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THE STRAIGHTEDGE

President's Message



Hi Everyone,
Cookies and milk, peanut butter and jelly, ham and cheese, builders and associates; what do all of these have in common? They are all pairs that you just can't have one without the other.

September is Associate Member Appreciation Month and as an association leader, I've worked side-by-side with associates for many years. And I can tell you from my personal experience, their commitment to the success of this association and this industry knows no bounds. They may not build, remodel, or develop homes - but they are the biggest builders of this association's heart and soul.

I've observed a few qualities that all associates seem to have in common. And it's precisely these shared attributes that put associates head-and-shoulders above the rest.

Associates are generous with their time and energy. Whether they're sponsoring a house of the year, aiding a charity, or serving on a committee, their generosity of spirit and kindness is unsurpassed.

If you need something done right, on-budget, and on-time, ask an associate. Our associate members have got the track record of achievements to prove their reliability.

Associates are the "cheerleaders" of our association and industry. I'm confident that's why associates excel at recruiting and welcoming new

members, and at rallying the rest of us around a new project or goal!

Associates possess the talent and skills that you need to succeed in most of our association's leadership and volunteer roles. From their own areas of expertise in business, they bring the right mix of know-how and can-do attitude. Above all, associates simply know what needs to be done and how to do it which is why our association relies on them so much for so many things.

Associates are in this for the long haul. They know the critical link between the health of the building industry and the profitability of their own businesses, as well as the well-being of their communities. Associates are undeterred by a few bumps in the road when coordinating an event or raising funds, because they know the long term results make it all worthwhile.

Please join our associate members on Associate Appreciation Night for our BAEC Mini Trade Show at 5:30 PM on Wednesday, September 23, 2009 at the Holiday Inn in Norwich. Thanks for sponsoring this event, Bob Maynard.

The products and services of many of our associate members will also be on display at the BAEC 2009 green showcase home from 10 a.m. to 2 pm on September 26 and 27. And remember, do business with an associate!



To Our Great Prosperity

Denise Nott
Nutmeg Building & Remodeling LLC
BAEC President

The Builders Association of Eastern CT, Inc. and The American Lung Association

Cordially Invite You to
**2009 BAEC Green Showcase Home
Open House**

*Saturday & Sunday,
September 26 & 27, 2009
10:00 am - 2:00 pm*

See Page 5 for details!



New Members

Welcome!

Jason Nowosad of New Ground LLC

888 Trumbull Hwy.

Lebanon, CT 06249

Ph: 860.428.2954 Fax: 860.642.1932

E-mail: newgroundllc@gmail.com

Sponsored by: **Dave Camasi of Norwich Lumber**

Builders Association Of Eastern Connecticut

Annual Awards Night is Coming
Friday, December 11, 2009
6:00 pm
Mystic Hilton

Over the years, we find that there are always a distinctive few who joined our association not with the intent of just receiving from it but with the desire to give of their time and expertise. So nominate those who go the extra mile and make the many things we accomplish possible!

Get in the running...Nominate your fellow members or yourself!

Award winners will be featured in the association's 2010 membership directory, consumer directory and on the association's web page; in The Straightedge, CT Builder Magazine and in news releases to local publications.

A nomination form is included in this issue for your convenience!

Student Chapter News

Grasso Technical School's carpentry department is looking to recruit individuals from our association to become Technical Trade Advisors. As an advisor, you would assist in advising the carpentry department with current trends in the trade, the skills students need to enter the workforce and tools and equipment they should purchase to make students more job ready.

They are also seeking a student chapter advisor to meet monthly with students in their junior BAEC.

Our **Killingly High** students are once again on a fundraising campaign to travel to IBS for their third year of involvement in the Student Chapter competition. They also seek professional involvement from our members.

Get Involved! Make a Difference!

Call the BAEC office today!!

Save the Date

BAEC Membership Breakfast
Wednesday, November 18, 2009
7:30 am-10:00 am
Holiday Inn in Norwich

Featuring James Nicholas
Easy Web Creations

Social Media

New media marketing options for homebuilders



See related article on Page 4

100 Members in 1000 Days Membership Drive

Are You in the Running to Win The Kitty? Now at \$885!! Meow!



Our Membership Defenders challenge you to win the kitty by bringing in the most new members in 2009. Competition is pretty tight right now! Make it interesting by joining these members in their recruitment efforts!

