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President's message: Don't complain - get in the game!

February 10, 2011 - Rhode Island

When my administration took office a few months ago, we laid out some ambitious plans for where we want the R.I. Builders Association to go over the next two years.

We also emphasized that succeeding in these goals would require a team effort. It would require us as RIBA members and pillars of our state's residential construction industry to stop simply complaining, and get into the game!

A new legislative year has begun at the State House, and there is a new administration. This means that we must educate those who make and administer the rules under which our industry functions. If we don't, then those with an anti-growth agenda will. We must promote our own legislative agenda with great energy. It's important not only for our businesses but for our state's economy.

RIBA's leaders have been building strong contacts with our legislative leaders over the past few months. But we need you to get in the game, too!

Hand in hand with our legislative efforts goes our budding membership drive, the first RIBA has organized in many years. According to figures from the R.I. Contractors' registration and licensing board, there are over 16,000 contractors in this state, only about 1,200 of whom belong to RIBA. Can you imagine the political clout we would gain if they joined us?

That's also where you come in. I'm asking every member to recruit at least one new member in 2011. Do that and it will not only double our membership by the end of the year, it will put us well on the way to recruiting those thousands of other contractors.

Ask all the non-members you know to visit the RIBA website for a look at our long list of member benefits. Talk to your subcontractors about joining. Ask RIBA's membership services coordinator Nancy Jenkinson to send your non-member friends and associates a membership package.

You also can point out new services, such as the impressive BuilderFusion software system now up and running. As you'll find out yourself, this will make online interaction with RIBA a breeze. Register for classes, get information about events, and even pay your dues online.

In today's economy, education is everything. There is no more valuable commodity than information. As we target our RIBA marketing program at recruiting, a special thrust will have to do with our expanding educational programs. We will increase our course offerings and our ability to deliver them to the greatest possible audience.

Get in the game!

Also tell potential members about our expanding insurance programs. We're working hard to bring down the cost of health insurance and to save members money on workers' compensation coverage. As we do so, we're also looking at expanding the other forms of insurance we can make available to members.

We also plan to improve the annual Home Show. Become an exhibitor and tie into the huge potential customer base that walks through those turnstiles. Let us know the opinions about the

show you might hear from visitors. The more we know about what people want, the better we can make the Home Show, and the more the Home Show can boost our industry every year.

Go even further: Serve on a committee. Let us know what you think. If you pick up local information about an important industry issue, let us know!

Join the team and reap the benefits!

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

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