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RIBA membership turns challenges into opportunities

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It's often said that great challenges bring great opportunities. I believe that. I also think that Charles Darwin had a point when he talked about "survival of the fittest."

Any active member of the Rhode Island Builders Association, whether builder, remodeler, subcontractor, supplier or related professional, will tell you that their membership helps turn challenges into opportunities. It also helps them not only to survive, but to turn that survival into success.

Dues got you down?

Not only is RIBA a real bargain considering the vast number of services you receive, but with your credit card you can now spread your dues payments out over 12 months.

It's well worth it: Your RIBA membership has been a prime survival tool for many reasons, especially education. From essential OSHA-10 courses and Lead Safe Remodeler/Renovator classes to seminars on running your business more profitably and nationally known speakers on industry issues, RIBA is where you should be.

RIBA's health insurance program and workers' compensation insurance endorsed program benefit thousands of employees of our member companies all over southeastern New England.

At the RIBA office, members can receive building permit statistics, seek guidance on industry issues, and even take advantage of our free notary service. Also available are a full array of construction documents. Code books and OSHA-required safety manuals are available for purchase. RIBA even offers meeting rooms to member companies for industry-related meetings at a reduced fee.

There are marketing vehicles and venues to help you promote your business, including our annual Membership Directory & Buyer's Guide, distributed to thousands of consumers at The Home Show and through RIBA member suppliers. As a member, you're entitled to a free listing on our website, www.ribuilders.org. Potential customers can find you by your company name, the services you provide, and by your geographic service area. We even link to your company website.

Since 1948 RIBA has offered The Home Show, which takes place every Spring at the Rhode Island Convention Center, Providence, and is attended by thousands of people from southern New England, all interested in building or buying new homes or in remodeling or decorating their existing homes. Exhibit your company's products and services and meet thousands of new clients for one low price.

Then there's this award-winning monthly magazine, The Rhode Island Builder Report, covering

issues, legislation and events that directly affect you and your business, helping you stay one step ahead of it all.

Services you can't see

There are plenty of services you can't see. Chief among these are RIBA's government affairs and lobbying activities. Land-use restrictions, high taxes and fees, and over-reactive environmental and consumer regulations all hamper your business. RIBA strives to monitor these situations and protect you.

The association even has an annual round of social events where you can relax and network to promote your business.

As if that weren't enough, RIBA members automatically become members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), a 200,000-member industry powerhouse that offers its own battery of member services.

And there's much more.

Member challenge

One of the goals of my administration is to recruit as many good new members as we can. There are thousands of good contractors in Rhode Island who don't yet belong to RIBA. I challenge every one of you who does belong to recruit one new member. Call Nancy Jenkinson at the association office (401-438-7400) for advice and a membership kit to give to your friends who don't yet belong.

Good times will return - they always do. In the meantime, however, your RIBA membership and the crucial services that come with it are a compass guiding you through rocky waters. Contractors who are educated, have good business practices, and use planning and good sense will survive. Share it with your friends!

Robert Baldwin is president of R.B. Homes, Inc., Lincoln and is president of Rhode Island Builders Assn.