

Needed sewer expansion projects in R.I. go begging for lack of grants



Susan Kiernan and John Manning

By Paul F. Eno Editor

An efficient and effective sewer and stormwater infrastructure is vital to residential growth, specifically the housing production needed to mitigate the critical shortage of affordable housing in Rhode Island.

There is a slew of such infrastructure projects – over \$1.5 billion worth -- on the 2021 Project Priority List (PPL) of the Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental

Management (DEM), the agency that oversees the state's sewer and stormwater infrastructure, but there is no slew of funding.

As a result, state officials say, the PPL has become little more than a “wish list,” and sewer expansions have largely dried up. When municipalities or sewer districts can get funding, they usually have to borrow it, with ratepay-

ers saddled with the bill for years to come.

The Rhode Island Builder recently sat down with DEM Deputy Administrator of the Office of Water Resources Susan Kiernan, and John “Jay” Manning of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to talk about the projects and the funding issues they face.

“Let me start with a very big picture. DEM’s role is to issue permits to the treatment facilities, and there

see **INFRASTRUCTURE...page 32**

To benefit RIBA's charity Builders Helping Heroes

Golf Classic slated for August 30

WHEN: Monday, August 30th, registration and lunch 11 to 11:45 a.m. Shotgun start will be at 1:15.

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

COST: \$225 per person

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: August 6th

FOR INFORMATION, TO REGISTER

AND FOR SPONSORSHIPS: Contact Robin Barlow at (401) 438-7400 or rbarlow@ribuilders.org.



Golf is roaring back after the COVID-19 hiatus. In fact, it's the Rhode Island Builders Association's 30th Annual Golf Classic, to benefit the association's charity, Builders Helping Heroes!

Enjoy a day of great golf, fine food and valuable networking at one of Rhode Island's most beautiful Donald Ross-designed courses.

At the same time, support RIBA's not-for-profit

see **SPOTLIGHT: GOLF CLASSIC...page 3**

FEATURED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES FOR AUGUST

Middle Section

Annual Clambake is August 6!

There's still time to get in on the return of the Rhode Island Builders Association's Clambake. Call Robin Barlow at (401) 438-7400 or e-mail rbarlow@ribuilders.org.

Page 4

Lumber prices continue to gyrate

RIBA's state representative reports on the ongoing crisis in building materials and a possible end in sight.

Page 7

Build-PAC revs up for advocacy action

As times return to normal, watch for in-person fundraisers for RIBA's vital Build-PAC. See the full background.

Page 9

RCWP unveils new trade training program

RIBA introduces the free, 15-week Residential Construction Pre-Apprentice Energy Weatherization Auditor, Installer & Performance Evaluator Training Program!

Page 31

President's Message



Carol O'Donnell

As times return to normal, RIBA's work takes off!

It's great to see times getting back to normal, especially with the great social and networking activities we enjoy as members of the Rhode Island Builders Association!

The month of August will see both a return of the RIBA Clambake (the 70th annual event) and the Golf Classic (the 30th annual event – see page 1) to benefit RIBA's Builders Helping Heroes charity. And we certainly look forward to the return of the Home Show (the 70th annual show) April 7th-10th next year.

Meanwhile, RIBA's vital work goes on for the residential construction industry, highlighted by expanding contractor development and trade training programs, the

full-service line of products offered by the Builders Insurance Group, and the crucial information resources made available to members.

One of our association's most important activities is one that's least visible to members until they start seeing the tremendous benefits of it: RIBA's government advocacy program.

All year long, even when the Rhode Island General Assembly isn't in session, RIBA, engaged members, and our construction-industry partners work to educate members of the legislature about our industry, about housing, and the importance of both as leaders of our state's economy.

During the legislative session every year, we and our government-affairs advocates monitor hundreds of bills that relate to

our industry and to your livelihoods. We staunchly support legislation that is good for housing.

We also closely monitor regulatory developments.

On the federal level, we work with our partners at the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) to monitor legislation and regulations that come out of Washington to influence our industry and the housing scene.

In another layer of our advocacy is the Build-PAC fundraising, with donations made to support pro-housing candidates of any party. There are state and federal Build-PACs, along with another for the Professional Women in Building Council.

See details about Build-PAC on page 9, and please support it!



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since 1951

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Vice President James Deslandes Sr.
Treasurer Jason M. DaPonte
Secretary Alexander Mitchell

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Publisher John Marcantonio
Editor Paul F. Eno

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DEADLINE FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE

All copy, ads and photos must be to us by

Friday, July 30

E-mail material to builder@newriverpress.com
or fax: (401) 356-0913

For RIBA
membership information
contact Elise Geddes
401-438-7400
or egeddes@ribuilders.org

Spotlight: Golf Classic



Join your fellow members
on the links!

...from page 1



The Hollands (Rick, Bill, Steve and Kevin) were the top tee-ers at the 29th Annual Golf Classic in 2019.

charity that helps wounded veterans and their families, and the families of those killed in action since 9/11.

There will be a “modified scramble” format. Cart, greens fees, lunch, dinner and a raffle ticket are included in the full registration fee. Collared shirts and soft-spikes only, please. Beverage coolers, cargo shorts and denim are not allowed. Cell phone use is prohibited on club property.

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

If you can’t devote the day to golf, then you’re welcome to just join us for dinner.

Please consider becoming a sponsor of the RIBA Golf Classic! *Information on back cover:* In doing so, you will generate great exposure for your company with tee signs, and you will be mentioned on a special page in *The Rhode Island Builder*. Top sponsorships offer you complimentary registrations at the event.

Builders Helping Heroes helps turn our wounded heroes’ homes back into places of comfort. Join us in supporting it!



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Looking Ahead

August 2021

♦ **Ongoing: Vocational English as a Second Language (VESL) - Basic Carpentry** - Recruiting continues for ongoing VESL classes. For details, contact Betty Bernal at (401) 500-9146 or bbernal@ribuilders.org, or register online at RIBuilders.org/vesl-training-program-details. *Related story on page 26.*

🔧 ♦ **August 4th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Mold Awareness Training. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 21.*

♦ **August 5th: 8 Hour Lead-Safe Remodeler/Renovator Course** - Taught at Rhode Island Builders Association Headquarters. *Details on page 25.*

♦ **August 6th: 70th Annual Rhode Island Builders Association Summer Outing and Clambake** - Kempenaar's Clambake Club, Middletown.

🔧 ♦ **August 11th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Blower Door and Air Leakage Testing. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 21.*

August 11th-14th: JLC LIVE Residential Construction Show - Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence. Visit NE.jlclive.com/ for more information or see the centerspread of this issue.

🔧 ♦ **August 12th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2½ Credit Hours** - Topic is Accounting and Cash Flow. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 22.*

🔧 ♦ **August 16th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2½ Credit Hours** - Topic is Marketing Your Business. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 22.*

♦ **August 17th: RIBA Contractor Training** - Topic is the New Home Construction Process. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 24.*

♦ **August 19th: RIBA Contractor Training** - Topic is Working with Industry Resources. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 26.*

🔧 ♦ **August 20th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Dealing with Challenging Employees. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 22.*

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


 Indicates a course eligible for Rhode Island and/or Massachusetts continuing education credits. Contact RIBA for confirmation.

