walsh

coln), and Susan Sosnowski (D-South Kingstown), along with Reps. Jason Knight (D-Barrington), John Lyle Jr. (R-Lincoln), Alex Marszalkowski (D-Cumberland), Patricia Serpa (D-West Warwick), and Anastasia Williams (D-Providence).

Fiscal experts prepare budget framework

Legislative and executive fiscal advisors have commenced the semi-annual Revenue and Caseload Estimating Conferences. The panel, consisting of State Budget Officer Thomas Mullaney, House Fiscal Advisor Sharon Reynolds Ferland, and Senate

Fiscal Advisor Stephen Whitney, reviews comprehensive testimony regarding medical and assistance caseloads, economic forecasts, labor market conditions, tax credits, lottery receipts and tax collections, and develops a consensus budget model for the General Assembly to use in developing the state budget.

For more information on RIBA's advocacy program and on legislative matters in general, contact RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio at (401) 438-7400.

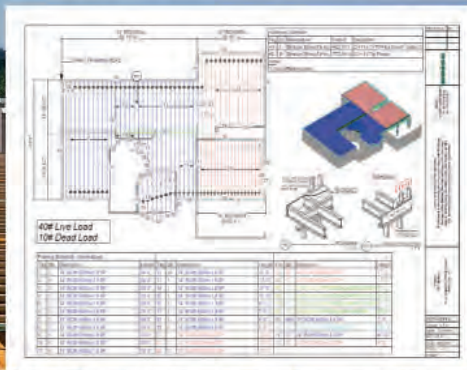


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OER renews initiative to place solar farms in brownfields

In a move that helps preserve open lands for housing and green spaces, the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) has renewed an initiative to encourage solar projects located on brownfields.

OER spokesman Robert Beadle made the announcement on April 27th.

The Rhode Island Builders Association and its industry partners have long advocated brownfields, former industrial or commercial sites that have suffered from contamination and are unsuited to residential use, as ideal locations for renewable energy projects.

OER has committed \$1 million in state Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) proceeds to the initiative.

“As we grow the amount of clean energy in the state, it’s important that we try and

site renewable projects in a responsible and sustainable manner,” said Nicholas S. Ucci, acting state energy commissioner.

“Last year, we earmarked \$1 million in RGGI funds to support the development of solar projects on brownfields, and the program was a success,” Mr. Ucci said. “This new round of funding will continue supporting renewable expansion and greenhouse gas emission reductions, help repurpose brownfields....”

As of May 5th, newly-developed solar farms sited on brownfields were eligible for this new round of project incentives through Commerce Rhode Island’s Renewable Energy Fund.

In 2019, seven solar projects, totaling more than 12 megawatts, benefits from this initiative, according to OER.

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With housing considered essential, Massachusetts starts reopening

While residential construction (though not commercial construction) has been considered an essential industry throughout the COVID-19 outbreak in the Bay State, plans to reopen the Massachusetts economy were afoot as *The Rhode Island Builder* went to press.

On April 28th, Gov. Charlie Baker announced the formation of the Reopening Advisory Board, which will be co-chaired by Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and Housing and Economic Development

Secretary Mike Kennealy.

The Board includes representatives from the business community, public health officials, and municipal leaders from across the Commonwealth. This group is charged with advising the administration on strategies to reopen the economy in phases based on health and safety metrics.

The board was to meet with key stakeholders and solicit input from a variety of constituencies to develop a report by May 18th that was to include:

- The different phases the state will follow as we recover from the public health crisis;
- What activities and industries are safe to resume in each phase;
- The public health metrics that would indicate it is safe to move from one phase to the next;
- General business guidance about social distancing, personal protection, and cleaning protocols that all businesses will need to follow upon reopening;
- Industry-specific guidance and detailed protocols for how to reopen safely.

This report was due on May 18th, but the administration has made clear that public health data and guidance from health care experts will dictate the timeline of the re-opening.

Operations at OCABR


Because of the current state of emergency, there have been changes to daily operations at the Massachusetts Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation (OCABR), which registers home improvement contractors and licenses construction supervisors.

