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Rhode Island Builders Assn. president's message: The Home Show was "just awesome!"

May 10, 2012 - Rhode Island

With all the activity of March and April nearly behind us, it's hard to know where to begin in my message to you this month!

First, Rhode Island Builders Association's new partnership with the Rhode Island Economic Development Corp.'s (RIEDC's) Office of Regulatory Reform and Quality Management (ORR) is truly historic. For the first time, we have a chance to really change the business atmosphere and the development process in this state by providing information to a state agency that has committed itself to reform.

Beginning immediately after our April 10th board of directors meeting, RIBA's leadership began coordinating with our membership to provide this information to ORR. If you have not received details on this, please contact the RIBA office: (401) 438-7400.

What we need from you are specific instances in which your work as a builder, remodeler or developer has been held up, stopped or permanently derailed by bureaucratic or regulatory delays, duplication, lack of communication between departments, overregulation or just plain resistance.

We need data: What were the delays? How much did each instance cost you in time and money? What effect did it have on your client's plans? What overall effect has it had on your business? And again, be specific about the municipality, office and agency where each instance occurred.

Get these specifics to us in writing. We will meet with ORR on a regular basis to discuss these details and work on the necessary regulatory and legislative remedies to fix the situation. You can drop by personally or call: (401) 438-7400. RIBA headquarters is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Or you can fax your documents to (401) 438-7446.

We do have friends in state government. When I complimented RIEDC executive director Keith Stokes on the partnership idea, he gave the credit to Gov. Lincoln Chafee. Subsequently, in speaking personally with the governor, he has committed himself to regulatory reform to help the state's business community and supports these efforts.

We thank him for it!

There are legislators who realize the importance of our industry to Rhode Island's economy. And there are others in government who appreciate the plight we face from overregulation.

This is a real chance to make changes for the better in Rhode Island's regulatory environment. Once data are collected, we will work with the governor, the legislature, Keith Stokes, and Leslie Taito and her team to create reform legislation. Please get involved!

Then there was our Home Show, which ran from March 29th-April 1st at the Rhode Island Convention Center.

As the kids would say (and many of them who attended did say), the Home Show was "just awesome"! How can we begin to thank all those who participated in making that wonderful Model

Home a reality, who put in so much work into organizing, publicizing and exhibiting at a show that was one-of-a-kind?

We can start with our new Home Show Committee, chaired by Ron Smith. It was the first time in the almost 30 years of the show that we built a house inside the exhibit area. Our members took an active role in planning and executing the event. These dedicated members, and our diligent executive director and staff, met countless times with the show's designers and publicists to create new ideas and turn them into reality. There was a true camaraderie and spirit among all involved. Indeed, all that work paid off: Attendance at the show was up 7% over recent years, and the number of exhibitors was up. Our exhibitors reported enthusiastic crowds.

They have brilliantly demonstrated what we can accomplish when we become involved and work together!

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