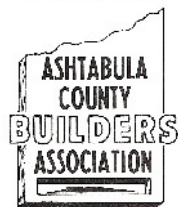


INTEGRITY



BUILDERS PLAN

April, 2008

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ASHTABULA COUNTY BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

"The Voice of the Industry in Ashtabula County"

GENERAL MEETING

\$25.00 PER MEAL

INCLUDES:

Happy Hour, Choice of :

Prime Rib, Chicken or Fish with
Baked Potato, Vegetable, Salad and Roll

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

April 10th	Huntington Bank General Meeting Elks Club
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May 8th	General Meeting Elks Club
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June 12th	Steak Fry Elks Club
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July 10th	Golf Outing To Be Announced
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August 14th	Summer Social To Be Announced
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September 11th	General Meeting Elks Club
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October 9th	General Meeting Elks Club
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November 13th	General Meeting Elks Club
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December 11th	Christmas Party Elks Club
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Happy hour is 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Dinner 7:00pm

RSVP by Monday prior to meeting date and
if you need to cancel please call by Tuesday evening.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTARY

As spring arrives. Lion's it is. As if we had a doubt. Congratulations to all of you. Your attendance, concern and involvement translated into action taken. What a way to "Spring" into the new year. A special hats off to all our board members who performed their duties so well at a drop of the hat to help make our meeting such a success, Thank you again.

So what's next? Well in keeping with your overwhelming request for more informative/educational programs, lets start with a topic we all like, MONEY. For our April general meeting, dinner and program we will be welcoming one of our local bankers, Huntington Bank. Presenting some of their best products for your information and consideration. So mark your calendar, leave your money at home and come on down. See you there.

Frank

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FINANCIAL RESULTS OF MARCH'S MEETING

March's monthly meeting brought some changes to the cost of being a member of the Ashtabula County Builders Association. The first change was brought to the meeting by Dave Nolan of Nolan Door and Hardware Co. Inc. and seconded by J.R. Kister of Witt Enterprises Inc. and that was to increase the cost of meals of the general meetings. The reason for this change is that our cost of meals has gone up over the years and we have not increased the price that is charged. Please note that we have not changed this price in many years. The Builders normally buys the meals for the guest speakers or any special guests. We have been starting to take a loss at each meeting and because of this the membership present has agreed to increase the cost of meals. The price of meals is going up from \$20.00 to \$25.00. Please note that this is only for general meetings and not for special social events, special social events such as steak fries, golf outings, and clam bakes will still be priced individually to reflect their costs.

The second change was brought to the meeting by J.R. Kister of Witt Enterprises Inc. and seconded by Bill Dingleline of Ohio-American Water Co. and that was to increase the amount of yearly assessment for Growth Partnership of Ashtabula County and also in the way it is collected. Currently an assessment of \$50.00 is included in the annual membership fee charged to each member on their anniversary date. The change would be to charge \$60.00 at the beginning of each year separate from the annual membership fee. The annual membership fee will still be invoiced on the members anniversary date. The reason for this increase and billing change is that the membership of the Builders was decreased over the years, and to pay the \$5,000.00 annual membership to Growth Partnership the individual assessment needed to be adjusted. Also it is the wishes of the membership to pay the Growth Partnership assessment once annually instead of monthly. The Board of Director of the Builders Association will review the assessment each year and can reduce this amount if membership numbers should dictate a reduction in the amount assessed. These changes were voted on by the membership in attendance at the meeting and passed.

MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTED AT MARCH GENERAL MEETING

A. Louis Supply Company	D.S. Theiss Building Contractors	Notter Electric Company
Active Plumbing	Eastdale Overhead Door	O & P Oil & Gas Company
American Alert	Famous Supply Company	Ohio American Water Company
Arthur Louis Steel Co.	First Merit Bank	Oros Builders
Ashtabula Chamber of Commerce	Great Lakes Buick	Production and Construction
Ashtabula Concrete	Hughes-Roller Building Company	Sky Insurance
Bogue Construction	Huntington Bank	Spence Contracting
Brobst Maintenance	Joseph Dragon & Sons	T. Strong Construction
Brown Sprinkler	Kinder Morgan/Pinney Dock	U.I.C. Construction
Cherrywood Homes	Kister Construction	Valley Building Center (2)
	LA Renovators	W.S.A.
	Nolan Door & Hardware	Witt Enterprises

New Home Sales Drop Shows Need for Congress to Act Now

Sales of new single-family homes fell by 1.8% in February to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 590,000 units, according to [numbers from the U.S. Commerce Department](#) released on March 26. Last month's sales pace was down nearly 30% from a year earlier and 58% from the peak in July 2005.

