

INTEGRITY



BUILDERS PLAN

October, 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

COMMENTARY

Hello Builders and Friends,

The fall season brings many pleasant memories of my childhood back to me. My senses seem more acute in the cool fall air. The smell of grapes on the vine, the taste of freshly pressed apples, the sounds of the leaves falling in the woods, and the beautiful sight of trees painted red, orange, and yellow, are all sensations that put a smile in my soul. One other sight that I see in the fall is the colors and words on political signs that dot the landscape along our highways and roads. If we could live our lives to the fullest with only the simple things, however as we get older politics becomes a every day part of our lives. In my opinion, the presidential election is exciting, but it is the local races that influence our day to day life more dramatically than any national race. Turn on a television or a radio and you will find out everything you would want to know about a presidential candidate good or bad. It is a little harder to find out about our local candidates. Because of this we are going to be having a candidates' night at our October monthly meeting. The eight candidates will introduce themselves; give us some of their personnel and professional history, and their future political goals. This will not be a debate between candidates but it will give us

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

October 9th General Meeting
Elks Club

November 13th Annual Meeting/
Bring Halo Gift
Elks Club

January 8th Celebration
Elks Club

February 12th General Meeting
Elks Club

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.

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all a chance to meet our future leaders. We will have a question and answer period after the candidates have spoken and also the candidates will be available for your person or private questions. Please make your reservations via our website or by calling Michelle at 997-1866. Please plan on attending and voting this election season.

At this time I would like to tip my hat to Drew Thomas and his cast of helpers for another successful Clam Bake. We had over 80 people in attendance for this culinary event. If you did not attend you truly missed a wonderful evening of fine food and drink, excellent entertainment, and great fellowship.

Lastly, I would like to remind everyone that the Builders Association is your organization. The board of directors is always looking for ways to improve your membership experience. If you have an idea for a speaker at a future meeting please share that information with a board member. Also we are always looking for new members, so if you know of anyone who is interested in membership, please let us know and we will invite them to join our ranks. We are always here for you, we can be a powerful voice in the local government but if we do not know of any issues there is nothing we can do about them. So please share with us any issues that you might have so that we can aid you.

Sincerely,

Bill Romanko

Secretary

**FOR YOUR
INFORMATION**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Officers

Frank Curran, President

Rick Miller, Vice-President

Paul Crease, Immediate Past President, Treasurer

Bill Romanko, Secretary

Trustees

Bill Claycomb

Bill Douglas

Gayle Lofthus

Mike Redmon

Terry Strong

Dan Theiss

Rich Vanek

Tim Vogel

Director

Michelle Laveck

ANNUAL MEETING

(NOVEMBER 13TH)

Please contact Michelle at 997-1866 if you are interested in becoming a member of the Board of Trustees for the Ashtabula County Builders Association. An agenda for the annual meeting will be in the next newsletter.

There will not be a December, Holiday meeting this year due to lack of interest but we would ask you to bring your Halo donation to the November meeting. If you have any questions please contact Michelle or a Board Member.

NEWSLETTER

**If you have any updates about your
company or any articles you would
like to see featured in the newsletter
please e-mail
ashtabulacountybuilders@alltel.net**

Housing Starts Decline Further in August

Housing starts declined 6.2% in August to an annual pace of 895,000 units as home builders continued to slow new construction in order to pare down their unsold inventories and help pave the way for a cyclical recovery in the home building industry, according to [figures released by the U.S. Commerce Department](#) on Sept. 17.

“Builders understand that there is still a substantial amount of unsold inventory to be worked down, and they continue to do the right thing by reducing production and pulling fewer permits for new homes to help restore better balance between supply and demand,” noted NAHB President Sandy Dunn.

“With help from the new first-time home buyer tax credit and improving interest rates on home mortgages, the long downswing in production activity is slowly but surely putting us back on track to a healthy housing market,” she said.

“Our latest builder surveys have indicated a substantial improvement in builders’ sales expectations for the next six months, in part because of the newly enacted tax credit,” said NAHB Chief Economist David Seiders.

“Meanwhile,” Seiders said, “the government takeover of [Fannie Mae](#) and [Freddie Mac](#) and the ongoing turmoil on Wall Street actually have produced downward pressures on key home mortgage rates, which should also help get more buyers to the table. But until sales have clearly turned the corner, it’s very important that builders continue the process of pulling in the reins on new production, which is exactly what they are doing and is right in line with our forecast,” he said.

“NAHB continues to project a stabilization of new-home sales in the final quarter of 2008, which should, in turn, allow production to begin a slow and steady recovery by the second quarter of 2009,” Seiders said.

The rate of housing production in August was the slowest since January 1991. Single-family starts fell 1.9% to 630,000 units, while multifamily starts — still evening out after a huge bump in June tied to a New York City building code change — declined 15.1% to 265,000 units.

Two of the nation’s four regions posted double-digit declines in housing starts for August — the Midwest, down 13.6%, and the Northeast, off 14.5%. Starts were down 7.4% in the South but up 10.8% in the West, where they had posted an equivalent decline in July.

Permit issuance, which can be an indicator of future building activity, also fell to a 17-year low in August.

Permits fell 8.9% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 854,000 units, with single-family permits dropping 5.1% to 554,000 units and multifamily permits down 15% to 300,000 units.

On a regional basis, permits fell 21% in the Northeast, 9.9% in the South and 7.1% in the West. Permit issuance edged up by 0.7% in the Midwest.