 Indicates a RIBA-sponsored event.

♦August 23rd: RIBA Contractor Training - Topic is Photography for Your Construction Business. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 26.*

 **♦August 25th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2 Credit Hours** - Topic is Understanding Your Construction Business Model. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 23.*

♦August 26th: 8 Hour Lead-Safe Remodeler/Renovator Course - Taught at Rhode Island Builders Association Headquarters. *Details on page 26.*

 **♦August 27th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 5 Credit Hours** - Topic is Building Planning and Building Inspector Skills. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 23.*

 **♦August 30th: Continuing Education for Contractors - 2½ Credit Hours** - Topic is Social Media and Digital Marketing. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 24.*

♦August 30th: 30th Annual Rhode Island Builders Association Golf Classic - Wannamoisett Country Club, 96 Hoyt Ave, Rumford, RI 02916. *Details on page 1 and back cover.*

 **♦August 31st: Continuing Education for Contractors - 4 Credit Hours** - Topic is Lead RRP Refresher. Taught via Zoom. *Details on page 24.*

April 2022

♦April 7th-10th: 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. *Watch for more information.*

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.

RIBA thanks these companies for joining, renewing or applying for membership

New Members

Brian Agius
John Berchem
Brandon Dame
William Dawson
Alexander Espinal
Christian Gigliotti
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Kurt Hanke
Adrian Jimenez
Edward Kanneh
Christopher O'Rourke
Greg Palumbo
Marvin Reyes
Stephen Roderick
Jason Theroux
Franklin Vieira
Michael Watson
Steven Wolpe

Rumford Restoration
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Dame Construction
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Baseline Builders LLC
Christian Gigliotti
Kustom Worx Home Improvement & Property Maintenance LLC
Spring Green Painting & Power Washing
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Kanneh Construction
Alside Building Products
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Sean Reynolds
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Everett Carvalho
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Andrew Medeiros
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Donald Morton
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Michael Twomey
Michael Waschevski

*Subject to registration with the Rhode Island Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board. Company name will be printed once application is approved.

For RIBA
membership information contact **Elise Geddes**
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Prices are falling, or are they?

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Lumber prices are falling at last, but don't clink the champagne glasses just yet.

That's the word from Bob Baldwin, past president of the Rhode Island Builders Association, RIBA's state representative to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), and president of Lincoln-based R.B. Homes.

"Let's put it this way. Sec. of Commerce Gina Raimondo announced in May that there would be a task force to probe lumber prices. All of a sudden, within 24 hours, the price (per 1,000 board feet of lumber) dropped from over \$1,700 to about \$1,200," Mr. Baldwin stated.

"Then, 36 hours later, shockingly, out of the Tariff Review Commission, came the announcement that the Biden Administration was going to double the import tariffs on Canadian softwood lumber. So, the price goes back up to about \$1,400," he added.

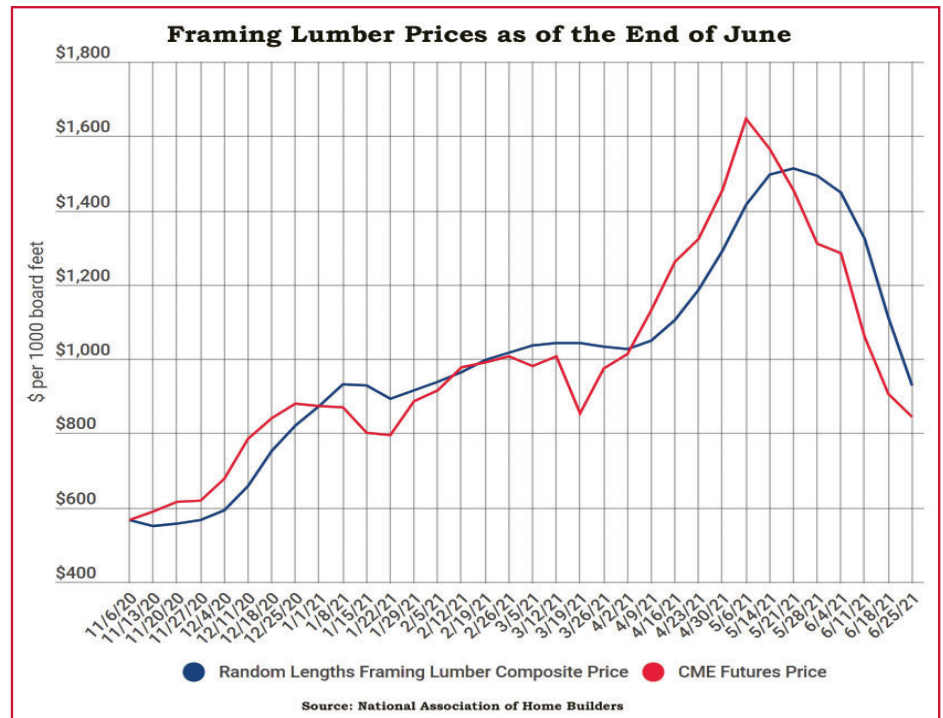
"The proposal to raise the tariffs at a time like this blindsided everyone, including everyone at the Commerce Dept., especially Sec. Raimondo."

According to figures from NAHB, the soaring lumber prices have already added some \$36,000 to the price of a new house. Nevertheless, the Biden administration announced on May 28th that it is moving forward with plans to boost so-called "anti-dumping tariffs" on Canadian lumber from an average rate of 8.99 percent in 2018 to 18.32 percent for 2019. That means, if the hike is approved, the new tariffs would apply retroactively to lumber imports made over the last two years.

This would slam American lumber importers with millions of dollars in taxes they never expected, and that would undoubtedly show up in the supply chain as higher prices for contractors and home buyers.

"Since the tariff announcement, prices have continued to decline on the futures market. The prices at the mills have begun to drop," Mr. Baldwin explained.

"Right now (June 30th), prices on the futures markets for delivery in July are around \$773, down from \$1,725, a heck of a drop. But it's still double what it was



pre-COVID."

Everyone is waiting to see what will happen, according to Mr. Baldwin.

"The lumber yards haven't really jumped in to buy yet because they have to get rid of all the stock they bought when it was much more expensive, and that might not happen until fall. Over the next few weeks and into August, we do expect prices to stabilize, and they should continue to drop."

One factor that should contribute to lower prices is the drop in the number of units being built.

"Tens of thousands of units around the country are not being built right now because of the cost, because you can't guarantee the price of a house, condo or apartment complex," Mr. Baldwin stated. But with demand remaining high, mills gradually catching up, and the pressure from the Commerce Dept., I think we will see things moving in the right direction. But contractors and home buyers probably won't see any cost saving until fall."

Glue and resins will remain sticking points in materials prices, according to Mr. Baldwin.

"Basically, anything that comes out of a petrochemical plant has not fully recovered

from a combination of massive spikes in demand, combined with the deep freeze that occurred in the south in the wintertime," he noted.

