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**Is your Directory
listing current?**

Be sure before the 2015 RIBA Directory is printed. Also, advertising spots are still available in this popular annual publication.

Page 8

**Winter class lineup
includes codes,
deck construction**

RIBA is offering a full class schedule this winter, including deck construction, air-leakage training, Excel®, asbestos, training, codes and more, all free of tuition charge for members and their employees.

Pages 4, 11 and 12

**RIBA has its
roadmap for 2015**

The association's 2015 Business Plan sets sights on member benefits.

Page 6

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A BIG development for members

RIBA launches insurance agency

Full-service Builders Insurance Group offers all the plans contractors need, including health, liability, workers' compensation, homeowner's, motor vehicle insurance and more.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

In an unprecedented and historic move, the Rhode Island Builders Association has

launched an independent insurance agency. The idea: Provide Rhode Island's residential contractors with a full-service, added-value alternative for their specific insurance needs.

In fact, the Builders Insurance Group (BIG), has been in operation for over two years, primarily managing health-insurance subscriptions. But preparations to offer full insurance services are now complete. Along with health insurance, products include contractor liability,

see BIG...page 24

A giant step at DEM



Robert J. Baldwin, past president of the Rhode Island Builders Association and co-chairman of the Legislative Committee, speaks at the grand opening of the Dept. of Environmental Management's Permit Application Center on October 16th. Behind him are, from left. Gov. Lincoln Chafee, DEM Director Janet Coit, Sen. Erin Lynch (D-Warwick, Cranston) and Rhode Island Foundation President Neil Steinberg. Story on page 2.

DEM opens its new Permit Application Center

Fewer delays and quicker answers are the goals at the agency's new reception area, adjacent to the main entrance off Promenade Street in Providence.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

"I never thought I would see this day. It's a total culture change at the Dept. of Environmental Management."

That was the word from Robert J. Baldwin, past president of the Rhode Island Builders Association and co-chairman of its Legislative Committee, at the grand opening of DEM's new Permit Application Center (PAC). It was October 16th and the scene was DEM headquarters at 235 Promenade St., Providence.

Streamlined permitting and quick answers are the main purposes of the PAC, located in a spacious office and reception area just off the main entrance. The service includes a public computer where applicants can check the status of their applications.

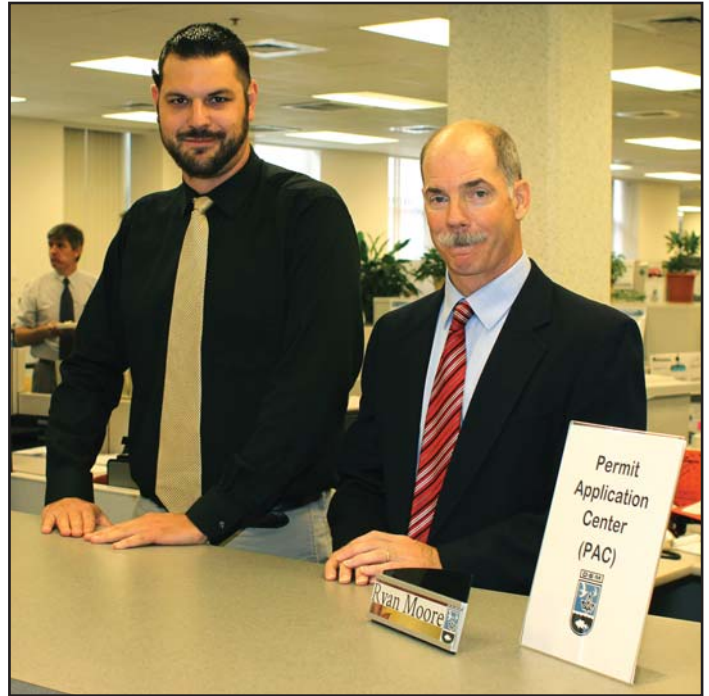
The PAC, an arm of DEM's Office of Customer and Technical Assistance (CTA), headed by Ronald N. Gagnon, is an outgrowth of DEM's "Lean Government Initiative." This began in 2011 with a determination to improve "customer service" and a \$47,000 grant from the Rhode Island Foundation.

"I never thought I could walk into DEM and be treated as a 'customer,'" quipped Mr. Baldwin, who heads R.B. Homes Inc. "The PAC represents a monumental first step in fixing the over-regulation and fragmented permitting in Rhode Island. Director Coit's leadership has provided both a change in culture and people thinking 'outside the box,' with the PAC being an example for other state departments and municipalities to follow."

Also present at the grand opening were other officials instrumental in establishing the PAC, including Gov. Lincoln D. Chafee, DEM Director Janet L. Coit, Sen. Erin P. Lynch (D-Warwick, Cranston), Rep. Raymond E. Gallison Jr. (D-Bristol, Portsmouth), Commerce RI Chief of Staff John R. Pagliarini and Rhode Island Foundation President Neil Steinberg.

The PAC, headed by DEM Information Aide Ryan Moore, is now "a single point of entry into DEM for all permit applications, whether they arrive by mail or are hand-delivered," A DEM statement said.

As soon as an application is submitted, it is reviewed for completeness.



DEM Information Aide Ryan Moore, left, who heads up the Permit Application Center, with Ronald Gagnon, chief of DEM's Office of Customer and Technical Assistance.

The goal is to follow up with applicants within one business day. File-review requests, as well as pre-application assistance for applicants, are available there. The PAC is open weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"Improving the services we provide to Rhode Island businesses is a top goal at DEM. This initiative provides tangible benefits to customers across the board," Director Coit commented. "It's also a great example of a public/private partnership in action, as DEM works with the Rhode Island Foundation to change the way we do business."

For details, visit www.DEM.ri.gov or contact Mr. Moore at ryan.moore@dem.ri.gov or (401) 222-4700, ext. 7265.



We appreciate our excellent working relationship with Director Janet Coit and the strides she has made at DEM in improving the permit process.

***-Executive Director
John Marcantonio***

DEADLINES FOR THE NEXT ISSUE

For the January issue, copy, ads and photos must be to us by

Friday, December 5

**Send material to The R.I. Builder Report, c/o RIBA,
450 Veterans Memorial Pkwy., Suite
301, East Providence, RI 02914**

or e-mail to builder@newriverpress.com Fax: (401) 356-0913

RIBA welcomes our new members and thanks their sponsors!

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Warwick, RI 02886
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For membership information, visit www.RIBuilders.org or call (401) 438-7400

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RIBA also thanks these members who renewed September-October

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John F. Nilan
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American Tile & Marble Co., Inc.
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Bilodeau Property Mgmt. Inc.
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Bob's Home Improvements
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Century 21 Access America
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DCS Construction LLC
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Memo Construction Inc.
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Petro Home Services
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Superior Plus
T.F. Buxton Ltd.
TM Electric
Vinyl Solutions
William J. Canning Management Co.
Wm. J. Lamar & Sons Inc.
Woodstock Financial, LLC

LOOKING AHEAD!

