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## **Paul Eno - RIBA members attend green meeting in Washington, D.C.**

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Two members of RIBA were among the nearly 100 environmental and energy leaders from the state to attend a May 4 conference in Washington, D.C.

David Caldwell Jr., vice president of Caldwell & Johnson Inc., one of RIBA's leading "green" builders, and Chris Duhamel of DiPrete Engineering Associates Inc. both attended the conference. Duhamel was there as a member of the Westerly Town Council.

Organized by senator Sheldon Whitehouse, the conference featured a panel discussion on building infrastructure for a clean economy; breakout sessions on clean energy, ocean policy, and green building opportunities; and a question and answer session with the senator, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. He also was a co-sponsor of the Energy Efficiency in Housing Act of 2009 (Senate Bill #1379), which would have, among other things, required lenders to factor in a property's energy efficiency when considering mortgages and appraisals. That bill died in committee, but Whitehouse plans to introduce similar legislation soon, according to his press secretary, Seth Larson.

Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson, and former White House chief of staff John Podesta each spoke at the conference and took questions about the future of national policy regarding these issues. Senator Jack Reed turned out to welcome the group to Washington.

"As a second-generation small business contractor in Rhode Island, I fully support Whitehouse's efforts to incentivize energy efficiency," said Caldwell. "This event is important because it is one of many forums the senator has hosted in seeking to ascertain best practices to recognize the true value of energy efficiency, to develop the best course of action to steer our country into a more energy-efficient future, and to lessen the energy cost burdens on consumers. In my opinion, this is a win-win-win situation, good for the consumer, good for the environment, and good for our national and local economy."

Caldwell also has been participating, with RIBA president Robert Baldwin and executive director Roger Warren, in ongoing meetings on industry issues with members of Rhode Island's congressional delegation here at home. Meetings have taken place with Whitehouse and Reed, and with representative James Langevin. As of this writing, there were plans to meet with representative David Cicilline as well.

Prime talking points are:

- \* The need to renew the Perkins Grant program, which is crucial to the existence and advancement of career and technical education in R.I.;
- \* Establishing more incentives for home energy efficiency, such as tax credits and making energy efficiency a factor in mortgage applications and appraisals;
- \* Preserving the mortgage interest deduction, and

\* A reduction in the number of acquisition, development and construction (ADC) loans being "called" for equity, and opening up more credit for residential construction.

"The legislators all seemed positive on these issues," Caldwell said.

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