OCABR has modified its available on-site staff to adhere to Gov. Baker's request that staff work remotely to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

OCABR officials apologize for any inconvenience and look forward to continuing to serve residential contractors, according to a statement.

The staff changes affect some services, such as the Consumer Hotline, which is currently closed. Consumer questions may be submitted via e-mail by going to: www.mass.gov/forms/contact-ocabr-by-e-mail.

As of Monday, March 30th, all window service was suspended for the duration of the health emergency.

Check the Mass.gov website daily for information updates. 

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 has expanded its education programs to include courses required for work in Massachusetts.

Bear in mind that most Massachusetts government services must be done online during the COVID-19 crisis.

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

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

Also find information about trade licensing at this site.

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

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



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EISENBERG...from page 30

much bigger problems down the road.

So, in the very short run, I'd say that required home repairs will be the norm. But in the long run, remodeling will not decrease much. Instead of going up 2 percent this year, it might decline like 2 or 3 percent. That's not a trivial amount of money, but there's hundreds of billions of dollars in remodeling work going on out there, so if it temporarily slows by just a few percentage points, the industry will recover.

I think new construction will fall more, there's no question. New construction is much more volatile.

THE BUILDER: Do you have any thoughts on how the experience might influence housing preferences or design?

EISENBERG: Along with a greater desire to move to the suburbs and exurbs, we'll be thinking about the next pandemic. How do we arrange to live in a house with more people? Say a husband and wife are empty nesters, but now the kids come back with grandkids. Or the kids move back home after college or because they've lost the jobs they had where they were living.

Houses will probably be segmented in some way. Maybe as you walk in the house, the first thing you'll see is a hand-sanitizing

station. House designs might change to reflect the need to keep clean at all times.

THE BUILDER: Do you see any changes in mortgage lending trends after this?

EISENBERG: In the long run, probably not much. The concerns that lenders have are: Do you have a job and is your job stable? Are you telling the truth, and I need to see your tax records. I can't see any of that changing.

In the short run, there's been all kinds of trauma to the mortgage markets, brought about by people losing their jobs. Then the government says, "Hey, we want to make sure you don't lose your house or your apartment, so we're going to let you go on some sort of forbearance."

No one knows quite what forbearance means in the long run, but they're struggling with that concept now, and there are unintended consequences. The problems are severe, but only in the short run. People will have jobs again. Soon there will be a new economy, whatever that will look like.

I don't think there will be any lasting, permanent, really meaningful changes to the housing market.



NOTICE TO INDUSTRY...from page 8

for adhering to social distancing protocols. However, when wearing one, the risk of spreading the infection to others is reduced. This is particularly important when a person who has the virus is asymptomatic and therefore, unknowingly, continues to go to work. It is extremely important that anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms stay home and call their healthcare provider. For the latest guidance on prevention from getting sick, please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

Likewise, it is important to continue complying with all safety and health guidelines issued by the R.I. Department of Health and the CDC. Although the CDC has made no recommendation that the general public should wear disposable gloves to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it is extremely important that, among other things, hands are kept clean through frequent washing and the use of hand sanitizer, and through wiping down frequently touched surfaces, and tools, with disinfectants.

Please feel free to submit questions online to the Department of Business Regulation using the web form available at www.dbr.ri.gov/critical or by calling the Department at 401-889-555.

Elizabeth Tanner, Esq.
Director

Julietta T. Georgakis
Deputy Director

PODCAST...from page 3

a month, more frequently if deemed necessary, and are intended for member use only.

While the podcasts will be posted on the major podcast apps, including Apple Podcasts, they will be password protected. When members are informed by e-mail that a new podcast has been uploaded, they will be provided with the password. Material covered in the podcasts will have been, or will be, covered in depth in *The Rhode Island Builder*.

"Our goal is to keep our members informed as fully and as often as we can," said Mr. Marcantonio. "While news and updated information will be the primary thrust, we invite suggestions for other features members want to hear."

If you have suggestions or comments, contact Mr. Marcantonio at (401) 438-7400 or jmarcantonio@ribuilders.org.



