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RIBA to reactivate Remodelers Committee

December 13, 2007 - Rhode Island

One of the top goals of my administration has been to keep improving services to our members. And one of these improvements will be the reactivation of our Remodelers Committee, which plans to hold its first meeting in January.

The Remodelers Committee will provide education and information to help members in all aspects of their businesses, and to improve and promote professionalism within Rhode Island's remodeling industry. Participation will reflect each remodeler's determination to use responsible business practices, to provide quality construction and to offer reliable customer service.

One of the greatest attractions for members will be education and certification programs, including Certified Graduate Remodeler (CGR) and Certified Graduate Associate (CGA). Imagine how one or both of those will look on your signage, trucks and stationery!

In addition, the Remodelers Committee will help our remodeler members with their professional "brand" recognition. This will be part of our ongoing work to better the image of our industry as a whole and of RIBA members in particular.

In closing on this topic, let me thank our Remodelers Committee co-chairs, Joe Cracco, president of Modern Yankee Builders, and Tanya Donahue of E.A. McNulty Real Estate for their hard work!

If you're interested in participating, please call executive director Roger Warren at (401) 438-7400.

Budget

On a less pleasant note, RIBA's board of directors was offered a grim assessment of Rhode Island's budget crisis during their monthly meeting on November 6th.

Susanne Greschner of the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council (RIPEC) outlined some formidable problems that she said were not being fully addressed by state leaders, particularly the General Assembly. Among these problems are a projected annual deficit of between \$210 million and \$280 million, accumulating each year until 2012. Just before we went to press, state analysts themselves put the figure at better than \$400 million!

Among the main culprits are huge and growing state entitlements, and a strained state personnel and retirement system.

I lay this before you because RIBA is determined to help spur state lawmakers into fully dealing with these issues.

We plan to work not only with RIPEC but also with our partners in the Rhode Island Shelter Coalition (RISC) to help wake up those at the State House. Along with RIBA, RISC includes the Rhode Island Association of Realtors, the Associated Builders and Contractors of Rhode Island, and other groups. We will all speak with one voice.

That voice must include yours. While we have been saying all along that the housing industry was powering our state and national economies, we must say it now with voices loud and clear.

The 2008 General Assembly session is just around the corner. RIBA will be well represented at the

State House as always, but please be willing to help by lobbying your own legislators and, if necessary, to testify on Smith Hill.

Be willing to respond when we contact you! Our state is facing financial danger that's just as serious for our industry as overregulation, unreasonable fees or long waiting times for permits. Be willing to help!

Watch The Rhode Island Builder Report for more information on this issue.

In the meantime, on behalf of all RIBA's officers, directors and staff, I wish you and yours a very happy holiday season, and the greatest New Year ever!

Thomas McNulty is the president of the Rhode Island Builders Assn, East Providence.

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