Affected products include vinyl windows, vinyl siding, roofing, paint, caulk, and particularly the glues and the resins that go into the manufacture of plywood, oriented strand board (OSB) and laminated veneer lumber (LVL).

"In fact, my lumber supplier notified me that, as of July 1st, the price of LVLs will rise an additional 40 percent. That's because of the supply of glues and resins," Mr. Baldwin declared. "That's a 70 to 80 percent price increase in a year."

Other complex factors are contributing to the price situation. For example, the snowy winter, along with a rail car shortage, gummed up shipments until a few months ago. That has all eased, but a shortage of truck trailer drivers persists.

"The conclusion is: The situation is getting better, but it has an awful long way to go. It's never going to go back to the way it was. There are still shortages. The supply chain has responded, but it is very tenuous."

Watch *The Rhode Island Builder* as this hot issue continues to develop.

NAHB to Congress: Open federal lands to more timber harvesting

National Association of Home Builders

To help resolve lumber supply shortages and rein in elevated prices, National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Chairman Chuck Fowke has called on Congress to increase domestic lumber production from federal lands, both as a means to improve housing affordability and address the resilience of our national forests.

Appearing at a June 29th forum conducted by Republican members of the House Natural Resources Committee and GOP members of the House Western Caucus to discuss skyrocketing lumber prices, Mr. Fowke said that boosting domestic lumber production is just part of the solution.

"We also need to resolve the long-standing trade dispute with Canada over softwood lumber imports as well as solving supply chain and labor supply disruptions that continue to linger," Mr. Fowke said.

Illustrating the unprecedented rapid rise in lumber prices over the past year that has added nearly \$36,000 to the price of a new home, Fowke told lawmakers that lumber prices have increased more than 165 percent since April 2020. OSB prices are also up nearly 400 percent, and the Random Lengths Framing Composite Index price shot past the \$1,500 barrier for the first time ever in May.

"For context, the previous high was \$582 in 2018 and framing lumber typically trades around \$425 per thousand board feet," Mr. Fowke noted. "These historic price increases are dramatically raising home prices and rental costs and threaten the nation's economic recovery."

Lumber prices currently stand at elevated levels, though they have fallen in recent weeks. However, these recent price declines are not due to an increase in supply.

"We see it due to a slowdown in housing production, which should alarm everyone," Fowke said. "In May, single-family starts fell 5.9 percent and that follows significant downward revisions to the April estimate and previous months' readings."

Regarding the nation's federally owned forests, Mr. Fowke noted that timber harvests from the National Forest System averaged between 10 and 12 billion board feet for a 40-year period from the mid-1950s and then plunged precipitously to an average between 1.5 and 3.3 billion board feet per year starting in the mid-1990s due to bureaucratic red tape and litigation.

Over the course of three decades there has been a dramatic decline in timber pro-

duction from our federally owned forests.

"We must strike a more appropriate balance in how we manage our national forests," Fowke told lawmakers. "Doing so will restore the health of one of our great natural resources and offers the potential to reinvigorate the forestry industry while improving housing affordability. That's a win-win-win in my book."

For ongoing information on the lumber crisis, visit NAHB.org.

RIBIA

Rising costs drive down home sales

National Association of Home Builders

New home sales fell to the lowest pace in a year, with prices jumping 18 percent on a year-over-year basis during the month of May, thanks to the high costs and uncertain availability of building materials, lots and labor.

Sales of newly built, single-family homes fell 5.9 percent in May to a 769,000 seasonally adjusted annual rate, according to data released in late June by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Census Bureau. The May number follows significant downward revisions to the April estimate and previous months' figures.

"New home prices have increased over the last year due to higher material costs and delays for deliveries," said Chuck Fowke, chairman of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and a custom home builder from Tampa, Fla.

"Policymakers must take action to improve supply-chains in order to protect housing affordability. While lumber costs have come down in recent weeks, they are still more than 210 percent higher than a year ago. And OSB prices are up 380 percent over the last year," Mr. Fowke said.

"As expected, new home sales have continued to soften this spring. While higher prices have shifted some buyers to the sidelines, NAHB survey data indicate that

approximately 20 percent of builders have limited sales activity in recent months in order to manage supply-chains of materials and labor availability," said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz.

In addition to adjusting for seasonal effects, the May reading of 769,000 units is the number of homes that would sell if this pace continued for the next 12 months.

Inventory remains low at a 5.1-month supply, with 330,000 new single-family homes for sale, 3.8 percent lower than May 2020. Supply-side challenges remain an issue, with the count of new homes sold that had not started construction, up 76 percent over the last year. The count of new homes sold that are completed and ready to occupy is down 33 percent.

The median sales price nationally was \$374,400, up 18 percent from the \$317,100 median sales price posted a year earlier.

"Entry-level buyers are being most affected by higher prices," noted Dr. Dietz. "Just a year ago, shares of sales priced below \$300,000 accounted for 44 percent of sales, while this May it dropped to 26 percent."

Regionally on a year-to-date basis new home sales rose in all four regions, up 48.7 percent in the Northeast, 33.5 percent in the Midwest, 32.3 percent in the South, and 5.6 percent in the West. These increases are due in part to lower sales volume during the pandemic a year ago.

RIBIA

Legislation affects you: Be engaged

Build-PAC helps members of the residential construction industry make their voices heard.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

As President Barack Obama once pointed out, elections have consequences.

That's why it's so important for members of the Rhode Island Builders Association to be engaged in the political process every

step of the way. And that's why there's Build-PAC, the bi-partisan political action committees that help support pro-housing candidates of any party on the national, state

and local levels.

"We actually have three Build-PACs, one for pro-housing national candidates, one for our pro-housing state candidates, and another administered by our Professional Women in Building Council (PWB)," said Roland J. Fiore of South County Sand & Gravel Inc., past RIBA president and the association's Build-PAC trustee.

Donations to the state Build-PAC can be up to \$1,000, with donations to the national Build-PAC, which is administered by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), up to \$5,000. All donations must be personal, not corporate.

"Our PAC supports pro-housing candidates of any party," Mr. Fiore said. "We work with RIBA's government affairs advocates to determine the candidates who best understand the importance of housing and the residential construction industry."

Mr. Fiore emphasized that the Build-PAC is an important part of RIBA's legislative advocacy program and a major member benefit.

"We can't forget the legislative progress our industry has made over the past five years, on the state level and locally, not just for the residential end of the industry but for the commercial as well. Many thanks go to the advocacy program and the Build-PAC for this, and for the fact that construction was declared an essential industry by Rhode Island officials during the recent pandemic," he added.

"The relationships we build with our representatives on all levels are very important."

Find out more about Build-PAC at RIBuilders.org/advocacy/ and watch for details on the next Build-PAC fundraising/networking event. Contact RIBA Executive Officer John Marcantonio for further information. To donate any amount, please visit RIBuilders.org/donations.



From the Executive Officer

June 29, 2021

Dear RIBA Member & Industry Partners:

Now that the pandemic begins to fade and we enter a sense of normalcy, RIBA is asking for your help in keeping its advocacy strong as we deal with regulatory reforms and new State housing policies to help grow the needed supply. In short, RIBA was here for everyone during the pandemic, keeping the industry

open and safe, now we need to get back to business and play a vital role in the momentum for big changes. With your support, we have a strong chance to make it happen!