♦**December 3: First Aid CPR/AED class** - 5-9 p.m., RIBA headquarters, East Providence. FREE for members, with a \$25 materials and certification charge. \$50 for non-members, with a \$25 materials and certification charge. To register, visit www.RIBUILDERS.org or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400. Class size is limited to 10.

Details on page 11.

♦**December 8: Deadline for Advertising Purchase in the 2015 RIBA Directory** - Final deadline for all advertising for 2015.

Details on page 8.

December 16: Katz Roadshow - FREE Trade Show sponsored by Riverhead Building Supply, Hyatt Regency, Newport. Registration now open. *Details on pages 5 and 10.*

♦**December 18: PWB Holiday Party and Craftmaking** - The Farmer's Daughter, 716 Mooresfield Rd., South Kingstown. Sponsored by RIBA's Professional Women in Building Council. *Details on page 24.*

♦**January 8: Deck Construction: Sorting Out Codes and Solutions** - 5-6:30 p.m., RIBA headquarters, East Providence. FREE for members, with a \$10 materials charge. \$50 for non-members, with a \$10 materials charge. To register, visit www.RIBUILDERS.org or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 12.*

♦**January 13: Air Leakage Testing and Preparing for the Test** - 5-6:30 p.m., RIBA headquarters, East Providence. Rhode Island's building code requires all new homes be blower-door tested. Learn what you need to know at this seminar. FREE for members, with a \$10 materials charge. \$50 for non-members, with a \$10 materials charge. To register, visit www.RIBUILDERS.org or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 12.*

♦**January 14: Excel Basics Part 1** - 5-6:30 p.m., RIBA headquarters, East Providence. FREE for members, with a \$10 materials charge. \$50 for non-members, with a \$10 materials charge. To register, visit www.RIBUILDERS.org or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 12.*

♦**January 21: Excel Basics Part 2** - 5-6:30 p.m., RIBA headquarters, East Providence. FREE for members, with a \$10 materials charge. \$50 for non-members, with a \$10 materials charge. To register, visit www.RIBUILDERS.org or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 12.*

♦**January 22: Asbestos Awareness Seminar** - 5-7 p.m., RIBA headquarters, East Providence. FREE for members, with a \$10 materials charge. \$45 for non-members, with a \$10 materials charge. To register, visit www.RIBUILDERS.org or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400. *Details on page 12.*

♦**January 26-February 16: OSHA 30-Hour Course** - 7 a.m.-12:30 p.m., RIBA headquarters, East Providence. Class meets 7 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. The course trains safety directors, job foremen and field employees in OSHA construction standards. FREE for members, with a \$40 materials charge. \$400 for non-members, with a \$40 materials charge. To register, visit www.RIBUILDERS.org or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400.

January 20-22: International Builders Show - Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. Registration is online at www.BuildersShow.com.

February 27: 4th Annual Expo and Education Fair - Registration begins 8:15 a.m., New England Institute of Technology, East Greenwich Campus, One New England Tech Blvd., East Greenwich. Sponsored by the Rhode Island Building Officials Association (RIBOA). *Details on page 10.*

♦**March 5-8: 65th Annual Home Show** - Sponsored by RIBA at the Rhode Island Convention Center. *Details on page 7.*

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

♦Indicates a RIBA-sponsored event.

President's Message



Roland J. Fiore

RIBA membership: a service to your customers

We take great pains to grow our businesses, to work well so our reputations shine, and so that word of mouth becomes our best advertising. We keep our accounts in order, take classes offered by the Rhode Island Builders Association so we can improve our business and technical knowledge, and strive to comply with the many laws and regulations that govern our work.

Why do we do it? The answer rests in one word: the customer.

Without customers who are well served and satisfied, homes don't get built or remodeled, we don't build our businesses, and we certainly don't support our families. In everything we do, consideration of the customer must be foremost.

One of the greatest things we can do for our customers is to belong to, and be active in, RIBA. Our trade association is our pipeline to knowledge for and about our customers. RIBA provides free education for members and their employees in everything we need to know to serve those customers.

That includes marketing, so we can get the word out about our services to people who need them. Classes on accounting software help us get it right when it comes to bookkeeping and in-

voicing. OSHA and lead courses help us comply with the law and keep our customers and employees safe. Code classes help us do the job right and not have to go back to correct mistakes. Workshops on contract and mechanics' lien laws help ensure there are no misunderstandings between us and the customer.

Certainly, RIBA's constant and successful push for sensible laws and regulations at the state and local levels helps us do our work and keep costs down, and our customers benefit.

That RIBA logo on our trucks, signage and business cards tells people one thing: "I care about my customers!" We care enough about what we do to become educated and to be professional.

Your membership in RIBA, and the membership in the National Association of Home Builders that comes with it, is all about customer care. Be sure to renew your membership when the time comes, and be sure to use your membership and its many benefits. And encourage your subs to join so they and their customers can benefit too!

For information about RIBA membership, visit www.RIBuilders.org or call (401) 438-7400.



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From the Board of Directors

As membership grows, RIBA Business Plan targets added value

As members return following the recession, the association seeks to strengthen and expand the benefits of membership.

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

The roadmap for 2015 was a primary topic for discussion on November 5th as the Rhode Island Builders Association's Board of Directors adopted RIBA's latest Business Plan.



With a new administration and six new members, the Board of Directors on November 5th listens to Executive Director John Marcantonio lay out the Rhode Island Builders Association's Business Plan for 2015.

THE RHODE ISLAND **builder** report

Official publication of the
Rhode Island Builders Association
since 1951

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The Rhode Island Builder Report

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

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Presented by Executive Director John Marcantonio, the Business Plan makes membership a top priority, with an emphasis on marketing RIBA, member services and discounts, increased information flow, and expanding the education program.

Also central to the Business Plan is the Home Show, with an emphasis on new features, new marketing relationships and recruiting new exhibitors.

There is also a plan to explore a fall "Parade of Homes" event.

In addition, the Business Plan targets insurance offerings through the Builders Insurance Group (BIG) (see page 1), politi-

cal action, advocacy and public relations, along with increased involvement with larger issues and programs through the National Association of Home Builders.

The Board also reviewed the RIBA budget for 2014-2015.

Environmental Committee Co-Chairmen Thomas E. D'Angelo and Timothy A. Stasiunas reviewed preparations for the adoption of statewide standards for septic systems and wetlands setbacks and buffers, set for 2015. See page 18.