- Dave Camasi of Norwich Lumber
- Ed Colburn of All-Phase Building
- David Gesiak of David J. Gesiak LLC
- Bruno Hayn of Home Designs By Bruno (2)
- Scott Gladstone of Wireless Zone (2)
- Attila Keller of Ricon Homes
- Kevin Lathrop of K&N Electric (2)
- John Lombardi Jr. of Lombardi Inside Out
- Matt Ostrowski of Creative Enclosures
- Jim Pepitone of Ark Contractors (2)
- Mike Scarpa of Coastal Construction Mgmt

AND.....Sponsor our Drive by Donating an Auction Item to Raise the Kitty
You Too Can Be a Hero!

The BAEC Membership Team

Frank Winkler Paul Stone Kevin Lathrop
Hope Sheldon Renee Main Kelly Whipple

Education Corner

Rhode Island Builders Association to Hold Fall Classes



8-Hour Lead Safe Remodeler/Renovator Course

September 22 & 23, 5-9 pm
Members - \$100,
Non-Members - \$150
Includes a light meal
Instructor: Kent Ackley, RI Lead Technicians

-This course will detail exactly what you need to do to be in compliance with the EPA's New Lead Rule, which will become mandatory in April 2010.

A written exam is given at the end of the course. This class is limited to 40 people and is expected to sell out.

Insurance 101 for Builders

October 15th, 4 - 5:30 pm
Members - \$20,
Non-Members - \$30
Instructor: Charlie Curci, The Doorley Agency

-Learn the basics you need to know to protect and grow your business! "What you need, what you don't need and how to reduce your costs!" This is not a sales presentation, and Charlie will keep it simple, with Q&A afterward. Don't miss the opportunity to maximize your insurance dollars!

Pervious Concrete

October 29th, 4 - 5:30 pm
Members - \$20,
Non-Members - \$30
Instructor: Shawn Legein, MA Concrete & Aggregate Producers Association

-A unique and effective means to support green, sustainable growth. It's also an important tool in low impact development and in coastal regions. This technology creates more efficient land use, and eliminates the need for retention ponds, swales and other storm water management devices resulting in lowered overall project costs on a first-cost basis.

The Truth About Mold

November 5th, 4—5:30 pm
Members - \$20,
Non-Members - \$30
Instructor: Eric Anderson, MRT, CMR, ASD, MRSPS, WRT

-Seminar topics include Mold and Construction, Ways to prevent mold, What to do when mold is found, Truth vs. Myths and How to protect yourself.

Contact Joanne DiGregorio for information and to register for any of the classes at (401) 438-7400.

Three Rivers to Hold Classes in Sustainable Initiatives

While the Architectural Design & Environmental Engineering Technology programs have historically included curriculum elements related to an environmental consciousness, these underpinnings of responsible design are now highlighted due to the recent focus on the "green" and "sustainable" movement towards cultural change in terms of how we plan for our resources and environment.

The Programs' curricula embeds the many elements of sustainable stewardship and can broaden workforce opportunities for students who are planning a career in design, com-

munity managing and planning, construction, or facilities operations.

These elements include concepts of sustainable communities, cultural behavior and lifestyles, planning and design, and how buildings "work" and are prevalent in the course materials of the core curriculum.

To get involved in curriculum development, take classes, or for more information please call the BAEC office at 860.859.3518.

2010 INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS' SHOW®
January 19-22, 2010 | Las Vegas

The International Builders' Show® (IBS) is the largest annual building industry tradeshow in the country. It's THE place to see and discuss the hottest products on the market and network with your friends and allies. On top of that, IBS offers more than 175 education sessions taught by industry experts.

For NAHB members ONLY!

For a limited time, NAHB members can receive a complimentary 4-day exhibit registration, giving them access to the hottest exhibit floor in the building industry for absolutely no charge!

Social Media: The Core Foundation of Effective Builder Marketing



A popular presenter at a recent Executive Officer Seminar was Carol Flammer, Flammer Relations, Inc. and mRELEVANCE.

"Social media is becoming the core foundation of a good marketing program," she stated.

Perhaps as recently as a year ago that statement would seem far fetched – really, the core foundation of marketing? Yet, today, few can argue that websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are becoming the 'go-to' sources for information on just about anything, including where to buy a new home... and who to buy it from. They have also become the preferred means that more of your buyers are using to get to know you and decide to do business with you.