ICC to Decide Heated Debate on Mandatory Fire Sprinklers

With the [International Code Council's](#) (ICC) annual meeting and final action hearings for the 2007-2008 code development cycle opening on Sept. 14 in Minneapolis and continuing through Sept. 23, NAHB leaders are preparing to argue against proposals for mandatory fire sprinklers and other changes that would erode housing affordability in exchange for dubious improvements in the safety of homes.

The ICC, whose mission is to advocate for building safety and fire prevention, regularly develops and continuously updates a comprehensive set of model codes for residential and commercial buildings.

Most U.S. cities, counties and states choose these International Codes — building safety codes developed by the ICC — as blueprints for their own building codes, or they adopt them outright.

During the hearings, building officials, fire officials and other voting ICC members will listen to testimony in support of or against almost 800 individual proposals on subjects as diverse as mechanical systems, framing, energy efficiency, fire safety, ventilation and electrical systems.

After listening to the testimony and studying supporting documentation, the members will decide whether to incorporate changes proposed to the International Residential Code, the International Energy Conservation Code or the other codes that govern construction of single-family homes, duplexes and townhouses in most jurisdictions.

NAHB representatives participated in the first round of hearings for the code development cycle, which involved 2,200 proposals and two weeks of testimony from Feb. 18 through March 1 in Palm Springs, Calif. Their efforts achieved many favorable results on behalf of the home building industry and home buyers — but many of these votes are scheduled to come up again at the final hearings.

Among the code change proposals:

- **Fire sprinklers in one- and two-family homes and townhouses.** Fire sprinkler proposals continue to be the most heavily debated and potentially most controversial of all code changes this cycle.

The four proposals on this issue that will be considered during the final action hearings would require sprinklers in all one- and two-family dwellings. The requirement would be moved into the main body of the code; it is currently in the IRC's Appendix P as an option for communities that want to adopt a sprinkler ordinance.

During the public hearings in Palm Springs, the committee disapproved all the fire sprinkler proposals, citing a lack of any compelling justification to require these systems in all newly constructed homes. Sprinkler proponents will need a two-thirds majority vote in Minneapolis to overturn the committee's action.

At the hearings earlier this year, NAHB identified several concerns over these systems — among them, questioning whether most home owners are prepared to perform the maintenance required to ensure that the sprinklers remain operational.

Builders also cited the potential for pipes installed in attics to freeze in colder climates and they said that the sprinklers can be discharged accidentally, with damaging results. In areas served by wells or where water is scarce, the availability of an adequate water supply is another possible problem.

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NAHB pointed to several existing code requirements that have contributed to a significant decline in fire-related deaths and injuries over the past 30 years.

The most effective improvement has been the introduction of hard-wired interconnected smoke alarms, which the code requires to be installed in every bedroom and on every floor. • [National Fire Protection Association](#) reports conclude that about 890 fatalities could be avoided each year if every home had at least one working smoke alarm.

Proposals RB 62, RB 64, RB 65 and RB 66 will be heard during the IRC section of the hearings, which is scheduled to begin no earlier than 6:00 p.m. on Saturday Sept. 20.

- **Wall bracing and roof uplift connections.** Proposals to substantially increase required wall bracing and to require uplift clips for roof framing in all homes — even in areas where high winds are not known to occur — were defeated in Palm Springs. Since then, NAHB has worked with the ICC's Ad Hoc Wall Bracing Committee and other experts to reach compromises. The new proposals increase bracing and uplift connection requirements for larger houses and for houses in high-wind regions, where such increases may be justified, while maintaining typical bracing and roof connection practices for most one- and two-story homes in low-wind regions. NAHB hopes to gain approval at the final hearing for these hard-fought compromises.

- **Accessibility.** NAHB is opposing two proposals that affect multifamily builders.

One, which was disapproved at the hearings in Palm Springs, would require all the apartments or condos in a multifamily building with four or more units to be served by an elevator. The proposal exceeds federal Fair Housing Act accessibility requirements.

The second proposal, which was approved during the first round of hearings, would require any existing building that is converted to multifamily apartment or condo units to be constructed as Federal Fair Housing "Type B" units, which include features allowing persons in wheelchairs to get in and out of the door and to use at least one bathroom.

NAHB and a number of other groups have submitted public comments requesting disapproval at the final hearings, noting that federal law only requires those multifamily buildings constructed after March 13, 1991 to comply with federal accessibility requirements.

Also, because of their construction, these older buildings may not be able to achieve the required door widths, accessible route widths and door approach clearances, NAHB said. Many structural elements in these buildings, such as support walls and columns, cannot be changed to achieve the required accessible dimensions.

- **Energy code changes.** A proposal introduced during the Palm Springs hearings would have required all newly constructed buildings to immediately become 50% more energy efficient than currently required. That proposal was defeated, but its proponents will be returning in Minneapolis asking for a requirement to boost energy efficiency by 20%. The proposal does not take into account the existing climate zone maps, tables or other information that most building officials use when determining insulation requirements and other guidelines. "NAHB will serve as the voice of housing on the future regulations that will govern the industry as the hearings progress," said NAHB Construction Codes and Standards Committee Chair Andy Anderson, a remodeler in South Carolina.

"This is the last opportunity for voting members to make changes to the International Residential Code and the other ICC model codes before the 2009 edition is published," Anderson said. "We need to make sure that these building codes continue to help us keep new homes safer — at a price first-time home buyers can afford."