Simply put, the industry needs to be able to compete against anti-housing forces, support candidates and political leaders who care about construction, and advocate for the development of affordable and market rate, homes.

We need your support! We know that donating to Political Action Committees is not something most like doing or have ever done, but by donating to our Build-PAC you ensure your industry can compete against these anti-housing forces, and that our voice on these issues will be heard. Supporting Build-PAC is indirectly supporting your own livelihood!

In the past few years, the industry has successfully advocated for reforms in inclusionary zoning, permitting, inspection, property taxes, notice laws, trade education, land regulations, and so much more.

We need to keep the progress going and we do need your support to make it happen. Making a donation has never been easier as credit cards are now accepted - just visit this link and know that any amount is appreciated: RIBuilders.org/donations/

Thanks for your support.

Roland Fiore
Build-PAC Chairman

John Marcantonio
CEO – RI Builders Association



Roland Fiore and John Marcantonio



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Member News

Cummings joins RIBA staff as communications manager

"I'm excited to be here. Helping RIBA grow is a great cause!"

So said Monica J. Cummings, the Rhode Island Builders Association's new communications manager, as she wrapped up her first week on the job in late June.

In her new post, Monica will "expedite communications with members so they know what we do, how we do it, and how they can benefit," she said.

Bringing with her many years of experience in internal and external communications, event planning, writing, marketing, branding and media relations, Monica is already coming up with ideas to give RIBA's websites, publications and other communications wider and more effective reach. And she wants to hear from members.

"It's member feedback that helps us craft what they want to know and how they want to know it," she stated.

A native of Manchester, Connecticut, who has spent most of her life in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, Monica came to RIBA from Cox Communications, where she was communications manager since April 2008.

Previous positions have included community affairs coordinator at Textron, senior media relations specialist at the Rhode Island School of Design, and public relations account representative at Duffy & Shanley Inc.

The mother of two grown sons who are pursuing football careers, Monica is a graduate of St. Bonaventure University and Leadership Rhode Island Beta II.

Contact Monica at (401) 438-7400 or mcummings@ribuilders.org.



Monica J. Cummings

From Economist Elliott Eisenberg....

Inexact Index

During the week of June 20th, NAR reported home prices rose by a stunning 23.6% Y-o-Y. Indexes that compare the change in price of the same home, which is how the CPI measures consumer inflation, and which carefully control for the mix of homes sold, show Y-o-Y home prices appreciating at an impressive 15%, great, but not nearly the NAR number! NAR's number is so high because sales of very expensive homes have doubled.

Visit Dr. Eisenberg's blog at ECON70.com/blogs.

For RIBA

membership information contact Elise Geddes
401-438-7400 • or egeddes@ribuilders.org



nationalgrid

Excavator Beware

Dig safely around natural gas lines

Whether you operate heavy equipment or use handheld tools, when you dig, you risk contacting natural gas pipelines. Use these tips to stay safe:

- **Notify 811 well in advance** of digging or moving earth in any way – even for small jobs.
- **Respect the locate marks** and follow them when digging.
- **Dig with care** in the vicinity of underground natural gas pipelines.
- **If you find an unmarked or mismarked line**, stop digging and notify 811.
- **Report any suspicious activity near a natural gas pipeline marker.**
- **Don't rely on your nose alone.** Be alert for the many warning signs of a natural gas leak.
- **Know what to do** if your equipment contacts a natural gas pipeline.

To report a gas emergency in Rhode Island, call **911** and National Grid at **1-800-640-1595** immediately.

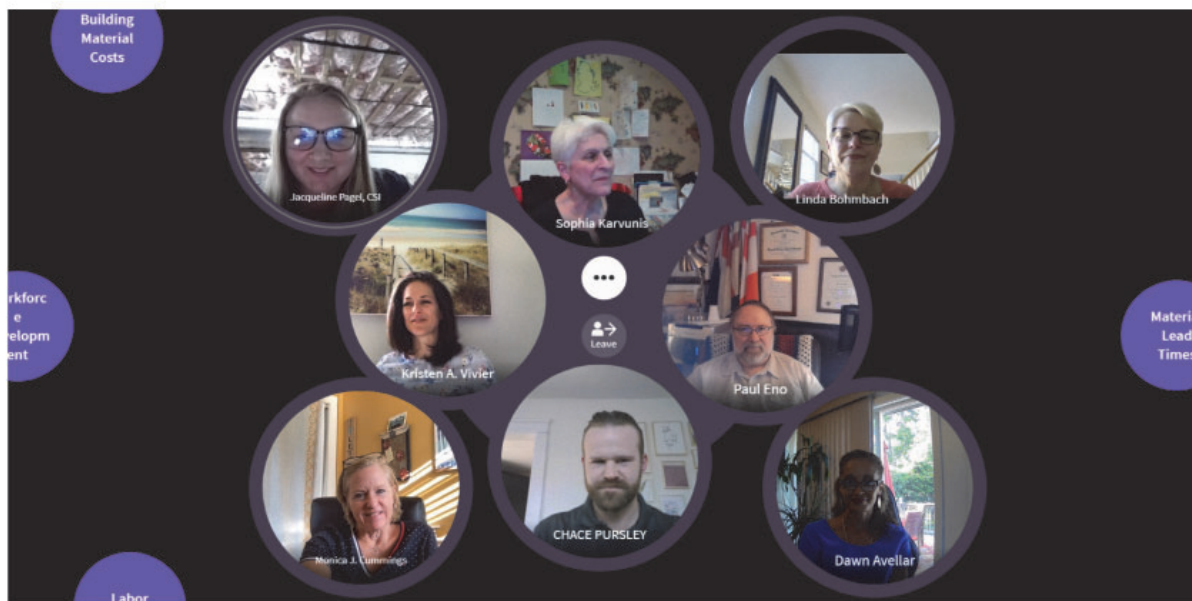
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Know what's below.
811 before you dig.

Professional Women in Building : PWB NEWS

Thank you to all our members and guests who joined us for our first Toucan Networking Event! A great evening of learning about what others are facing in the industry plus experiencing a new, more interactive, online networking platform.



Stay tuned about our first In-Person Networking event this Fall at East Greenwich Yacht Club!!



PWB Officers

Linda Bohmbach - President
Jacqueline Pagel - Vice President
Sophia Karvunis -Treasurer/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>

PWB Summer Networking Event covers top industry issues

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

The labor crunch, workforce development, material costs and lead times all figured into a lively discussion as members and guests gathered for a virtual Rhode Island Builders Association Professional Women in Building (PWB) Summer Networking Event on June 16th.

The meeting took place via the unusual Toucan Spaces platform, which mimics a physical event venue, with participants able to move from “table to table,” depending on what topic they would like to discuss.

Every participant who is a contractor or supplier mentioned feeling the labor shortage, with many commenting that potential employees are still absent from the workforce because of stimulus checks and generous unemployment benefits.