5 Critical Goals for your Social Media Program.

"The first step is really to define the goals for your program. There's really only five possible goals – you can choose one of them or all of them, but it's important to know what those goals are," says Flammer. Those five goals include:

Increase traffic to your website or blog.

Social Media Optimization. "There are multiple ways to increase search engine optimization to your website, but one of the fastest – and I think one of the most fun ways – is through social media optimization.

Reputation Management. "When you Google your name, do you like what you see? You either like what you see and get relevant results, or you get some unhappy homeowner that's posted a negative blog about you. You want to fill up the search results with great results for your name. We've done some amazing reputation management programs for builders who have had some bad search results on page one because of just one bad apple."

Social Networking. "Social Networking is you engaging others by being in the places where your buyers are looking for you; being on Flickr, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter – interacting with them."

Build Brand. "Social media is a great way to build brand. Every time you touch a customer you're influencing your brand. When you build it online it's important that it look correctly and tie into all your other branding materials. Also, how you relate to them and the conversations you have are all part of the brand."

5 Top Social Marketing Tools

"Then, once you decide why you want to be here, the next step is to determine the tools," Flammer explains. Here are the top tools that you have to work with to build that core foundation:

1. Your Website. "Your website has to be built correctly; it needs to be 'sticky' and interactive, because everything that you build in your social media program is going to push people back to your website. So, if you can't get visitors to come through to your 'Contact Us' form or you can't get them to act based on your website, you need to fix your website.

2. A Well-Built Blog.

With a blog there are so many great stories that you can share with your customers. You can post customer testimonials on your blog, you can talk about your neighborhood or the awards you've won, things going on around your community, home maintenance tips. There's a lot of education you can do with a blog."

3. Online PR. "A recent study found that 98% of all reporters start their searches for stories online. You can repurpose your press releases online and link them all back to your website and your blog.

4. Social Networking Sites. "Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Flickr – there are dozens of them. If you're a small company and just want to get started, then just pick two of these. If you're a Realtor, you absolutely have to be on LinkedIn and that you fill out your complete profile and really build that online Rolodex.

Then, after LinkedIn, I'd pick either Facebook or Twitter. Facebook sends a tremendous amount of traffic to websites. However, it's traffic that doesn't spend a lot of time on the website. They spend maybe a minute on the website, as opposed to Twitter, where we're seeing some high traffic coming, but they may spend three to four minutes on the website. Facebook is really your online 'cocktail party,' where Twitter is more like 'text messaging to the world.' You're kind of teasing the message to get people to open the link."

5. Other Sites. "There sites like Ning and Squidoo and different forums that can be beneficial. Some of them make more sense than others, depending upon what groups or associations you might belong to. There are some really cool local groups on Ning. Even Monster.com and Craig's list can link back to your website or blog.

With all the social sites, monitor them for a while before you start interacting. You can become irrelevant very quickly if you're interacting inappropriately with the way other users think the channel should be used. And, follow the 1/3, 1/3, 1/3 rule – a third of your posts should be about your company, a third of them should be a bit more personal, and a third of them should be promoting other cool stuff you see happening in the industry.

Getting 'Eyes on Your Site.'

"The whole goal of a social media program is to push traffic through your website. You want to relate to them and engage them, but ultimately you really do want them to go look at your website and to begin to think about you. So, everything you do online should have a link back to your website or blog. The more people you can get looking at, talking about, and thinking about you – maybe they're not your buyer, but their best friend might be looking for a house.

"Think like a search engine. When you think like a search engine, you're thinking like your buyer. What is your buyer searching when they're looking for you? They don't know they're looking for you, so what are they searching for? You want them to be able to find you the way they are looking for you, and that might not be the way you think they are searching," says Flammer.

Mastering social media as a marketing outlet does take time and a new set of skills. Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube accounts are free, as is most blog software, but, wrapping them all together into an effective marketing plan can be daunting. Companies like mRELEVANCE offer these services as part of an overall marketing strategy.

Whether you go it alone or hire a professional to help you craft your social message, the time to start is now. "Embrace the conversation," says Flammer, and watch your traffic – and your sales – continue to grow.



**The Builders Association of Eastern CT, Inc.
and
The American Lung Association**

**Cordially Invite You to
2009 BAEC Green Showcase Home
Open House**

***Saturday & Sunday,
September 26 & 27, 2009
10:00 am - 2:00 pm***

***Opening Ceremony and VIP Reception
Saturday, 10:00***

A suggested donation of \$10.00 at the door will provide a fund for visits to area schools by the American Lung Association's Breath Express

Volunteers from the American Lung Association will be on hand to provide you with a guided tour of this high-tech exhibit and you may also purchase radon testing kits for only 12.00!

