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Attorney General Kilmartin asks for cooperation on industry issues

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"If we cooperate and work together, we can find the solutions."

That was the word from Peter Kilmartin, Rhode Island's new attorney general, as he talked with the Rhode Island Builders Association's board of directors on January 11th. The issues: illegal contractors, the Contractors' Registration and Licensing Board, workers' compensation and unemployment fraud, and illegal immigrants.

"If my office and groups like RIBA work together, we can maximize our efforts. My door will be open to you," Kilmartin told directors. "We have already put quite a few things in motion."

One of these, which drew praise from directors, was Kilmartin's signing on to the federal program aimed at identifying illegal immigrants who break the law. The attorney general that afternoon had signed a memorandum of agreement to enroll the state in the Secure Communities initiative.

"People would be surprised at the calls I received from members of the legal immigrant community praising that action, and asking me not to be swayed by the vocal minority within their own communities. As far as I'm concerned, it's a matter of people who have either obeyed the law or broken it," said Kilmartin, a former Pawtucket police officer.

In a question-and-answer session with directors, the attorney general also vowed to work with RIBA in the quest to get unregistered and uninsured contractors out of the marketplace. There also was some discussion of problems in the workers' compensation and unemployment compensation systems.

In other matters, president Robert Baldwin stressed the importance of member involvement in political action, especially in the larger and more frequent meetings planned for RIBA's Breakfast Club. This venue allows members to meet and interact with various state officials, particularly lawmakers, on a one-to-one basis.

Plans call for, among other things, Breakfast Club sessions with all freshman members of the state legislature, one by one, MBaldwin stated. He said that RIBA will lower the cost of Breakfast Club participation in a nod to the tight budgets many members face.

Baldwin also hailed the work of the marketing committee, headed by Michael DeCesare, and RIBA Professional Women in Building president Cheryl Boyd, who are preparing a membership drive to follow the unveiling of RIBA's new BuilderFusion software system.

Executive director Roger Warren offered an in-depth demonstration of BuilderFusion, which will allow seamless online interaction between members and RIBA. It also will permit easy storage, processing and communication of information in all aspects of RIBA's organizational life, he said. BuilderFusion is expected to be up and running for member use in February. An informational mailing will be sent to all members, Warren said.

Paul Eno is the owner and editor-in-chief of New River Press, Woonsocket and is the editor of the

monthly RIBA newsletter, The Rhode Island Builder Report.

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