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President's message: Look at The Big Picture



President Michael Artesani W. Artesani & Sons
Cranston, RI

There are times when we all need to look at "The Big Picture." This is one of them. And when we do look at that Big Picture, there is much to make us optimistic.

First, there's the simple fact that "what goes around comes around": The market always bounces back. Things always get better eventually. Second, there's good evidence that the market is turning around, nationally and in Rhode Island. See the story on page 1.

Another time to look at The Big Picture is when the president tells you that the Rhode Island Builders Association is raising its dues. For builder members, dues will rise to \$450 this coming year. For non-builder members, they will increase to \$400. But read on to see that there's something extra in it for you.

Consider this:

- * As a way to help compensate you for the increase, you will receive, with your first renewal invoice, a "builder bucks" voucher worth \$25 toward any RIBA class or event in the coming year.

- * RIBA has not raised its dues in seven years.

- * RIBA's dues will still be lower than, or the same as, those of our neighboring associations. For example, builders pay \$580 a year to belong to the Builders Association of Greater Boston. To our west, the Builders Association of Eastern Connecticut charges builders and remodelers \$450 a year for membership. Up north, the Home Builders & Remodelers Association of New Hampshire levies membership dues that average about \$450, depending on the local chapter.

- * RIBA and its programs are respected around the nation, and we are considered among the strongest of the home builders associations. Yet, our dues are among the lowest in the country. We want to maintain that strength and make it even better, especially with signs of economic recovery on the horizon. To do that with our health insurance and workers' compensation programs, educational events, training courses, certification programs, social and networking opportunities, legislative activities and everything else that

we offer, we believe this dues increase is necessary.

- * This increase is an investment in RIBA's future and yours.

I know that some of our members are struggling, and that this isn't the best time to raise dues. I realize that some of you will be tempted not to renew your membership because of this increase. Once again, I urge you to look at The Big Picture when it comes to that decision.

Remember:

- * If you leave, you will be going it alone in a tough industry. How far will you get?

- * You will not be able to take advantage of all the RIBA and NAHB programs that you can now. When you can participate, it will cost you more.

- * You will be "out of the loop" at the State House and in the shelter industry.

- * Where will you turn?

Let's stick together because - as several of my predecessors have said — we can do so much more together than we ever could alone. Together, we will weather the storm and come out stronger and better.

Micheal Artesani is president of the Rhode Island Builders Assn., East Providence.