The BAEC's green showcase home program highlights the experience, professionalism and high standards of its members. Built by Certified Green Professional Jim Pepitone, it is located at 12 David Road in the Greenbrier Development in Montville.

This green home is one of only two homes in the nation to achieve the Emerald certification from the ANSI and NAHB National Green Building Standard, and Greenbrier is one of only seven nationwide developments to achieve certification under the standard.

Additionally, the home will receive certification as a Build America Prototype Home from Building Science and the US Department of Energy, Energy Star and as the first certified Health House by the American Lung Association on the east coast in ten years.

Tour the home to view the green products and services that have earned the home these distinctions. Visit with professionals to learn about the green building process before choosing your own contractor.

COME SEE WHAT MAKES THIS HOME GREEN



HBA of Connecticut News

BAEC Members Join Statewide Effort to Lobby CT Congressional Delegation

BAEC members and staff attended a luncheon with Representative Joe Courtney to talk about the economic impact that lack of credit is having on the home building industry in Connecticut. The meeting was attended by more than 50 people, including members of the BAEC, HBA of Hartford County, HBA of Northwest CT, HBA HBACT staff and staff from the Connecticut Business and Industry Association (CBIA).

BAEC members Rico Mastronunzio of Brom Builders and Teresa Forrestt of Stock Loan Services were among the spokespersons who shared their banking horror stories, problems with



Courtney also supports an expansion of the \$8,000 tax credit.

Similar meetings were held in with Representative Jim Himes with HBRA of Fairfield County members and with Representative Chris Murphy and members of HBA of Hartford County and Northwest Connecticut and HBACT staff.



appraisals and confusion over the HVCC (Home Valuation Code of Con-



duct) regulation, and the need to extend the \$8,000 home buyer tax credit beyond the November 30 deadline.

Courtney told members that he was one of the sponsors of a bill to suspend HVCC rules, which would relieve some of the problems caused by confusing regulations and hurting sales.



More meetings are being planned with congressional leaders as well as state legislative

leaders. If you have problems with lending and appraisal issues that you are willing to share with the HBACT for lobbying purposes, please contact Lisa Kidder, lkidder@hbact.org, or 860-521-1905.

Have you read the HBACT Annual Report?

The HBACT Annual Report for July 2008–June 2009 is posted on the HBACT's web site: www.hbact.org. Please take a few minutes to read the report and learn about lobbying efforts at the State Capitol, and the many other programs and services offered by the HBACT. The report was also e-mailed to all members who have provided an e-mail address. If you are not receiving e-mails from the state HBA and would like to, please contact Joanne Hoerrner, jhoerrner@hbact.org, or 860-521-1905.

HOBİ AWARDS 2009

Call For Sponsors & Advertisers

Reach an audience of 700+ industry insiders by sponsoring the HOBİ Awards. If you're interested, contact Joanne Hoerrner at the HBACT, jhoerrner@hbact.org, or 860-521-1905. Forms for sponsorships and advertising are available on the web-site: www.hbact.org.

Join Us at the
ANNUAL HOBİ ("HOME BUILDING INDUSTRY") AWARDS DINNER
 Tuesday, November 10, 2009, 5:30-9:00 PM
 Aqua Turf Country Club, Southington, CT

BUILDING BRIEFS

Dodd To Remain In Housing Chairmanship

Connecticut housing and community development advocates are pleased that U.S. Sen. Christopher J. Dodd will retain the chairmanship of the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee rather than replace the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-MA, as chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions committee. Dodd will now not only be in a position to oversee regulatory reform of the financial services industry - a politically crucial role after criticism by consumers that he was too close to the industry - but also to oversee a large menu of housing legislation detailed below. Among those bills is his Livable Communities Act, which seeks to flesh out President Obama's priority to coordinate housing, transportation,

environmental and development policy.

Some Housing advocates feel that Connecticut will benefit immensely from Sen. Dodd choosing to stay as Banking Committee chairman. Getting the Springfield-New Haven rail line moving will spark sustainable economic growth for the whole state. His Livable Communities Act will promote effective community and housing development along rail lines. His leadership of the desperately needed regulatory reform in financial services will ensure that Connecticut consumers have credit, young workers and families can get mortgages, disabled and low-income people have affordable homes."

