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President's message: RIBA's legislative program

December 09, 2009 - Rhode Island

One of the most important services you receive as a member of the Rhode Island Builders Association is one you can't see until after it happens. I'm talking about our legislative program.

During any annual session of the Rhode Island General Assembly, RIBA will monitor almost 200 bills of concern to the state's shelter industry. In the case of bills expected to have a significant impact on our members, the activity goes far beyond monitoring, to include active lobbying at the State House, testimony before legislative committees, and grassroots contact between members and lawmakers.

All this not only gets our views across to our state senators and representatives, it educates them about our industry as well. If we don't educate those who make the rules for our businesses, our opponents will.

Average RIBA members see the effect of this organized and concentrated legislative action when their taxes or fees don't rise as much as they could have, they're able to build that house or subdivision a little sooner, or their customers have more choices in building or remodeling than they would have if this or that restriction or mandate had been passed.

While there are many factors involved in the success or failure of a legislative measure, the opinions and activities of those affected by the bill carry great weight with lawmakers. When it comes to the shelter industry, RIBA is at the forefront of this effort every year. This helps not only our members, but all Rhode Island contractors.

With the 2009 legislative session finally over, you as a builder or remodeler won't have to charge your customers sales tax for construction services. And you will not have to worry about your employees being driven to unionize because of a lack of secret balloting on the issue.

You will have one less reason to worry about losing money on approved projects that have been stalled by the slow economy. Thanks to last-minute legislative action on a RIBA-sponsored measure, the time clock on any approved application you had in hand as of October 30th won't stop until June 30, 2011.

We believe that RIBA's legislative work was influential in preventing setbacks to our industry. Thanks go to all members who participated in getting our message across, especially legislative committee co-chairs Steven Carlino and Edgar Ladouceur, along with our executive director, Roger Warren.

Day-to-day lobbying continues to be in the capable hands of Joe Walsh, Gayle Wolf and Tom Hanley.

It's all the more reason for you to stick with RIBA and to help recruit those in the industry who are not yet members but who benefit from RIBA's activities. It's all the more reason for you to get involved in our legislative activities next year...and that's just around the corner!

None of us can go it alone. There's not only safety in numbers: There's power in numbers too.

Support yourself and your own business by supporting RIBA!

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