Dawn Avellar, workforce program assistant with RIBA’s Residential Construction Workforce Partnership (RCWP) outlined this program as the association’s response to the lack of skilled labor, noting that the trade training programs are in demand and expanding.

Supply-chain issues also came to the fore, with several participants noting six to eight weeks as the wait time for many



deliveries. They noted that a shortage of reliable delivery drivers has been a problem, and that, when deliveries are made, orders are sometimes incomplete or products damaged.

PWB will sponsor another event in September, and plans are for it to take place in-person, according to President Linda Bohmbach. All RIBA members and guests are invited to participate. Watch for details.

Are there any women in your organization interested in joining PWB? It's a great opportunity to network with other women in various professions within the housing industry.

To find out more about the Professional Women in Building Council and how to become a member, contact Linda Bohmbach at (401) 935-4653 or linda@homehealthsmith.com



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Member Profile: Kevin Moran of Moran Home Improvements

Dynamism and ambition develop bigger and bigger projects!

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Ray Moran certainly was a versatile teacher!

“My father was a carpenter but also a school teacher, so he wasn’t in construction full time,” Kevin Moran recalls. “I got into it because a lot of the people I talked to had bad stories about contractors. This one did a bad job, that one stole my money.... I couldn’t stand that, and I wanted to be different.”

It all clicked, because today, the ever-energetic Kevin works not only in Moran Home Improvements, but with his brother-in-law, commercial/residential developer David Corsetti, in their own company, Premier Land Development. In addition, Kevin has served on the Rhode Island Building Code Standards Committee for the last four years.

Now, more than 20 years after founding Moran Home Improvements, Kevin still cultivates the high energy and high ideals that spurred him into the residential construction industry in the first place. And, working with David, the projects get bigger and bigger.

Kevin, a Providence native, inspired by his dad, learned carpentry and worked on jobsites during his whole academic career, all through high school at LaSalle Academy, then Bryant College. He was especially good at kitchen and bathroom remodels. By the age of 18, he was already a registered contractor. After graduating from Bryant at the age of 24, Kevin wasted no time plunging into the contractor’s life with his super-energy.

Currently, that dynamism has been channeled into developments that include multi-family housing.

“We’re very, very busy! We have a lot going in, and I try to keep



Kevin Moran

it moving!” Kevin declares.

Current work includes a mill restoration at Wanskuck Mills on Branch Avenue in Providence, where Premier Land Development has its headquarters. Another project, in Central Falls, will have 110 units. More such developments are in the pipeline for Lincoln and Cumberland to the tune of 500 units over the next three to four years, according to Kevin.

One of these is the former, and famous, Ann & Hope Mill

in Lonsdale, which later became the Ann & Hope department store. That development will create 240 units and a restaurant. In an interesting historical twist, it is believed that Sam Walton, founder of Walmart and Sam’s Club, first got the idea for his department-store format from the Ann & Hope store.

Recruited by the equally energetic Lou Cotoia of Arnold Lumber, Kevin joined the Rhode Island Builders Association in 2015.

“I liked the idea of the tuition-free education classes for members most of all, and that’s a service I’ve used on multiple occasions,” Kevin declares.

Not only is he a familiar sight at RIBA events, but he has served on the association’s Board of Directors, and takes full advantage of the trade training programs. *Related story on page 31.*

“In the last two years, I’ve hired three people from RIBA’s training programs. The first one I hired turned out to be a real all-star!” Kevin says, adding that the two other hires were recent.

Kevin isn’t the only Energizer Bunny in the Moran Family. His wife, Stephanie, is a real estate agent, a property manager and full-time nurse. Together they have bought, rehabbed and sold a number of residential properties.

“RIBA is a tremendous asset!” he says.

So, keep an eye out for Kevin at RIBA’s events. You’ll feel the energy when he enters the room!

Moran Home Improvements

President: Kevin Moran

RIBA member since: 2015

Focus: Residential and commercial building and remodeling

Serves: Rhode Island

Founded: Original company - 1999

Based: North Smithfield, Rhode Island

**For RIBA
membership information
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Featured Products & Services for August 2021



A Rhode Island Builder Magazine Special Section



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At Pella® Windows & Doors: Easy-Slide Operator named 'Best of Show' at 2021 IBS!

The Easy-Slide Operator – Pella® Corporation's innovative new hardware solution – has been named winner of the Best of Show at the 2021 International Builders' Show, which was held virtually February 8-10, 2021.

The judges were especially impressed with Pella's game-changing, patent-pending slide mechanism, which replaces the traditional crank to open and close casement and awning windows. The Easy-Slide Operator was selected by a panel of 18 industry and media judges.

The recently launched hardware solution allows homeowners to open and close casement and awning windows by easily sliding the operator up to open and down to close the window.

The Easy-Slide Operator is currently available on Pella Impervia® fiberglass casement and awning windows. The company plans to expand the availability of Easy-Slide Operator to additional product lines in late 2021.



Visit <https://www.pella.com/ideas/windows/features-options/hardware/easy-slide-operator/> for more information or, better yet, visit one of Pella's four convenient locations!

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Gray takes helm at DEM

There's a new hand at the helm of the Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM).

Headed for Washington, D.C., in June was Janet Coit, DEM director for over 10 years, now named administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, informally known as NOAA Fisheries, by U.S. Secretary of Commerce and former Rhode Island Governor Gina Raimondo.

Ms. Coit is also acting assistant secretary



Terrence Gray and Janet Coit are guests at the RIBA Annual Meeting in 2018.

of commerce for oceans and atmosphere, and deputy NOAA administrator.

NOAA Fisheries is charged with managing America's marine fisheries and conserving protected marine species. The agency employs 4,800 people in five regional offices, six science centers, and more than 20 laboratories in 15 states and U.S. territories.

Meanwhile, here at home, Terrence "Terry" Gray, formerly DEM's associate director for environmental protection, has been named acting director by Gov. Daniel J. McKee.

see DEM...page 32

Zero Energy Homes: A homeowner's perspective

nationalgrid
UPDATE
with Laura Rodormer



Submitted by Doug Sabetti, Middletown Homeowner, member of the Rhode Island Builders Association and National Grid customer.

I had the opportunity to build my own house and did not pass up the chance to build an all-electric passive/mechanical solar home. Now I'm enjoying inexpensive and comfortable living.

On winter days in the morning, the house is around 63 F and I run the mini split heat pump for 30 minutes or so to get the house up to 68 F, then turn it off for the day. On sunny, or even partly sunny days, the house heats up to around 70 F to 75 F with the sun and the thick walls keeping the house warm all night. If the sun isn't shining, the heat pump is turned on in the afternoon for a while to get the house up to 70 F, then turned off, and that's it for heating.

The builder (RIBA member Stephen DeMetrick of DeMetrick Housewrights) said I would be able to heat the house with a candle, and now I believe him!

The window overhangs are designed to let the sun in during the winter and to keep it out during warmer months. The mini split system is called "split" because it cools as well as heats. The thick walls and little sun in the summer keep the house relatively cool and comfortable so we only cool the bedrooms for sleeping at night.