To find out more about RIBA's programs and activities, visit www.RIBuilders.org or call (401) 438-7400.

For more information on scheduled RIBA classes, see pages 11 and 12, and the calendar on page 4. If there is a class you would like to see offered, contact Sheila McCarthy at (401) 438-7400 or smccarthy@ribuilders.org

PCTA students to build 'Home Showcase' at Home Show

WHEN: March 5th-8th

WHERE: Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence

FOR INFORMATION AND TO OBTAIN EXHIBIT SPACE:

Contact John Marcantonio or Elizabeth Carpenter at RIBA,
(401) 438-7400.

Excitement continues to build as the 65th Annual Home Show approaches, and members are reminded that this premiere event of the Rhode Island Builders Association's year takes place a month earlier than the 2014 event. There will be many new features as the show continues to expand.

Students from the Providence Career and Technical Academy (PCTA) will build a roofless "Home Showcase," with designers, furniture dealers and landscapers highlighting their best work in a home setting. This not only will provide an unusual and attractive Home Show feature, but will allow the students to showcase their skills as our industry's future workforce.

Another showcase will highlight the "mini-home" concept and

the trend toward smaller homes. All will feature both indoor and outdoor concepts. Other features at the 2015 Home Show will include a RIBA-sponsored contractor pavilion to help those who have never exhibited before "get their feet wet."

"First-time contractor exhibitors will have the option to rent space for a day rather than committing to the whole four-day show," explained RIBA Executive Director John Marcantonio.

There will also be a wider variety of exhibitors. The popular Energy Expo will return, as will landscape features by the Rhode Island Nursery and Landscape Association, demonstrations, seminars and special events.

"The Home Show is in March, a month earlier than last year. Now is the time to contact us about exhibiting, especially if you want to get in on the new RIBA Contractor Pavilion," Mr. Marcantonio said.

RIBA helps exhibitors with booth design and other guidance, and will assist new exhibitors through the entire process, he emphasized. Surveys say that Home Show visitors want to see more contractors and suppliers, so plan your exhibit now!



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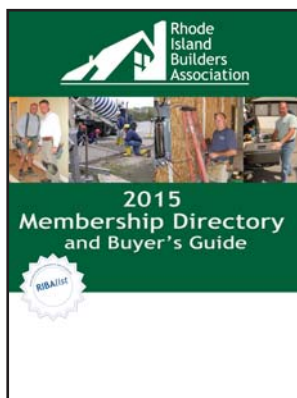
RIBA's 2015 Directory: Get your info right, and get your ad!

The annual *Membership Directory and Buyer's Guide* is an invaluable resource to help members find subcontractors and suppliers, and to help the public find contractors, real estate professionals, lenders and anyone else they need to buy, remodel or maintain their homes.

Members of the Rhode Island Builders Association should be aware of two things:

First, this is a free member benefit, so make sure your listing in the *Directory* is correct. Do that by making certain that your free listing on RIBAlist.com is correct, since the printed *Directory* reflects the online listing. To check your listing, simply search for your company on RIBAlist.com. If you want to change any information, contact Elizabeth Carpenter at RIBA to make the corrections: ecarpenter@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400.

Second, consider advertising in the *Directory*. Whether you're a contractor, supplier, lender, real estate professional or anyone



else involved in the residential construction industry, this is your perfect, year-long advertising venue.

The deadline for *Directory* advertising is December 8th. Advertising is available to members and non-members alike.

The ad will showcase your business throughout 2015. What's more, it will be in the hands of thousands of potential customers before, during and after the 65th Annual Rhode Island Home Show in March. So if you haven't done so already, reserve your advertising in this attractive venue. The low advertising rates remain the same as last year.

The *Directory* will be printed, and distribution will begin, before the Home Show, and will be an excellent introduction to your business, especially if you are a Home Show exhibitor. The show will take place March 5th-8th at the Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence. *Story on page 7*. There, homeowners will seek out contractors and suppliers to begin their spring and summer construction and remodeling projects.

Information about the *Directory* was mailed to members in September, and premium advertising positions are almost gone. RIBA once again offers advertising "package deals" with the *Directory* and *The Rhode Island Builder Report*. Advertisers who opt for both publications will earn a 5 percent discount on their total advertising cost.

Current and potential advertisers are now being contacted about advertising by Paul or Jonathan Eno from New River Press. With an improving market, it's even more important to keep the name of your business in the public eye.

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



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AD RATES: 2015 DIRECTORY

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

Member Profile: Steve Fitzgerald of Fitzgerald Building and Remodeling

It all began with a favor

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

The gods were determined to make him a contractor. It started with a favor to a friend, and one thing kept leading to another.

"I grew up in a neighborhood (in Johnston) with a lot of kids, and the father of one of them was a contractor," recalls Steve Fitzgerald. "So I started helping my friend help his father around his shop."

In the meantime, the boy's uncle, who lived right across the street from the Fitzgeralds, started an addition to his house.

"I'd run over there every day during the summer and help fill up their pouches with nails. I was about 10 years old."

When Steve was 16, Bob Mende, a family friend, asked Steve's father if the lad had a job that summer. It so happened that Bob was a contractor -- A.W. Mende Construction. And that was it: Steve knew he was going to be a contractor.

Steve graduated from high school in 1979, then went into the Air National Guard in 1980, where he learned about electricity and electronics. Between basic training and Air Force technical school, Steve was gone for about nine months.

"When I got home, my job with Mende was right where I left it," Steve says.

Finally, in 1987, he set off on his own path, and Fitzgerald Building and Remodeling was born. Today, Steve has two employees and subs out much of his other work, which covers Rhode Island and nearby Massachusetts.

"The vast majority of my work is restoration and remodeling, with some additions. In fact, I've only built one house from the ground up," Steve says. "Most of my early training was in restoring old houses, and that's how I became a carpenter."

Much of that training involved learning the history of American construction techniques by seeing it for himself.

"Working on houses from the 1700s and 1800s, you can actually see how the techniques developed. And it shows you many things, like why fire codes came in and why they've changed over the years," Steve says.



Steve Fitzgerald courts a lead at the 2015 RIBA Home Show

"When they started out, it was post-and-beam construction, with just boards and plaster. There was no cavity for insulation. Later, they put studs in to support the beams. And when they added a second story and these things caught fire, they would burn fast!"

So building techniques and fire stops evolved accordingly, Steve explains.

One of his most educational experiences was helping to rebuild an 18th century farmhouse that had been moved from Chalkstone Avenue to Benefit Street in Providence.

"Learning from this perspective is a great educational experience for any builder or student."

Within a year of founding his own company, Steve joined the Rhode Island Builders Association, where he now serves on the Board of Directors.