July Home Sales Rose, But Prices Were Still Off

The number of single-family home sales rose 4% in July, the first year-over-year increase in two years, but the median sales price remained low, falling 11.7% to \$255,000 from \$288,750 in July 2008, according to The Warren Group. Through the first seven months of 2009, the median home price is down 12.7% to \$240,153 from \$275,000 at the end of 2008. As usual, there was significant variability among Connecticut counties: sales increased by rates of 81% in Windham County and 51% in

Tolland County, while sales fell 24% in Fairfield County and 19% in Middlesex County. Prices, meanwhile, rose slightly in Tolland and Litchfield County but fell 25% in Fairfield County and 15% in Windham County.

The number of contracts written in August was up 37% compared to August 2008, and year-to-date contracts are up 12% from last year

State Budget Not Good For Housing, But Could Be Worse

- The new state budget provides some advances for affordable housing, but there was no progress, or problems, in other areas. The budget will be allowed to become law by Gov. Rell without her signature. The key spending decisions on housing include:
- **Supportive Housing:** Last year, the Administration suspended capital and service spending for the Next Steps Initiative for 150 new units of permanent supportive housing. The budget adopted by the legislature will provide \$1.8 million in FY 10 and \$2.3 million in FY 11, which could allow 50 to 100 units to be created.
- **PILOTs and Tax Abatement Grants:** The budget restores \$3.9 million for Payments-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOTs) for public housing and Tax Abatement Grants for nonprofit housing. Rell had eliminated that aid, which helps keep rents affordable for poor, elderly and disabled residents of public housing.
- **HOMEConnecticut:** Approximately \$2 million, previously appropriated for incentives to municipalities that create higher density residential zones, was in danger of being lost after the Administration froze the program. The new budget carries forward these funds to FY 10.
- **Community Investment Act:** Funding was maintained for the program, which dedicates document recording fees to affordable housing, farmland protection, historic preservation and open space. The housing component has supported CHFA gap financing and assistance to suburban and rural communities that initiate affordable housing.
- **Historic Home Rehabilitation Tax Credit:** Gov. Rell had sought to suspend the program but the legislature rejected that proposal.
- **Connecticut Fair Housing Center:** The legislature provided \$325,000 for foreclosure prevention and anti-discrimination activities. Rell had sought to drastically reduce funding.
- **Rental Assistance:** Both the Governor and legislature consistently maintained full funding for the state Rental Assistance Program and other housing/homelessness services at DSS.
- **Capital Programs:** Not yet resolved; the legislature has yet to adopt a bond bill. It would have to change course from Rell's failure to propose any new financing for the state Housing Trust Fund or DECD's Flex Program.

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.BAEC.NET



**Johnny D's
Words of
Wisdom**

Before you criticize someone,
you should walk a mile in
their shoes. That way, when
you criticize them, you're a
mile way and you have their
shoes.

~Author Unknown



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**Bulk Mail
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Bozrah, CT**



Copies PLUS...more

has brought color to the BAEC world of news!

*BAEC is the recognized source of quality building services and information.
We build neighborhoods and improve the communities in which we live and work.*

**Associate Night
Trade Show**

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND
BAEC 2009 TRADE SHOW

**Wednesday,
September 23, 2009
The Holiday Inn,
Norwich**

5:30 PM—9:00 PM

\$10.00 table

\$30.00 BAEC members

\$35 Billings & non members

**Calendar
of Events**

SEPTEMBER 2009

Tues.	22nd	12:00PM	Home Show Comm. Mtg. Illiano's, New London
Wed.	23rd	5:30 PM	Associates Night Trade Show, Holiday Inn, Norwich, CT
Sat & Sun	26 & 27	10am-2PM	BAEC Green Showcase Home Open House 6 David Drive, Oakdale

OCTOBER 2009

Thurs.	1st	6:00 PM	HBACT Developers Council
Thur.	8th	6:00 PM	Membership Comm. Mtg .
Tues.	6th	6:00 PM	BAEC Board Meeting
Wed.	28th	5:30 PM	General Membership Mtg. Holiday Inn, Norwich, CT

**For more information or to sign
up, call the BAEC office at
860.859.3518!**

**For more information or to
register for events, visit our
calendar at www.BAEC.net**