With solar on the house there is no electric bill (remember it's an all-electric house). And with the addition of battery backup, we can always enjoy comfort and security regardless of what the latest catastrophe is on the grid.

The additional cost to build to these standards compared with the much less efficient typical construction standard was minimal and will be paid back in savings in just a few years. This all-electric house paired with solar will enable me to retire comfortably with very low monthly expenses.

As my builder told me, "forget most of what you were taught about passive houses"; recent technology and design improvements allow architects to be as creative as they can be and provide a super-efficient, super-inexpensive and super comfortable home



The Sabetti Home

for anyone.

National Grid offers free technical support and incentives for the design and construction of Zero Energy homes. For more information call (888) 887-8841 or visit Nationalgridus.com/RI-Home/Energy-Saving-Programs.

In-person classes resume on a limited basis in July. Others remain on the Zoom online conferencing platform. Meanwhile, the Rhode Island Builders Association continues the Contractor Training Program, expanding its educational offerings for members and their employees! Call for details and to register, contact RIBA Professional Development Manager Bob 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:

Mold Awareness Training

August 4th

WHEN: Wednesday, August 4th, 9 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.

Learn the basics of mold: how to prevent mold from growing in your construction project and how to deal with it when you find it.

The instructor is Christopher Sanford.

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.



2 Credit Hours:

Blower Door and Air Leakage Testing

August 11th

WHEN: Wednesday, August 11th, 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.

Rhode Island's building code requires all new homes and some remodeling projects to be tested for air leakage.

Learn when the test can be done, how it is done, and how to prepare for it.

The instructor is Jeremy Dagold

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.



Find an Employee
Find a Job
Learn more at RCWPJOBS.com

IN-PERSON classes will be limited in size and will take place at RIBA Headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pkwy Bldg 3, East Providence RI 02914.

All up to date COVID-19 protocols will be followed.

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



2½ Credit Hours:
*Accounting
and Cash Flow*
August 12th

WHEN: Thursday, August 12th, 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.





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2½ Credit Hours:
*Marketing Your
Business*
August 16th

WHEN: Monday, August 16th, 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.

Taught by Bob Salvas, this course is designed to help business understand the many methods available to market and brand their construction business..

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.



2 Credit Hours:
*Dealing with Challenging
Employees*
August 20th

WHEN: Friday, August 20th, 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.

Taught by Jeff Deckman, this class provides a very specific process developed to reverse the "power advantage" from a manipulator/challenging employee back to the manager/owner.

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.



For RIBA
membership information
contact Elise Geddes
401-438-7400 • or egeddes@ribuilders.org

2 Credit Hours:

Understanding Your Construction Business Model

August 25th

WHEN: Wednesday, August 25th, 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.

In order to grow a business to the next level, you need a good understanding of your business model. This class will discuss the nine building blocks to a repeatable and scalable business.

Bill Cunningham 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.



5 Credit Hours:

Building Planning and Building Inspector Skills

August 27th

WHEN: Friday, August 27th, 8 a.m. 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 Larry Desormier, this class covers Chapter 3 of the Rhode Island One and Two Family Dwelling Code as well as communications skills needed for building inspectors. Problem-solving and R.I. code amendments will also be discussed. This class is mandatory for all building inspector candidates.

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.



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2½ Credit Hours:
***Social Media
 and Digital Marketing***
August 30th

WHEN: Monday, August 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.

Join instructor David Englund for this course, which will provide guidance on how to use social media platforms to grow your construction business.

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.



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4 Credit Hours:

RRP Lead Refresher
August 31st

WHEN: Tuesday, August 31st, 8 a.m. to noon
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 Scott Asprey, this four-hour class is a refresher course for contractors who have their lead renovator/remodeler certification, and it is coming up for renewal. We will review lead hazard controls and update attendees with any changes to regulations.

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.



***The New Home
 Construction Process***
August 17th

WHEN: Tuesday, August 17th, 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 Elise Geddes to learn the steps you will need to keep in mind before you build a new home on speculation or for a specific client.

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.



8 Hour Lead Safe Remodeler/Renovator Course

August 5th

WHEN: Thursday, August 5th, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

WHERE: This is an in-person class at 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. There is a \$25 materials fee for all participants.

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

FOR INFORMATION & TO REGISTER: Contact Martin Misenhimer at mmisenhimer@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

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

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

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

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

Again, you must pre-register for this course. **This is an in-person class, and seating is limited.** There will be no admittance to the class without pre-registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.




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www.RILBMDA.org

For RIBA
membership information contact *Elise Geddes*
401-438-7400 • or egeddes@ribuilders.org



RIBA Contractor Training/Trade Training

Working with Industry Resources

August 19th

WHEN: Thursday, August 19th, 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 Mike McDole to find out about the many ways independent lumberyards support contractors. Learn about the resources available, including material costing, design services, new product information, manufacturer relationships and field representatives.

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.



Photography for Your Construction Business

August 23rd

WHEN: Monday, August 23rd, 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.

Taught by instructor Bill Parmentier, this class will show you how to best use photography to enhance and grow your construction business.

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.



8 Hour Lead Safe Remodeler/Renovator Course

August 26th

WHEN: Thursday, August 26th, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

WHERE: This is an in-person class at 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. There is a \$25 materials fee for all participants.

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

FOR INFORMATION & TO REGISTER: Contact Martin Misenhimer at mmisenhimer@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

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

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

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

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

Again, you must pre-register for this course. **This is an in-person class, and seating is limited.** There will be no admittance to the class without pre-registration. Participants must provide proof of employment with a member company for the class to be free.



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William J. Fazioli

Director, E. Providence Planning & Economic Development Office.

William J. Fazioli has held his current position since September 2019, when he was named the first director of the newly formed East Providence Planning & Economic Development Office. His department oversees short- and long-term economic and community development plans and provides guidance to individuals and companies to establish, relocate or expand their businesses within the city.

During his 25-year-career, Mr. Fazioli has worked with more than 60 local governments throughout New England. He has held several positions in local government, including city manager, finance director and interim town administrator. In addition to his current duties, Mr. Fazioli has chaired the East Providence Waterfront Commission since 2019. In addition, he has been executive director of the New England States Government Finance Officers Association (NESGFOA) since 2000.

Mr. Fazioli holds dual bachelor's degrees in sociology and public administration from Rhode Island College and a master of public administration from the Rockefeller College of Public Affairs at the University of New York at Albany. He is a Registered Municipal Advisor Representative (Series 50).



won conditional final approval from the Planning Board in April. This will include 52 two-bedroom and one-bedroom/studio apartments for a total of 416 residences, with a 4,500-5,000 square-foot clubhouse for use by residents.

A mixed-use development is proposed for long-disused land at Newport Avenue, New Road and Moore Street. This is "Newport Center" and was approved by the Planning Board in May. There will be two four-story apartment buildings, a gas station/convenience store and a commercial outlet.

There will be 142 market-rate residential units.

Surprisingly, that land has been vacant for about 50 years. I think this development is exactly what that area needs.