"RIBA is vital to me for education and information. It helps me stay current on state and local codes," Steve says. "You just get a ton of information. The magazine comes out every month, and we can see what's about to happen with enforcement and what rules are about to change."

Steve, who always exhibits at the RIBA Home Show in the spring, also values the networking opportunities RIBA provides.

"I know guys who aren't in RIBA and who certainly could afford the dues. But they think they can stay under the radar. That never works!"

Find out more about Fitzgerald Building and Remodeling at www.FitzgeraldBuildingAndRemodeling.com.

Fitzgerald Building and Remodeling

President: Stephen Fitzgerald

RIBA member since: 1987

Focus: Remodeling and additions

Serves: Southeastern New England

Founded: 1987

Based: Rumford, Rhode Island

Riverhead Trade Show to feature hands-on carpentry clinics

WHEN: Tuesday, December 16th, 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
WHERE: Hyatt Regency Hotel, 1 Goat Island, Newport
COST: FREE
DEADLINE TO REGISTER: ASAP
FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER: Contact Riverhead Building Supply at (800) 874-9500 or (631) 996-3087. Registration for builders, general contractors, remodelers and their construction crews is now open online at RBSTradeshow.com.

The Katz Roadshow, a traveling building clinic featuring frame-to-finish carpentry techniques by Mike Sloggatt, will provide free hands-on training to professional builders and contractors at the Riverhead Building Supply Trade Show on December 16th.

All participants must register in advance.

This year, the Katz Roadshow has partnered with Huber Engi-

neered Woods to bring this event to Rhode Island. This will be the Roadshow's only stop with a Rhode Island dealer during its 2014 nationwide tour.

Mr. Sloggatt will present four Frame to Finish Carpentry Clinics at the event. Topics will include lifetime flooring systems, installing leak-free windows and more. He has more than 30 years of experience in the construction industry and is a frequent presenter at many events, including the International Builders Show.

Attendees will enjoy a hot breakfast and complimentary lunch, and will have the opportunity to learn about new products, network with manufacturers, and take part in the live carpentry demonstrations. This event is free to members of the residential construction trades: builders, project managers, remodelers, lead carpenters and general contractors.

Architects can earn three learning units (LUs). Full information and a registration form can be found online at RBSTradeshow.com. *More information on page 5.*



RIBOA sets education expo

WHEN: Friday, February 27th, with registration at 8:15 a.m. and the Expo beginning at 9.

WHERE: New England Institute of Technology, East Greenwich Campus, One New England Tech Blvd., East Greenwich, RI 02818

COST: \$75 for RIBOA members, \$80 for non-members.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER: February 6th

FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER: Visit RIBOA.net

It's the 4th Annual Expo and Education Fair, sponsored by the Rhode Island Building Officials Association (RIBOA), and there's a great lineup of educational events.

Rhode Island Builders Association member Michael R. Guertin of Michael R. Guertin Inc. will offer "Residential Building Codes & Advanced Framing Techniques," while another member, Rob Sherwood, will discuss the Rhode Island Energy Code.

David Grandpre will offer a third program, on "Structural Roofing and Explanation of 23-27.3-106.0 Existing Structures, Substantial Improvements."

In addition, there will be vendor booths, code-book ordering and door prizes at the conclusion. Lunch is available.

Space is limited, so don't wait to register.



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83% of members hail RIBA education

Eighty-three percent of members place a high value on education as a member benefit, and code training is at the head of the class. That's the result of a recent survey conducted by the Rhode Island Builders Association as its expanded education program begins for 2015.

The survey also showed class subjects in order of preference: codes, OSHA compliance and training, mechanics' liens and contract law, lead training, new technologies, estimating, new products, marketing and insurance.

Based on surveys such as these, RIBA creates content for its programs. When you receive a RIBA survey by e-mail, please take a few moments to complete and return it. This helps RIBA

provide the benefits that you and your business need.

To learn more about RIBA's education program, which features free tuition for members and their employees, contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400. Also visit www.RIBuilders.org.



Based on this survey, RIBA will create more great classes and programs based on what members need. To provide feedback, please contact the RIBA office.

*-Executive Director
John Marcantonio*

OSHA 30-Hour Course January 26-February 16

WHEN: January 26th - February 16th, 7 a.m.-12:30 p.m. every Monday and Wednesday.

WHERE: RIBA headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pkwy., East Providence

COST: FREE for members, with a \$40 materials charge. \$400 for non-members, with a \$40 materials charge.

FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER: Logon to www.RIBUILDERS.org, click on this event under the "Events Calendar," or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Instructor Scott Asprey, construction safety consultant and trainer at Risk and Safety Management, will take participants through this course, a comprehensive safety overview. The course will cover everything from the OSHA law itself through walking surfaces and emergencies to electrical safety, ergonomics and hazardous materials.

It is specifically devised for safety directors, foremen and field supervisors to learn OSHA construction standards. The course provides complete information on OSHA compliance issues.

Payment is due at the time of registration.

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Deck Construction and Codes

January 8

WHEN: Thursday, January 8th, 5-6:30 p.m.
WHERE: RIBA headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pkwy., East Providence
COST: FREE for members, with a \$10 materials charge. \$50 for non-members, with a \$10 materials charge.
FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER: Logon to www.RIBUILDERS.org, click on this event under the "Events Calendar," or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Join instructor Mike Guertin of Michael R. Guertin Inc. to sort out codes changes that have taken place over the past two cycles. Building officials take decks more seriously than ever before!

Learn what you need to design and build code-compliant decks using prescriptive measures and alternatives, ledger fastening and fastener options, lateral load connection, guardrail post-to-frame connections, ledger flashing and more.

Also learn about deck stair requirements, along with other deck framing, planning and layout issues.



Air Leakage Testing and Test Prep

January 13

WHEN: Thursday, January 13th, 5-6:30 p.m.
WHERE: RIBA headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pkwy., East Providence
COST: FREE for members, with a \$10 materials charge. \$50 for non-members, with a \$10 materials charge.
FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER: Logon to www.RIBUILDERS.org, click on this event under the "Events Calendar," or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Instructor Mike Guertin returns to discuss "Air Leakage Testing and Preparing for the Test."

Rhode Island's building code requires that all new homes be tested for air leakage with the blower-door test. Learn when the test can be done, how it's done, how to prepare for it and what the test results mean.

See where your time is best spent air-sealing a house during construction, and find out the best sealing approach for each location.



