



ASHTABULA COUNTY BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

March 2014

President's Comment

Dear Members and Friends,

Considering the weather conditions that we have had for the last couple of months I have to admit that I have been pleasantly surprised by the attendance that we have had at our last couple of meetings. The topics have definitely been controversial and very interesting. I would like to complement all those in attendance for controlling their feelings and being respectful of the speakers and those with opposing opinions. For March's meeting it will be somewhat of a repeat of January topic, we will be discussing the possibility of having registration of contractors in Ashtabula County. As we heard at our January meeting the ACCA (Air Conditioning Contractors of America) group of Ashtabula are in favor of being registered in Ashtabula County. Tim Volpone of ACCA's Ashtabula group will be speaking about the reasons that his organization are in favor of registration. Brenda William, Chief Building Inspector with the Ashtabula County Department of Building Regulations will also be present to answer some of the questions that arose from the January meeting. I would imagine that we will also have the County Commissioners in attendance also to answer any question directed to them. Enclosed in this newsletter is a statement of opposing views regarding this topic, I would encourage everyone to read this carefully and be prepared with any questions prior to the meeting.

Join me in welcoming back H.J. Ziegler Heating Company back as a member of our association. In the last several months we have added 4 companies to our roster of members which is a great accomplishment and testimony to the value of membership to the Builders. If you know of anyone that would like to broaden their exposure to the members of the Builders Assoc. please feel free to invite them to one of our meetings.

There are few things that can disrupt ones life and family like a fire. In April we will be talking and showing membership all there is to know about fires and fire protection. Calvin Brown Jr. has assured me it will be a hot meeting. More details to follow in our next newsletter.

Lastly, tickets for the Builders Reverse Raffle are still available for the May 3rd event. Please feel free to contact any board member, myself, or Michelle if you are in need of tickets. Early ticket sales have been very good but we still have some available so do not delay as there are a limited amount left. We are still looking for items for the Chinese raffle and the Silent Auction tables, so if you have something you would like to donate please contact Michelle and we will make arrangements to have them picked up.

Sincerely,

Bill Romano

President of the Ashtabula County Builders Assoc.

Board of Directors

Bill Romanko	President
Calvin Brown, Jr.	Vice-President
Rich Vanek	Treasurer
John Hogan	Secretary
Joe Oros	Past-President
Kim Kidner	
Robert Hegfield	
John Smolen	
George Csepegi	

Calendar of Events

March 13th	TBA Elks
April 10th	TBA Elks
May 3rd	Reverse Raffle 4 H Jefferson
June 12th	Steak Fry Elks
Social Hour	6:00pm
Dinner	7:00pm

Please RSVP by the Monday prior to the event.

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Why are New Homes Getting so Big? Look at Who's Buying Them

February 25, 2014 - Though the average size of new homes keeps getting bigger, there is more to this home buying trend than meets the eye, according to Census Bureau data presented by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) during the International Builders' Show in Las Vegas.

"The average home size has continued to rise for the past four years, from 2,362 square feet in 2009 to 2,679 square feet in 2013," said Rose Quint, NAHB assistant vice president for survey research.

The share of new homes with at least four bedrooms has also been on an upward trend, rising from 34 percent in 2009 to 48 percent last year.

Meanwhile the percent of homes with at least three full bathrooms has gone from 23 percent in 2010 to 35 percent in 2013, and the share of homes with three-plus garages has climbed from 16 percent in 2010 to 22 percent last year.

The upward trend also applies to the percentage of two-story single-family homes started, with the share steadily rising from 51 percent in 2009 to 60 percent in 2013.

As homes get bigger, so does the average sales price, rising from \$248,000 in 2009 to \$318,000 in 2013. To find out why homes are getting so big you need to look at who is buying them.

"It requires a high credit score and a nice income to qualify for a mortgage," said Quint, who noted that the spread between the average Experian credit score of all U.S. consumers and the average home borrower's score has risen from 33 points in the early 2000s to 58 points in 2013.

The median income of new-home buyers has steadily climbed from \$91,768 in 2005 to \$107,607 in 2011.

During the same period, the number of new-home sales has dramatically declined, from 1.28 million to 306,000.

"There are not as many people who have the income that can qualify for a new home," said Quint.

Most Popular Features in 2014 Homes

The features that builders are most likely to include in a typical single-family home this year are a walk-in closet in the master bedroom, low-e windows, a laundry room and a great room, according to the latest survey by NAHB.

Energy-efficiency is also a key theme, as Energy-Star rated appliances, programmable thermostats and Energy-Star rated windows also rank high on the list.

According to builders, granite countertops, a double-sink and a central island will likely make the cut in the kitchen as well as a linen closet and a private toilet in the bathroom.

Other features that builders are likely to include are first-floor ceilings at least nine-feet high, a front porch, exterior lighting and a patio.