REPORT FROM THE MEMBERS...from page 9

tractors. But I do have a tip for lumberyards: They need to enable their websites for online ordering with real-time inventory and product codes!"

A word for suppliers

At the same time, Mr. Guetin said he appreciates suppliers who have dropped the minimum order for free delivery and are handling phone orders "with the usual efficiency."

"I usually drop in to pick up the tools, hardware, screws, bolts, fasteners, sandpaper and so on, but many have closed for walk-in business or requested that we not drop in," Mr. Guetin added.

Members are invited to share their stories of dealing with the COVID-19 crisis. Contact the editor at (401) 527-5345 or builder@newriverpress.com.



TRAINING...from page 1

their employees.

“With this new, expanded program, RIBA set out to support its members and the industry in a bigger way,” said RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio. “And, given the current public health crisis, it was a good thing we did! With more subjects and more instructors, RIBA has doubled the size of the education program this year.”

Most classes fulfill continuing-education credits as required by the State of Rhode Island and some for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All focus on improving the skills and business savvy of contractors.

Among the courses being offered for credit are:

- Advanced Framing
- Dealing with Challenging Employees
- Frost-Protected Shallow Foundations
- Marketing and Social Media in a Crisis
- Hiring Best Practices for Builders
- Waterproofing Walls and Roofs
- Residential Energy and Indoor Air Quality
- Residential and Commercial Blueprint Reading
- Residential and Commercial Estimating
- Blower Door and Air Leakage Testing
- Deck Codes and Construction
- Lead-Safe Remodeler/Renovator 8-Hour Initial Training
- Accounting and Cash Flow...and more.

Among the non-credit courses that can nonetheless expand

your skills, jobsite safety and compliance, and business acumen are classes on accounting software, OSHA compliance, and how to grow your contracting business.


Depending on the course, some are offered on-site and others online. Until the COVID-19 crisis passes, however, all courses are being offered by live teleconference on the Zoom platform.

“For me, the only thing that has changed is doing classes via Zoom from my basement,” commented instructor Mike Guertin.

As for the Contractor Training Program itself: “RIBA members should recognize the tremendous resource they have in the education program that John Marcantonio and Bob Salvas have been building over the past six months. Builders across North America often travel long distances and pay \$50 to \$100 per hour, for trainings and classroom presentations to improve their technical and business skills, and to develop their employees’ skills - classes that RIBA members have available for free!” Mr. Guertin declared.

Workforce Development

Job training, both to prepare new workers for the residential construction industry and to upskill current employees in the industry, is available free of charge to employers and participants in RIBA’s extensive system of classes in carpentry, electrical and plumbing. And there are plans to further expand the offerings. *Related story on page 28.*

For details on RIBA classes and to register, contact Bob Salvas at (401) 438-7400 or bsalvas@ribuilders.org, or visit RIBAeducation.org. For information on RIBA membership, contact Elise Geddes at (401) 438-7400 or egeddes@ribuilders.org. 

LARDARO...from page 1

“One of the after-effects of this crisis will be a change on the demand side, so residential contractors will have to reinvent themselves, become trained in additional areas, and become more innovative,” he said. “My best advice to contractors right now is to cut your costs, then see how you can redefine your niche by branching into other things that will give you a higher profit margin.”

Along with the recommendation that current contractors expand their knowledge into new areas, Dr. Lardaro also stressed the need for new blood in the industry.

“Apprenticeship training is a very big deal. Otherwise, who’s going to carry on? This might encourage skilled people to stay in the state, and encourage entrepreneurship in the people who get the training.”

What demand-side changes does Dr. Lardaro foresee in the housing market?

“I think people’s habits, beliefs, thoughts and values are really changing as a result of the COVID-19 virus. It might well be that there’s more of an impetus for factors like growth restrictions because we don’t have a flourishing economy.”

He suggested that the financial strain might force some people to sell their homes, which could increase supply, which has been “abnormally low” for years.

At the same time, people will likely do what they did after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

“Many people will adopt the nesting instinct, staying where

they are and putting a lot more money into their homes,” he stated.

This bodes well for the remodeling industry, but Dr. Lardaro sees no great increase in home building, which is nothing new.