Excel™ Basics

Part 1: January 14

Part 2: January 21

WHEN: Wednesdays, January 14th and 21st, 5-6:30 p.m.
WHERE: RIBA headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pkwy., East Providence
COST: FREE for members, with a \$10 materials charge. \$50 for non-members, with a \$10 materials charge.
Separate charges for each class.
FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER: Logon to www.RIBUILDERS.org, click on this event under the "Events Calendar," or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Learn the basics of this fundamental Microsoft Office® spreadsheet software in these two separate classes with instructor Kristine Ricci. *Each class incurs separate charges.*

You can use Excel™ to create and format workbooks (a collection of spreadsheets) in order to analyze data and make more informed business decisions. Excel can be of great use to contractors for accounting, budgeting, planning, billing, tracking and more.



Asbestos Awareness

January 22

WHEN: Thursday, January 22nd, 5-7 p.m.
WHERE: RIBA headquarters, 450 Veterans Memorial Pkwy., East Providence
COST: FREE for members, with a \$10 materials charge. \$45 for non-members, with a \$10 materials charge.
FOR INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER: Logon to www.RIBUILDERS.org, click on this event under the "Events Calendar," or contact Sheila McCarthy at smccarthy@ribuilders.org, or call (401) 438-7400.

Join Instructor Lance Comeau of R.I. Analytical Labs Inc. for an introduction to mold and indoor air quality, basic health hazards associated with mold, potential locations of mold within buildings, monitoring and sampling of mold within buildings and HVAC systems, protecting yourself and others when working with mold, and good work practices when dealing with small-scale mold growth.

Learning about mold, a major cause of lawsuits against contractors today, can help you know what to do when you come upon it during a remodeling job, and can help you prevent it in the first place during new construction.



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December

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The Design Center in Westerly is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., and after hours by appointment. Stop by and meet designer Lauren Burnap. Reach her at (401) 596-2806 or lburnap@arnoldlumber.com.

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On your mark... Get set...!



Steven Carlino

The 2015 session of the Rhode Island General Assembly is about to begin, with several new lawmakers and a new governor about to take office.

We thank Gov. Lincoln Chafee for the many ways he has helped our industry, especially in his "Lean Government" initiative and the resulting efforts to reduce unnecessary regulation and to streamline permitting. We also thank the legislative leadership, Senate President M. Theresa Paiva Weed and House Speaker Nicholas

A. Mattiello. Special thanks also go to Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM) Director Janet Coit, who has worked with us as a real partner, as shown by the recent opening of DEM's Permit Application Center. *Story on page 2.*

On the same hopeful note, we welcome Governor-Elect Gina Raimondo, who has already shown a willingness to get to know

the Rhode Island Builders Association and the needs of our members. She also knows the world of business, and she knows what small businesses are up against today.

We look forward to working with Gov. Raimondo to get Rhode Island's economy going strong again in the years to come!

Meanwhile, we at RIBA are preparing for the legislative session, with many important items on our agenda, some returning from previous years and some new.

Improving Rhode Island's water and sewer infrastructure will be an important consideration this year.

Please watch these pages, your e-mail and the rest of your RIBA information flow for important details on our advocacy work for 2015. It's important to your business, our industry and our state's economy.

Let's have another successful legislative year!



Robert J. Baldwin

RIBA's Legislative Committee

Steven Carlino, Co-Chairman
Douglas Lumber, Kitchens & Home Center

Robert J. Baldwin, Co-Chairman
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Against deadline, statewide standards panel still has hurdles

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

It's coming down to the wire for the Legislative Task Force on Wetland and OWTS Setbacks, but significant questions remain in the face of a December 31st deadline for the panel's report to the General Assembly.

At its October 31st meeting, the Task Force was still undecided on at least two major issues when it comes to implementing the statewide environmental regulations and eliminating local ones. One is the "area of jurisdiction" and buffer distances, including those around "critical resources." Another is whether municipalities should be notified about all or some pending applications for projects within their own boundaries and, if so, if they should be allowed to comment.

There was also some concern that the terms "buffer" and "setback," which have different meanings, are still not being clearly defined in the proposed draft documents.

The meeting, which took place at Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM) headquarters on Promenade Street in Providence, was attended by about 25 Task Force members and visitors. Serving on the Task Force from the Rhode Island Builders Association are Thomas E. D'Angelo and Timothy A. Stasiunas, co-chairs of RIBA's Environmental Committee, along with members Scott F. Moorehead, Scott P. Rabideau and Joseph A. Casali. DEM, the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC), local communities, environmental organizations and other stakeholders are represented as well.

On the definition of terms such as buffer and setback, it was generally agreed to include a glossary in the report to the legislature.

Discussion of local involvement included allowing municipalities to "petition"



The Legislative Task Force on Wetland and OWTS Setbacks meets at DEM headquarters on October 31st. At the far end of the table are RIBA members Thomas E. D'Angelo, Timothy A. Stasiunas, Scott F. Moorehead and Scott P. Rabideau.

DEM for stricter standards around critical environmental sites within their jurisdictions. Several committee members, including Mr. D'Angelo, pointed out that DEM, the primary regulatory agency in the future scenario, would already know about critical features and would regulate accordingly. He stated that adding municipal input of this kind could increase costs and lengthen the permitting process.

He also expressed concern about expanding DEM jurisdiction in areas where this isn't necessary, citing longer permit times and an increase in applications classified as "significant," which are more expensive and take longer to process.

Discussion on the area of jurisdiction

also involved concerns about overkill.

There was some discussion of CRMC's place in any statewide regulatory scenario. Several members stated that the Task Force's purpose is not only statewide standards for OWTS (on-site wastewater treatment systems) and wetlands, but a predictable and non-burdensome permitting process.

Task Force Chairman Kevin Flynn commented that many of these issues will be resolved as regulations are drafted after the presumed adoption of the Task Force's recommendations during the 2015 session.

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



CRLB in complete rewrite of registration rules

By Paul F. Eno *Editor*

Rhode Island's contractors should be prepared for major changes in registration and licensing regulations in 2015. That's the news from George W. Whalen, executive director of the Rhode Island Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board (CRLB).

"This is a complete rewrite of all the regulations and standards," Mr. Whalen said. "Draft regulations are now being reviewed, and the only question is what their final form will be."

Major changes will include the continuing-education requirements the Rhode Island Builders Association has been preparing for, as reported in the October *Rhode Island Builder Report*.

"There will be pre-registration requirements as well, including five courses needed before applicants can register," Mr. Whalen added.

A public hearing on the new regulations will take place early in 2015.



From the Environmental Committee

Regulations under the microscope

Working on statewide standards for septic systems and wetlands has taken up most of the time and effort for the Rhode Island Builders Association's Environmental Committee lately. *Related story on page 18.*

"We are trying to ensure the most reasonable outcome for our builder members," stated Environmental Committee Co-Chairman Timothy A. Stasiunas. "Both (Co-Chairman Thomas E. D'Angelo) and I recognize that we will probably lose a little ground with regard to setback differences with new developments. But we're concentrating on the issue of existing lots of record as well as existing properties with dwellings and buildings already on them. It's our position that they should be exempt, or at least be given variances, because, in most cases, they existed before zoning and wetlands regulations."