"Builders have been pulling out all the stops to sell homes and narrow the supply of units on the market," said NAHB President Sandy Dunn. "Unfortunately, buyer demand remains very weak heading into the spring home buying season. Clearly, Congress needs to act decisively when it returns from its recess next week to enact measures that will keep housing from dragging the economy into a recession."

"Our latest member surveys confirm that builders have seen an improvement in the number of prospective buyers who are visiting model homes, and consumer attitudes toward home buying have perked up in recent months," noted NAHB Chief Economist David Seiders. "But this hasn't yet translated into greater sales activity, and it stands to reason that additional stimulative measures — such as a temporary home buyer tax credit, FHA modernization and GSE reform — could have substantial positive impacts on both the housing market and the overall economy."

Regionally, sales activity was mixed in February, with gains of 40.3% in the Northeast, 5.7% in the South and 0.7% in the West but a decline of 6.4% in the Midwest.

On a positive note, builders' efforts to reduce their inventories drove the number of new homes on the market down by 2.1% to a seasonally adjusted 471,000 units in February. However, the supply of units at the current sales pace remained unchanged at 9.8 months and the median length of time that completed homes were on the market rose to 7.2 months from 6.7 months in January.

"This is a truly critical time for housing and the economy, and Congress needs to get right down to business," Dunn said. "Every day that lawmakers fail to act is a missed opportunity for improvement."

Beyond the Slump, Outdoor Home Features Seen as the 'In' Trend

Looking beyond the current cyclical housing downturn and identifying the new home features that will give builders a competitive edge and keep remodelers busy in the marketplace shaping up for the next 10 years, outside will be the in thing, according to Gopal Ahluwalia, NAHB's vice president for research.

At a remodeling outlook presentation at last month's [International Builders' Show](#) in Orlando, Ahluwalia said that findings on what new home buyers want to see outside have significant repercussions for both home builders and remodelers.

"What comes in new homes eventually trickles down to the existing stock, where most of remodeling actually is," Ahluwalia said.

The consumer preference findings were based on survey research among designers, architects, marketers and builders, and they were compiled for both an average home and an upscale home, which was defined as generally being 3,000 to 4,000 square feet or more in size.

Among the outside features that are expected to increase new-home sales over the coming decade and increasingly generate remodeling projects:

- Eighteen percent of survey respondents said that barbecue grills and outdoor kitchens would be an important feature in the average home and 71% cited their significance for upscale homes.
- Nine percent expected outdoor fireplaces to be of critical importance in average homes, but 65% said that buyers of more luxurious homes would be looking for them.
- Asked about outside kitchen features, 15% said that sinks would be important for average home buyers but 76% said it would be a requirement for larger homes. Findings for other features for average and upscale homes, respectively, were: refrigerators, 13% and 60%; cooking islands 12% and 58%; and beer dispensers/wine coolers, 6% and 47%. While there is a large difference between demand for these outdoor features among average and luxury buyers, "demand for outside living and kitchens will be huge," Ahluwalia predicted.

Beyond the Slump, Outdoor Home Features Seen as the ‘In’ Trend, continued

- On demand for outside room features, those surveyed reported several that are a veritable must for upper market buyers while registering some importance among more typical buyers. The findings, reported for average and upscale homes, respectively, were: decking/patio covers/enclosures, 28% and 78%; outdoor lighting, 26% and 74%; pools/spas, 17% and 73%; outdoor audio/TV equipment, 16% and 70%; decorative water features, 10% and 57%; portable patio heating, 6% and 31%; and built-in patio heating, 3% and 27%.
- Demand for standard outdoor features was strong, with not too much difference between the two groups of buyers. Seventy percent of the survey respondents said that a front porch would be desirable in the average home and 79% said that it would be important for the upscale home. Other findings: a patio, 61% and 76%, respectively, between average and upscale home buyers; a deck, 42% and 61%; and a rear porch, 24% and 79%. Currently, only 46% of new homes have decks, Ahluwalia said.

Ahluwalia included in his presentation at the Builders’ Show findings from last year’s third-quarter [Remodeling Market Index](#) survey demonstrating that outdoor remodeling is already a significant source of business for that industry.

Three-quarters of the remodelers surveyed reported an increase in their volume of outdoor work compared to the previous year, and 44% said that outdoor jobs had picked up over the past five years.

Of those who worked on outdoor remodeling projects, the most common types of jobs were: deck, 52%; porch, 35%, patio, 27%, front porch, 25%; decking/patio covers/enclosures, 22%; outdoor lighting, 13%; outdoor kitchen, 13%; and outdoor fixed fireplace, 10%.

**PLEASE CONTACT US
IF YOU HAVE IDEAS OF ARTICLES
FOR THE NEWSLETTER
997-1866 or ashtabulacountybuilders@alltel.net
Thanks for the help!**