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Robert Baldwin's president message: News from NAHB

February 09, 2012 - Rhode Island

There is some very welcome news about the New England housing market, courtesy of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

Each month since last October, our national trade association has been publishing its Improving Markets Index (IMI). On this list are metropolitan areas across the nation where critical factors clearly indicate that the housing market has finally turned around. There wasn't a single New England metro area on the list until December, when Burlington, VT., was added. It was very heartening to see the January list, which added Worcester, Mass.; Manchester, N.H.; and New Haven and Bridgeport, Conn., to the list!

Geographically, at least, a housing turnaround seems to be knocking on Rhode Island's door. What will it take for us to open that door and let the recovery in? At the Rhode Island Builders Association, we believe we know how.

In doing our part to get that recovery started across Rhode Island's borders, we are getting ready to propose a broad legislative plan to energize housing activity in Rhode Island. The idea is to ease up on our industry in several areas, if only temporarily.

In addition, RIBA's board of directors on January 3rd voted to support a proposed \$50 million Housing Bond issue, to be placed on the 2012 ballot. In doing so, we joined HousingWorks RI and other leading workforce-housing advocacy groups. Such a bond issue would boost the housing market as did the 2006 Housing Bond, whose funds did much for the low- to moderate-income market. Those funds have now run out.

I'd like to particularly thank Al Valliere of Nation Wide Construction Corp., who is RIBA's representative on the state's Housing Resources Commission and has ridden shotgun on the housing bond proposal for us.

As we often say in these pages, it is extremely important for members to support our legislative advocacy if it is to succeed. This includes getting personally involved through contact with your own state senator and representative. As I have pointed out before: There is nothing that cuts ice with these lawmakers more than hearing from their own constituents. Be prepared before you e-mail or call them, however. Check the newly revised article on "How to Talk to Your Legislators" at www.RIBUILDERS.org and/or call RIBA executive director John Marcantonio or development coordinator Joanne Mattos at (401) 438-7400 to get the latest on the issues.

Support RIBA's PAC activities!

Another important way you can help is to participate in our stepped-up PAC activities, both on the state and federal levels. There are plenty PAC events in the works, and we are making them more affordable. They won't cost you a lot, but they will go a long way toward getting our industry's message across to those who make the decisions.

I thank once again all our members who are working so hard on these crucial legislative matters,

especially our legislative committee co-chairmen, Ed Ladouceur and Steven Carlino, and our tireless executive director, John Marcantonio.

Personally, I have a good feeling about 2012. Working together, we can open that door and let the housing recovery in. Remember: Action is everything!

Robert Baldwin is president of R.B. Homes, Inc., Lincoln and is president of RIBA.

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