Stormwater rules

On other fronts, the committee is trying to eliminate needless,

repetitive or burdensome regulations, whether governing on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS), wetlands or stormwater discharge.

"We're trying to get updated on stormwater issues that we had a meeting on about a year ago. Some regulations may be overkill, particularly when no credit has been allowed on any front for addressing them," said Mr. D'Angelo.

Both men praised efforts by the Dept. of Environmental Management (DEM), particularly Director Janet Coit and Chief of Groundwater and Wetland Protection Brian Moore, to work with business and industry to help simplify regulations and streamline permitting.

"We are still in talks with Brian Moore about water-resource regulations and what we feel are inconsistencies," Mr. D'Angelo added.

Members are urged to contact RIBA with their environmental concerns: (401) 438-7400.



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National Grid

On connections and renewable energy issues



We talk with Timothy Roughan, distributed resources consultant; Roger Cox, manager, distribution design; Tracy Bolduc, manager, electric service connections; and Laura Rodormer, residential program strategy analyst.

THE BUILDER: One of the primary complaints by builders is how long it takes to get electrical service at a jobsite. What has to be in place before service can be provided?

BOLDUC: For jobsite services in general, the electrician should call in and know the size of service (AMPS) required. From there, National Grid generates a work order, and that's assigned to a "job owner" (a project manager from National Grid), who then contacts the electrician for anything else we need – in the form of paperwork in an initial proposal for electric service package. That usually includes a site plan, deed information, an easement application and load information (depending on the size of service).

To begin and for information, the electrician should call (800) 375-7405. As soon as planning for a construction project begins, the electrician should call in. They shouldn't wait.

COX: Depending on the job, there could be a lot of details. So it's always best to have that conversation with the project manager sooner than later.

THE BUILDER: Do your people need to come out and see the site first?

BOLDUC: Not necessarily. Once we get a work order, the job owner might set up a site visit if the electrician wants to see the designer beforehand. Otherwise, we would start the design as long as we have the site plan.

THE BUILDER: How smooth is this process and can it be

streamlined?

BOLDUC: It can be smooth, and a lot of it depends on the contractor getting the paperwork back to us as quickly as possible. The connection could take anywhere from a month to six months, or even longer, depending on the size of the job and how quickly we get the paperwork back.

COX: Small jobs are quicker, and larger jobs would have longer lead items like municipal or state permits, and setting of poles performed by the telephone company instead of by us. Those things obviously tend to take longer than a simple service. For example, an easement generally takes six weeks.

THE BUILDER: How involved can a contractor expect the municipality to get?

BOLDUC: Each town is a little different with inspections and permits, so it could take a little longer in one place than another. If we have to go out for a petition to set poles, some towns, especially in the summer, only hold public hearings every two or three months. So we have to wait for the next hearing date.

As for the electrical inspectors, we find they're pretty responsive to us once they do an inspection. Pretty much every job has to be inspected. Our rule of thumb is that if the seal on the meter is cut, it needs an inspection.

THE BUILDER: What other suggestions or contact people do you have for builders in this regard?

BOLDUC: They're more than welcome to contact me once they have a work-order number or if they're having trouble getting in touch with their job owner. We also have a hotline: (800) 260-0054.



THE BUILDER: Builders and their clients are increasingly aware of energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy sources. How far along is National Grid when it comes to integrating these technologies and energy sources? (For example, how easy is it for a new home to have solar panels and/or wind turbines installed and have them work within the grid?)

ROGHAN: The good news is that there's no real need for a formal integration project for different technologies. For basic solar or small wind turbines, it's very simple and straightforward. National Grid does thousands of hook-ups a year in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York.

The systems are relatively small. They have certified (electrical) inverters, so they're almost "plug-and-play," but not quite because we need to know where these are on our system. We also need to know that the metering and the billing are accurate so folks can take advantage of "net metering": When the system produces more power than you need in the house, the meter actually turns backward.

An important point for builders is to take advantage of the many residential energy-efficiency programs. We have lots of programs out there to make homes as efficient as they can be, even above code. States are increasing their energy-code requirements, and building officials may or may not be fully aware of those changes. As a result, some new homes aren't as energy-efficient as they should be. This is something we're working on with other stakeholders. We're working to train building officials also.

First and foremost, we want to be sure that new homes are built as energy-efficient as possible. Typically, the new, high-efficiency heat pumps are part of that picture, providing for low-cost cooling in the summer and relatively moderate costs for heating in the winter. Initially, those systems are a little more expensive than standard oil- or gas-fired boiler systems, but they have significantly lower costs over their life cycles. That's especially true if you're a gas customer of ours.

Then, if folks want to install solar panels or a small wind turbine, they can augment that energy-efficient construction and those technologies, cutting their energy bills even more. There's a great deal of information on our website (www.NationalGridUS.com) about those technologies and programs.

THE BUILDER: It sounds as though homeowners aren't being deterred by the cost of solar—energy systems.

ROGHAN: No. In fact, larger systems are going in because the cost of solar has dropped fairly significantly. But you're limited by physical space in most cases. A 2' x 4' panel is only about 260 watts, or a quarter of a kilowatt. You also have to be sure that any nearby trees belong to you and not your neighbor. We have many cases where people invest in solar projects and the trees next door grow, blocking sunlight to the panel six or eight years in.

This is a vital consideration because solar panels have a life cycle of 25 years or more, barring a huge storm with softball-sized hail. There are no moving parts, so the only component they might have to replace at some point is the inverter, which converts the solar power so it can be used in a home.

THE BUILDER: How common are residential wind turbines?

ROGHAN: Wind turbines are a little more complicated because people can see them. It's actually rare to have a customer install a wind turbine just for their home. And currently, they're more expensive than solar systems. It can be difficult unless you're on some 40-acre parcel and your neighbors can't see it.

THE BUILDER: One thing builders like is one-stop shopping. So they can come to you and get all the guidance they need on energy efficiency and renewable sources?

ROGHAN: Yes, we work directly with the solar installers in Rhode Island. We have seminars open to the public, and we certainly encourage contractors to come. We walk people through the process and let them know about new technologies and trends. We have a good installer base already.

The challenge with solar is when you get an installer who hasn't done it and doesn't know how to do it, but makes promises to a customer. Contractors and homeowners really need to work with people who have installed at least a few of these things, knows how they work and knows our process.

If people just put a system there because they don't want to talk to the power company, the meter won't register properly. In fact, the electric bill will probably go up. The meter reads the "absolute value" of the power. Whether the power is flowing in or out, it will read it as flowing in, unless we review it and adjust the metering accordingly. Our review takes two weeks, maximum.