Another development was recently completed at the end of Veterans Memorial Parkway, right before the 195 on-ramp. This includes 22 studio apartments. Things went so well with Phase 1 that they're into Phase 2, which will create an additional 12 units.

So, we have good signs on the residential front.

THE BUILDER: Can you tell us about the zoning changes East Providence has been considering, and their intended purpose?

FAZIOLI: We actually got approval from the City Council in May to adopt mixed-use overlay districts for some key central corridors in our city: Waterman Avenue, Taunton Avenue and Warren Avenue. These older parts of East Providence have some properties that are vacant or underutilized because they were zoned, say, strictly for commercial, retail or office use. That market was very different even before the COVID-19 pandemic, but after that it's even more so.

Allowing for mixed use, where a building can contain a retail operation along with housing, makes the properties a lot more developable, and it makes a lot more sense for people to take a look at those.

THE BUILDER: No "tiny houses" on microlots in East Providence as yet?

FAZIOLI: Not quite yet, no! We do have parts of the city that are quite dense, with 5,000 square-foot lots. But, so far, the tiny house phenomenon hasn't hit East Providence.

THE BUILDER: In recent decades, East Providence has stood out as a community that has welcomed growth. Does the city still want more residential development and of what kind?

FAZIOLI: Absolutely! We're actively looking to expand residential development opportunities in our city. That's one way we can replenish our working age population. As an older community, we really need to attract and retain younger people in East Providence. One way to do that is to provide high-quality housing opportunities, including single-family, multifamily and affordable housing in areas we're promoting.

THE BUILDER: So, unlike some communities, East Providence welcomes families with children.

FAZIOLI: We welcome families and children to live in East Providence. The city's working age population has declined and, as I said, we need to replenish this demographic segment to support local businesses, local government and bolster our labor force.

THE BUILDER: What major residential projects are going on in East Providence now?

FAZIOLI: There's the "Wampanoag Meadows" project, which

THE BUILDER: For healthy growth to take place, the

see *INTERVIEW...next page*

NRLA severs ties with national group

The Northeastern Retail Lumber Association (NRLA) is severing ties with the National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA).

In a press release dated May 17, the NRLA said the decision was made by its board of directors on May 11th.

“The decision was following a year of discussions resulting in NLBMDA adopting changes that were not aligned with NLBMDA’s or NRLA’s mission,” the statement said.

Rita Ferris, president of NRLA, told *LBM Journal* that, more specifically, recent

NLBMDA initiatives around education weren’t retail, legislative or regulatory in nature and didn’t support the organization’s original mission.

The associate member structure also wasn’t in the best interest of NRLA, she added.



INTERVIEW...from previous page

drinking water, sewer and stormwater systems must be able to handle it. What’s being done in East Providence to maintain and expand infrastructure of this kind?

FAZIOLI: Fortunately, the city invested quite heavily in its sewer treatment plant down in Riverside several years ago. We really upgraded the facility to meet all the regulatory standards for treatment, so that’s already been paid for. Those upgrades anticipated buildout of the city’s waterfront, so that area is taken care of.

The northern part of the city is served by the Narragansett Bay Commission, and they’re constantly upgrading and improving their facilities, so that’s in good shape.

For drinking water, we’re connected to the Providence water supply system, and that’s a very reliable source. But there’s some discussion about tying into the Pawtucket water system over the next year or so, as a backup.

THE BUILDER: Where does the funding come from for these infrastructure activities?

FAZIOLI: The sewer projects were all funded through the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. *Related story on page 1.* They provide very attractive loans to allow for those improvements to be made, and these are paid back by the ratepayers over time. Because of the subsidized interest rate that the Infrastructure Bank provides, the impact on the ratepayers is minimized.

THE BUILDER: Especially given the crisis in affordable housing, do you feel that a statewide housing policy is needed?

FAZIOLI: We desperately need a coherent statewide housing policy. In talking with other planners and people in the development field, it’s clear that the lack of inventory, which is causing prices to increase exponentially, has a long-term detrimental effect on the ability of our city and our state to grow.

THE BUILDER: How would you suggest that the state and municipalities work together, and with the private sector, to increase housing supply and affordability?

FAZIOLI: We have to take a long-term view. Inventories were so low after the last recession, the great financial crisis in 2008-2010. There was no meaningful production of housing, and we fell behind every year. Every time we didn’t provide housing, it just dug a deeper hole for the state and municipalities to crawl out of.

Combine that with the fact that 25- to 40-year-olds, the millennials, are now aging out to the point where they want to live

in their own places: apartments, condos or single-family homes. They’re creating a huge demand for housing while the inventory isn’t there, and I think that’s why we see the spike in prices.

The state needs to recognize that housing can provide the progress that allows Rhode Island to grow economically.

THE BUILDER: Your point about millennials wanting their own digs matches what housing advocates say: That while Rhode Island’s population has stagnated, there is a growing demand for housing because of smaller households. So, you’re seeing this trend yourself?

FAZIOLI: Absolutely. We see that the square footage of the apartments being proposed now are much smaller than they were years ago. Higher density is much more common. We’ll see 600 or 700 square-foot units, whereas before they might have been 1,100 or 1,200 square feet.

Single-family houses are being downsized a little bit to become more affordable, and we’re seeing a lot more duplexes. Someone might have a lot that’s zoned for single-family, but would like to make it for a two-family house so it will have that higher density and be more affordable.

THE BUILDER: What’s your overall message to the residential construction industry?

FAZIOLI: Just continue to build! Inventories are very low, and we have fallen behind. We have a lot of catching up to do. The starting point is to make more land available for development. Once we do that, there’s still a lead time, a year to 18 months to get through the regulatory processes, to get the land ready for construction.

The fact that we have so many millennials looking to get into home ownership or rental opportunities, we need that long-term, statewide strategy to meet that demand through additional housing. The state needs to develop a steady financing stream that allows for housing to happen in a more predictable and reliable way.

I speak with a lot of affordable-housing agencies, and they have to deal with a lot of different funding sources from different agencies that have different cycles. That can be very troublesome, and that’s why a lot of their projects tend to lag. There’s no coherent financing strategy that allows them to move forward.

Everyone needs to realize that housing is tied to population. We have to replenish our labor force as it ages out. How else are we going to keep the economy going and provide the public services people need?

This labor force has to have somewhere decent to live.





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MassWorks teams up with One Stop for economic growth

The MassWorks infrastructure program is now part of the Community One Stop for Growth, a single-application portal and collaborative review process of community and economic development grant programs that make targeted investments based on a "Development Continuum."

That's the news from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), which administers MassWorks, the model for Rhode Island's new Municipal

Infrastructure Grant Program.

"This process will streamline the experience for the applicant and better coordinate programs and staff on engagement and grant making," the EOHED statement said.

"It will also reorient the state from a passive reviewer of funding requests to an active partner in economic growth strategy, priorities, and investment."

MassWorks "provides grants to communities to help them prepare for success and contribute to the long term strength and sustainability of our Commonwealth."

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program is a competitive grant system that provides the largest and most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities, primarily for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs throughout Massachusetts.

