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President's message: Hard work has paid off!

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This year certainly is winding down quickly. Maybe that's because time flies when you're very busy, which has certainly been the case for the Rhode Island Builders Association, its leaders, staff and committees. And that activity has brought some major progress in 2013.

Congratulations to our board of directors and our committees for the hard work that has provided us with the rewards we have seen this year! A series of successes at the State House during the legislative session, ever-expanding member benefits, and great attendance at our educational and networking events are only a few.

Homes For Our Troops, the Rhode Island Builders Association and our charity, Builders Helping Heroes, have come together to build a house in Burrillville to donate to a wounded Marine and his wife. The project is speeding along, spearheaded by RIBA Immediate Past President and Builders Helping Heroes President Bob Baldwin and RIBA Secretary Dave Caldwell Jr. Many thanks to the generous donors who have made it possible.

The tremendous energy of our young executive director, John Marcantonio, has been a great factor in what I can only call a renaissance. John has come up with new programs and ideas, has energized and streamlined our staff, and has personally reached out to current, new and potential members to get them involved.

Thanks to the recruiting and retention effort spearheaded by John and our membership committee, co-chaired by Cheryl Boyd and Lou Cotoia of Arnold Lumber Co., RIBA has won the National Association of Home Builders award for the highest increase in retention for 2012-2013!

John is now in his third year as executive director. Time certainly flies when you're being successful! Of course, none of these great happenings will touch you if you aren't a member of RIBA, or if you are a member and sit on the sidelines. Join a committee! Help with our legislative advocacy program. Take advantage of our events to improve yourself and your business through education.

Speaking of education, there's a great series of Contractor Boot Camps on basic business topics going on at RIBA right now, and it's free. So take the plunge and get involved with your trade association. What's good for RIBA is good for you and your business!

Felix Carlone is the president of the Rhode Island Builders Assn.

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