COX: Most reviews can be done within 10 business days.

ROGHAN: With new construction, we do need an initial work request, as Tracy mentioned.

RODORMER: There's now a program called "Solarize Rhode Island." It's kicking off in North Smithfield. The state Office of Energy Resources (OER) and Commerce RI are working with solar installers on this, and National Grid is making sure that any customer who signs up is expedited through the EnergyWise Home Energy Assessment Program. This will help them find ways to reduce their (energy) load before having their solar array designed.

Moving forward, National Grid will work with OER and Commerce RI to assess the possibility of aligning energy efficiency and solar incentives for new construction in the state. As Tim said, we always encourage energy efficiency as a first step. That way, customers properly size their mechanical and solar systems.

Solarize Rhode Island will move into Little Compton and Tiverton within the next few months. And the more people who sign up for it, the less expensive their solar installation will be. Shauna Beland, renewable energy portfolio manager at Commerce RI, can provide information on that program (sbeland@commerceri.com or 401-278-9100).

THE BUILDER: Along with the Renewable Energy Growth Program just passed by the General Assembly, are there other changes in rules or processes that builders should know about?

See INTERVIEW...page 24

Census Bureau: New England's building lots are nation's largest, most expensive

National Association of Home Builders

Single-family homes started in New England, where local zoning regulations often require very low densities, are built on some of the largest and most expensive lots in the nation, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Construction (SOC), the National Association of Home Builders reports.

"Looking at single-family homes built on speculation and started in 2013, the median lot size in New England exceeds half an acre," an NAHB statement said. "This is 2.6 times larger than the national median lot of about one-fifth of an acre. The East South Central Division is a distant second, with the median lot occupying about one-third of an acre," NAHB continued.

The Pacific Division, where densities are high and developed land is scarce, has the smallest lots, with half being under 0.14 acres. The neighboring Mountain and West South Central Divisions also report typical lots smaller than the national median, at 0.17 and 0.16 acres, respectively.

The SOC also reports the lot values for single-family spec homes that are sold, along with their reported sales prices.

Not surprisingly, New England lots that stand out for being the largest are also the most expensive in the nation. Half of all sold, single-family homes started in New England in 2013 report lot values in excess of \$100,000.

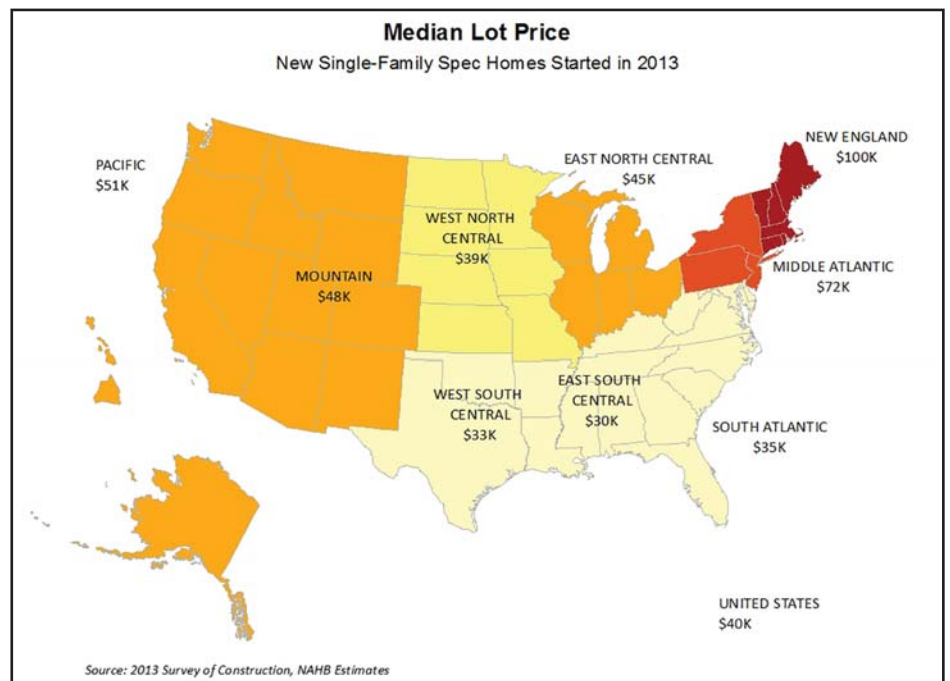
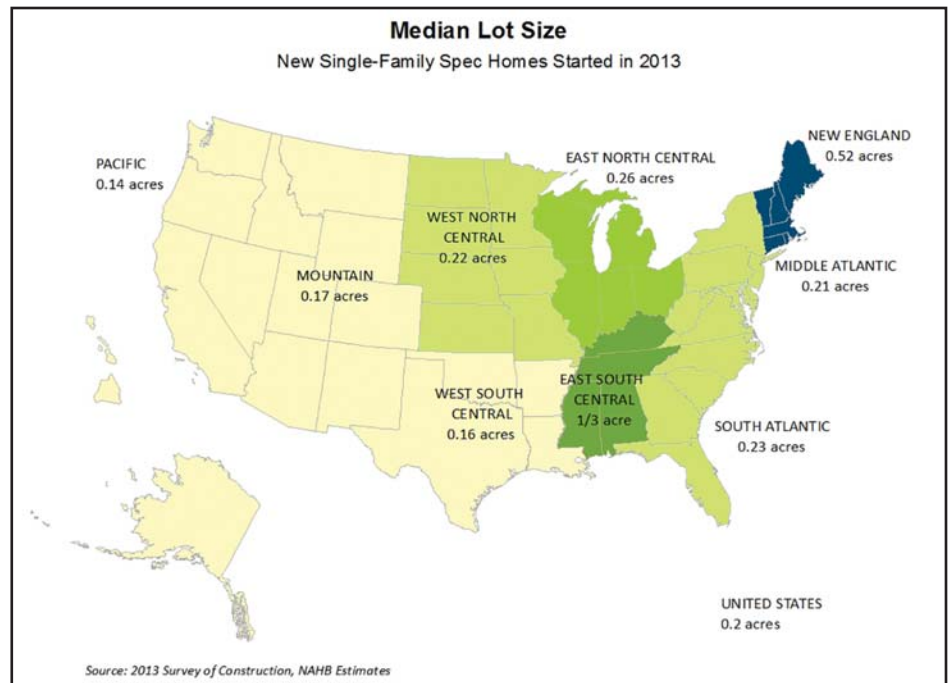
The national median lot value for single-family spec homes is \$40,000.

The Middle Atlantic Division reports



The problem is obvious: Our region, which has the least land, has the largest lot requirements. It's the core issue behind housing affordability and competitiveness in New England.