Conversely, the most unlikely features to show up in 2014 homes are laminate kitchen countertops, an outdoor kitchen, an outdoor fireplace, a sunroom, a two-story family room, a media room, a two-story foyer and a whirlpool in the master bathroom.

CONTRACTORS REGISTRATION LETTER

As many may know the Ashtabula County Department of Building Regulations was been asked by one of the trade organizations within the county to implement a licensing program for the residential and commercial specialized building trades and commercial general contractors within the county. Please note that this does not include residential general contractors. The County Commissioners has asked the Ashtabula County Builders Assoc. for their opinion on this matter. We have heard mixed opinions from our membership on this proposal. For those individuals or companies that do not have an opinion on this matter we would like to offer both sides of this discussion for your decision. The Board of Directors would like to respond to the County Commissioners in a timely fashion so that a decision can be made and the Department of Building Regulations can proceed in one direction or another.

The proposed requirements to be a licensed trade within the county would be as follows. The first thing that the contractor would have to do is pay a \$100.00 fee to the Building Department. The contractor would also have to be bonded with an insurance company for a total of \$10,000 dollars which would cost an average of \$100.00 (per Bill Herzog of Huntington Insurance), and lastly the contractor would have to show proof that the employees of the contractor's company are covered with Workmen's Compensation Insurance. These licenses would be good for one year and would need to be renewed each year with the Department of Building Regulations.

Those NOT in favor of having licensing for the building trades within the county have many reasons why they are opposed to this not being enacted. The points mentioned in this summary are the points mentioned to the writer and may not be a complete list.

1. The registration of contractors does not make a contractor a better tradesman in their field.
2. This is a way for the county to make more money from the \$100.00 annual fee.
3. This will make the prices charged by contractor to the customer higher to offset the expenses of becoming registered; this could cause registered contractors to loose business to unregistered contractors.
4. This will not stop the less than honest contractor from coming into the county from working without the county registration. It will also not prevent local contractors without registrations from working in the county.
5. The possession of a registration could give the customer the perception that the contractor is a quality tradesman when there is no proof that they are.
6. This could cost the customer more in the end, in that it would limit competition from outside the county. The added expenses and hassle of becoming registered within our county could prevent outside competition from working in the county allowing the local contractors to charge more for their services.

CONTRACTORS REGISTRATION LETTER. Continued

Those IN favor of licensing for the building trades within the county have many reasons why they are in favor of this being enacted. As above the summary points mentioned are the points mentioned to the writer and may not be a complete list.

1. When we go out of the county to neighboring counties we have to register and pay their fee schedule. Why shouldn't the contractors that come into our county pay a fee schedule similar to theirs in our county?
2. I do a quality job and would be proud to display a license number to prove to my customers that I meet the requirements of the county.
3. The playing field is now level, I take care to be sure that my employees are covered under Workmen's Compensation Insurance and now my competition also has to have insurance for their employees.
4. When the Building Department puts my company name on their website or on their literature as a registered licensed contractor it will be some of the cheapest advertising that I can purchase for a \$100.00.
5. The fact that a contractor is registered shows that the contractor is serious about the profession that they are in and are willing to stay educated and are willing to train their employees to stay current in their trade.
6. I want the residents of Ashtabula County to benefit from having lower insurance rates for their homes and businesses. Because we require registered contractors the insurance companies will look at that when coming up with insurance rates for our structures.

Please give both of these views some thought, as mentioned before the County Commissioners are looking for our opinion on this matter. The Board of Directors would like to hear what you as a member of the Ashtabula County Builders Assoc. have to say about this issue. As always you can call or email any board member or Michelle our director. You can leave a message through our website but please make sure to give us your name and company when you do this. When we feel that we have heard from a majority of members, we will inform the Commissioners of our point of view as a group. If you should have any questions regarding this proposed change they can be directed to Brenda Williams, Chief Building Inspector with the Ashtabula County Department of Building Regulations, she can be reached at 25 West Jefferson Street, Jefferson, Ohio 44047 or via phone at (440)576-3737. All opinions and comments will be kept in confidence unless told to share them with others

Ashtabula County Builders Association

Annual Reverse Raffle

May 3, 2014

Grand Prize: \$1,500.00

50/50 raffle ~ Instant Bingo ~ Black Jack ~ Silent Auction

*\$100.00 Early Bird
Drawing at 6:15 p.m.*

\$50.00 a couple

Includes dinner and open bar

Doors open at 5:00 p.m.

Raffle starts at 7:00 p.m.

Location: Ashtabula County Fairgrounds

4-H Building

All Proceeds will benefit:

**Community Care Committee &
The Ashtabula County Builders Association**

For more information or tickets contact:

(440)645-7496 or ashtabulacountybuilders@windstream.net