"EOHED is committed to helping communities prepare for success and contribute to the long term strength and sustainability of our Commonwealth. The program places particular emphasis on the production of multi-family housing in appropriately located walkable, mixed-use districts that result in direct and immediate job creation and/or that support economic development in weak or distressed areas," the statement continued.

Access to the next rounds of MassWorks grants is now exclusively available through the One Stop. Learn more at [MASS.gov/guides/community-one-stop-for-growth](https://mass.gov/guides/community-one-stop-for-growth).

RIBIA

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](https://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](https://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](https://masshousing.com).



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RCWP UPDATE

Weatherization class to begin this fall

Introducing the free 15-Week Residential Construction Pre-Apprentice Energy Weatherization Auditor, Installer & Performance Evaluator Training Program, from the Residential Construction Workforce Partnership!

This program is specifically designed for candidates who seek entry into the home weatherization field. Training is driven by industry involvement, with local agency participation.

Included in the 60-night, 180-hour training will be BPI Certification, HBI Pre-Apprentice Carpentry Certification, OSHA 10 Certification, Lead Safety—Renovate, Repair, and Painting Rule (RRP), and the Basic First Aid Certificate.

Participants will learn widely used industry terminology related to building science and demonstrate how various components of a home interact to affect the overall energy performance.

Training will take place at RIBA's Central Falls Vocational Facility, 10 Higginson Ave., Central Falls. The COVID-19 situation will determine if there will be a virtual start.

Apply online at RIBuilders.org/training-programs.



Part of the graduating class from the most recent Carpentry Career Training Program course at CHARIHO Career & Technical Center in Richmond proudly display their pre-apprenticeship certificates on June 30th. That's instructor David Bannister at left.



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INFRASTRUCTURE...from page 1

are 19 major wastewater facilities in the state,” Ms. Kiernan explained. “They all have ‘facility plans’ that do engineering analyses to project a 20-year-out time frame. So, their whole system – the pump stations, all of it - gets documented, and they project where their needs will be.”

DEM requires the various jurisdictions to monitor failing septic systems and areas of high density that would better be served by sewer systems.

“So, there are always sewer expansion and maintenance plans, and those get translated into projects the facilities actually want to approve or pursue,” Ms. Kiernan said. “Then they have to come to us for approval of the design to make sure it’s consistent with the facilities plan, and that the engineering is sound.”

Money to pay for the project is another matter, Ms. Kiernan pointed out.

“Long ago, the financial side migrated from construction grants to the primary funder today, through the federal Clean Water Act: the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, administered by the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB). DEM formally certified sewer projects funded in this way.”

It’s the federal money administered through this loan program that has financed virtually all major sewer infrastructure programs in the state for the last two decades.

“Occasionally, some grant programs develop. There’s a recent one that popped up with the EPA. In another, the state has put some state bond funds toward projects, as in the Wastewater Treatment Facility Resilience Fund.”

Most financing for sewer projects, however, remains in the form of loans through RIIB. And Mr. Manning is the point of contact.

“As Sue said, DEM’s Project Priority List (PPL) is an annual production, and it creates the universe of projects that could potentially be funded through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF),” Mr. Manning explained.

“We encourage the communities to treat it as a wish list, however, so we can know what they’re thinking about and have an idea of what the potential needs are.”

The current priority list contains \$1.622 billion worth of projects. Of this, 11 percent, about \$179 million, would be for “contemplated” sewer-system expansion, according to Mr. Manning. Another 6.9 percent, or \$111 million, if funded, would be put toward sewer and pump station repairs.

“The SRF has been going for 31 years. Sewer expansion was a large part of our work in the early years, but that has essentially dried up,” he added. “We currently have zero sewer expansion projects funded. It’s probably been a couple of years, and even then it was only a project or two.”

Mr. Manning cited one such “lingering project,” the Bay Side Sewer Project in Warwick, along Tidewater Drive.

“So why are these projects grinding to a halt? It used to be that the municipality would float a local bond, and it would get done. Now it’s a case of, ‘I got mine, so tough for you,’” he stated.

“Communities have trouble putting forward general obligation bonds that the whole community will support. Now, it’s those who are going to benefit by the sewer expansion who might support it,

realizing that the financial burden will be placed on them. They have to go out and sell it to the rest of the town. I saw that in my own neighborhood in Middletown,” he added.

“With this approach, the people who would be hooked up to the sewers end up with an annual regular sewer fee for the service. But then they typically have this assessment that’s now associated with their property that has to get paid off over time,” Ms. Kiernan noted. “The problem is that those liabilities can end up in the tens of thousands of dollars. It creates controversy and complaint.”

The result is that many people will stick with their septic systems when they really need sewers because they don’t want a sewer assessment on their property, according to Ms. Kiernan.

RIIB does have an interest-free Sewer Tie-In Loan Fund for homeowners. Still, there is a \$300 loan origination fee, a 1 percent annual servicing fee on the outstanding loan balance, and homeowners are still saddled with the principal, at a maximum of \$10,000 for up to five years.

A grant-based funding source – even a partial one – would be most welcome, the officials indicated.

“If there was a funding source, perhaps a complementing grant program to cover planning and design of these projects, that could help communities be more amenable,” Mr. Manning said.

Ms. Kiernan agreed.

“The more funds that can flow into this, the sooner we will address some of these needs that have been flagged in the systems. That will be better for sustaining that infrastructure long-term. It’s a real need, but the systems can only charge (the ratepayers) so much,” she said.

Mr. Manning added: “If a grant program, whether funded by federal stimulus money or other sources, is there, we’re well-positioned to get to work.”

Light on the horizon?

The most practical answer to this question is probably Rhode Island’s yet-to-be-funded Municipal Infrastructure Grant Program, passed by the General Assembly in 2018. Since the legislation as enacted forbids funding the program with state money, federal funds would, presumably, have to be the primary source.

This is, however, a story yet to be written. Until it is, loans will remain the only route for sewer projects in Rhode Island.

For information on DEM programs and initiatives, visit DEM.ri.gov. Follow DEM on Facebook at Facebook.com/RhodeIsland-DEM or on Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM) for updates.



DEM...from page 20

“I appreciate Gov. McKee’s appointment and will work to continue to deliver responsive, clear and predictable customer service across DEM,” Mr. Gray told *The Rhode Island Builder*.

“This ethic is one of Director’s Coit’s greatest legacies. We have a lot of work ongoing, and much work ahead of us, and I look forward to continuing to partner with the leadership of the Rhode Island Builders Association, as well as its members, to meet challenges on housing and other construction projects in a reasonable and environmentally responsible way.”

Watch for an in-depth interview with Mr. Gray soon.



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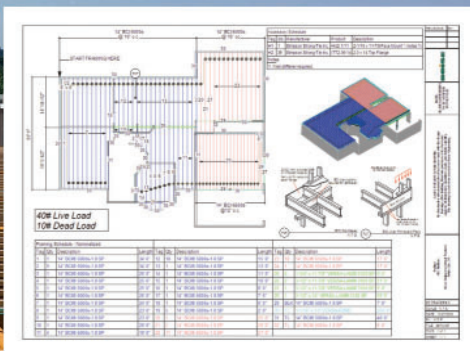
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