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55 YEARS

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President's message: A look back at a day's work well done

August 09, 2012 - Rhode Island

It's always good to look back on a day's work well done. And in RIBA's case, the "day" is the 2012 session of the Rhode Island General Assembly and Gov. Lincoln Chafee's 2012-2013 budget.

It was a good legislative year for the Rhode Island Builders Association and for the state's residential construction industry because we were able to effectively communicate with our lawmakers. Thanks to the efforts of many people at RIBA, we were able to make them see that housing is the linchpin of Rhode Island's economy. Our industry is the beginning of the food chain.

Because so many of you helped convey that, we are seeing reforms to the state fire code system, more predictability in wetlands regulations statewide, and even the beginnings of a uniform, statewide, computer-based permitting system. While we didn't get everything we asked for, we have plenty to show for our efforts!

At the same time, we will have a \$25 million housing bond on the November ballot. You will be hearing a great deal about this from RIBA over the next two months, because our next legislative task will be to get out the vote and pass this bond issue. Given the tremendous benefits reaped from the 2006 housing bond, a 2012 edition would be "just what the doctor ordered" for our industry and the state economy.

While all RIBA members are called upon to participate in the vital task of getting our message across at the State House, there are always certain members and staff who do the "heavy lifting." These include our hard-working Legislative Committee, chaired by Ed Ladouceur and Steve Carlino, backed up by our outstanding executive director, John Marcantonio, Legislative Committee member Joanne Mattos and the rest of our great staff. Spearheading it all are our lobbyists, Joe Walsh and Gayle Wolf, who are absolutely the best at what they do.

We also thank those dedicated members of the general assembly, especially the legislative leadership and the sponsors of these bills, who are aware of how critical housing is to the state's economy.

We express our gratitude to those who have supported our recent political action committee fundraising events, especially the organizers for the events and for our PAC: Roland Fiore, Jack Bentz, Steve Carlino, Ed Ladouceur, Dennis DiPrete and our tireless National Association of Home Builders Representative, Barbara Gallison.

At our latest event, held on June 26th at the East Greenwich Yacht Club, we had over 50 attendees. Also present, and full of praise for RIBA's political fundraising drive, were three officials of the NAHB: 2012 first vice chairman of the board Rick Judson, national BUILD-PAC chairman Robert Frost and his assistant, Katie Harman.

Thanks once again for all the support. Let's do it again in 2013!

For those of you who may have sat on the sidelines this year, just take a look at what can be accomplished when we work together!

Next year, we are looking to partner at least one builder, remodeler or subcontractor with each senator and representative in their district to inform these lawmakers of our concerns.

Believe me, these legislators listen to their constituents!

The more of you who join the legislative effort in 2013, the more success we can have at the State House. And that translates into more success for your business and a better economy for Rhode Island.

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

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