“We haven’t had a lot of new home construction anyway. It’s no great cause for celebration when, in a given month, we have only 100 single-family permits in the whole state. It’s been like that for a while, and many months are even below that.”

Asked if the “new normal” predicted for the post-COVID world might dissolve back into the old normal, as it did within two years of 9/11, Dr. Lardaro said that could happen, but not until a reliable vaccine is widely available.


As he has in many past interviews, Dr. Lardaro called on state leaders to reinvent their economic policies.

“Our state doesn’t know how to manage a post-manufacturing economy. We’ve been running the place exactly as we did 40 years ago, when we were manufacturing-based. This crisis is a chance for the whole state to reinvent itself.”

Find out more with Dr. Lardaro’s monthly *Current Conditions Index*, available free at Llardaro.com.

Echoing Dr. Lardaro’s advice was Dr. Elliot Eisenberg, a leading housing economist, formerly chief economist for the National Association of Home Builders.

“Education and training to improve and expand your skill set are extremely important. You’re looking to take your skill set and adjust it to the new reality and a new niche,” Dr. Eisenberg said.

See the interview with Dr. Eisenberg on page 29. 



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INSPECTIONS...from page 2

ficient manner.”

Are the new measures slowing up the process?

“I have heard of some delays when it comes to boards meeting to approve projects. Understandably, this has caused some frustration. It’s super important that we all find innovative ways to continue functioning under these challenging circumstances. Using the technology we have available to teleconference could be a solution for boards, particularly since Executive Order 20-25 ([Governor.ri.gov/documents/orders/Executive-Order-20-25.pdf](https://www.governor.ri.gov/documents/orders/Executive-Order-20-25.pdf)) has made such allowances. This really is the time to get creative and be flexible. We all need to come up with longer-term ‘fixes’ and workarounds to continue our duties as best we can. It looks like this is our new reality-at least for the foreseeable future.”

There are local variations to how things are going.

“We have been working part time for the last five weeks,” reported Lincoln Building Official Roger G. Pierce on April 30th.

“The online e-permitting system has been great for getting permits out without much delay. Inspections have been a little slow. The inspectors try to limit interaction with the public so, for some inspections, like insulation and wallboard, we accept pictures,” Mr. Pierce added.

He agreed with many builders that it’s easier to work outside than inside under the current safety guidelines.

“With new construction, it’s easier to limit contact, and we ask that there be no-one at the site or that the workers stay away from the inspection area when we are present. Remodeling inspections have been a little harder to perform, as some people don’t want us in their homes, and two of my inspectors will not go into remodeled spaces,” he stated.

Additions are easier to inspect, according to Mr. Pierce.

“There’s always someone at Town Hall who can answer contractors’ questions. I will also call people back on my cell when I’m at home. Being a former contractor, I do my best to work with the builders and address issues as quickly as possible.”

Pawtucket and Central Falls share Building Official John W. Hanley.

“We are still functioning here in Pawtucket and Central Falls,” Mr. Hanley reported.

“We are only scheduling field inspections on Tuesdays and Thursdays and are requesting minimal staffing on-site when we arrive. All permitting is being done through the e-permitting system, and we are keeping up with the demand. A lot more phone and e-mail communication has helped bridge the gap from no office visits,” he added.

Things are proceeding under modified conditions in Middletown as well, according to Building/Zoning Official Jack Kane.

“We have continued to perform all essential functions with regard to inspections, with a few conditions,” Mr. Kane said.

“Inspections are being performed as usual on new construction sites. Inspections in occupied dwellings will not take place unless the owner has been notified and agrees to allow access. If access is denied, the inspection will be scheduled for a later date,” he continued.

“In some cases, we are allowing contractors to upload photos to the permitting system as proof of code compliance. Plan reviews and approvals are being done as usual, and all permit applications and submission of supporting documents can be done on our permitting system at: [Middletownri.viewpointcloud.com](https://middletownri.viewpointcloud.com).”

Contact information for all municipal building departments is reproduced below.



Contact List - Municipal Building Officials

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|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------|
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