**-Executive Director
John Marcantonio**



the second most expensive lots, with half priced above \$72,000. The Pacific Division, where lots are smallest but regulatory costs are high, reports the third most expensive median lot value of \$51,000.

The East South Central Division has the second-largest lots, and reports the lowest median value of \$30,000 per lot.

For details, visit <https://www.Census.gov/econ/overview/co0400.html>.



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PWB plans Holiday Party on Dec. 18

The place to be on Thursday, December 18th: The Farmer's Daughter in South Kingstown.

That's where the Rhode Island Builders Association's Professional Women in Building Council will gather for a gala holiday party and to make holiday centerpieces.

Reservations will be required and can be

made by contacting President Tracey Boyajian at tboyajian@abcleads.com.

There will be a \$50 fee for the materials, and wine, cheese and crackers will be served.

"The PWB visited The Farmer's Daughter last year. It was a great success and much fun!" Ms. Boyajian commented.

The Farmer's Daughter is located at 716

Mooresfield Rd., South Kingstown.

CORRECTION: In the November *Rhode Island Builder Report*, the new PWB officers were incorrectly identified in the photo spread on the RIBA Annual Meeting. President is Tracey Boyajian, Vice President/Secretary is Joelle Sylvia and Carol O'Donnell is treasurer.

INTERVIEW...from page 21

ROGHAN: In terms of solar, there are significant developments at several points. As I mentioned earlier, homeowners can now net-meter solar. Any energy their system produces that their house doesn't use goes out into our system, and we pay them for it based on the retail rate they pay us.

The Renewable Energy Growth Program (REGP) also is significant for builders and homeowners. National Grid is just filing the proposed tariffs to implement it. REGP provides a homeowner a fixed price for the output of their solar array for a fixed term, 15 or 20 years. Even getting paid the retail price of 17¢ or so, you're still looking at an eight to 10-year payback. REGP provides the certainty of a revenue stream to help solar projects pay

for themselves, for both residential and commercial customers. We want to interest as many residential customers as we can in that program.

We hope for approval by the Public Utilities Commission by late March. So, hopefully, by April we can start the program. It will be open enrollment for residential customers until we reach a three-megawatt limit for solar input to the system. If we exceed that, the PUC may allow additional projects. It will be a great project for homeowners and for builders to sell to homeowners because there won't be any more risk. As long as they operate their systems properly, homeowners will get paid and will earn back the cost of the system.

Rhode Island will be the only place to have this program in the immediate future.

BIG...from page 1

motor vehicle, workers' compensation, homeowner's, and any other form of insurance contractors may need for business or personal coverage. But you don't have to be a contractor to take advantage of insurance plans offered by BIG – anyone can.

BIG, the first new insurance agency in Rhode Island in over 30 years, is incorporated and fully independent of RIBA, having its own governance. BIG's offices are located adjacent to RIBA's at 450 Veterans Memorial Parkway in East Providence.

"This is a major step forward for the residential construction community in Rhode Island," commented BIG's president, Kenneth Jones of Ken Jones Construction Inc.

"RIBA has worked very hard to increase benefits to its members. And now we have an insurance agency specifically for contractors and run by contractors, familiar with our needs and with how to save us the most money on our premiums. And BIG can be the source of education for our members when it comes to insurance requirements."

BIG's senior broker is none other than Joyce Therrien, familiar to RIBA members as the association's health-insurance administrator for over 25 years. Ms. Therrien has now left the RIBA staff and moved over to BIG, where she is fully licensed and can advise any customer on the best and most cost-effective insurance plans.

BIG's full line of targeted insurance products and the potential savings are expected to be a tremendous resource for RIBA mem-



Joyce Therrien, the Rhode Island Builders Association's longtime health insurance administrator, has moved over to Builders Insurance Group.

bers. Potential customers are encouraged to start thinking about their insurance needs right away: Find out more or get a quote by calling Ms. Therrien at BIG, (401) 438-4BIG (438-4244), or e-mail jtherrien@builderinsgroup.com.

For online information, visit www.BuilderInsGroup.com.

More honors for RIKB

RI Kitchen & Bath (RIKB) has been honored once again – with a 2014 Prestigious Results in Sales and Marketing (PRISM) Award in the “Best Bath Remodel under \$75,000” category from the Builders Association of Greater Boston (BAGB).

Susan Wornick, former WCVB-TV anchor, hosted the 2014 Awards Gala, held October 9th at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. The event celebrated the winners while raising funds for the Be Like Brit Foundation, named for the late Britney Gengel, who died in the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. She was the daughter of Len and Cherylann Gengel, long-time BAGB members. The foundation supports an orphanage in Haiti built in honor of Brittany. RIKB’s Silver Award recognized exceptional results after renovation work on an outdated bathroom.

Find out more at RIKB.com.



Proudly displaying their latest PRISM Award are Tanya Donahue, Steven L. St. Onge, Prudence Stoddard and Lynne Shore of RI Kitchen & Bath Inc., based in Warwick.

Corps of Engineers scuttles New England wetlands permit

National Association of Home Builders

Home builders in New England have been spared the aggravation of yet another regulatory hurdle with the help of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) and the New Hampshire Home Builders Association NHHBA).

The Clean Water Act allows the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to issue “general permits” for certain types of discharge activities, and Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont have operated under their own general permits for more than 30 years.

After talking with New England HBA executive officers and members, NAHB and NHHBA sent a joint comment letter in September demanding that the Corps drop its plan. Not only would the permit represent an additional layer of regulation, the letter said, but “builders question the Corps’ ability to handle the increased caseload without causing significant delay” or adding costs to pay for more Corps staff.

This month, the Corps announced that it would no longer pursue the consolidated NEGP, but instead work to update each state’s general permit.

For additional information, contact Mr. Ward at (800) 368-5242 ext. 8230.

RIAR's Susan Arnold retires

Susan Arnold, CEO and general counsel of the Rhode Island Association of Realtors® (RIAR) and its subsidiary, the State-Wide Multiple Listing Service (MLS), has announced her retirement, effective at the end of this year. Ms. Arnold has led RIAR and MLS since 1997.

During her years as CEO, Ms. Arnold oversaw all facets of RIAR and MLS, including development and growth of the



Susan Arnold

organization’s official websites, www.RILiving.com and www.RILivingCommercial.com. Thousands of people use the sites to search for properties for sale, rent or lease each year.

More recently, Ms. Arnold oversaw the development of the new Rhode Island Commercial Information Exchange. She leaves RIAR one of the largest professional organizations in the state.




*The Officers, Directors, Members and Staff
of the Rhode Island Builders Association
wish all our readers the best
of the Holiday Season!*

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