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RIBA president's message: We have power as a group

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When he held the gavel from 2004-2006, our immediate past president, Ed Ladouceur, drove home the theme: "Together we can do it!" He said it, wrote it and applied it every chance he got as president.

I'd like to keep echoing that great and positive theme.

Many times in this column, I've pointed out the power we have as a group when we work together to help our industry. This has been effective for decades in the presence the Rhode Island Builders Association has had at the State House, before regulators and at city and town halls. It shines forth also in high-profile activities like the Home Show we just sponsored and enjoyed, our You're Home Sunday morning radio show, and our involvement with charitable projects such as Rebuilding Together and Builders Helping Heroes.

But there's also the "Together we can do it" spirit in the things we do just for ourselves. Primary among these is our growing roster of educational programs, where members help members learn the techniques and skills that make businesses succeed. Sometimes these programs help us all learn how to make those dollars stretch further or simply how to better comply with regulations. At other times, something you learn at a RIBA educational seminar can make the difference between whether you stay in business or not.

A perfect example of this educational power is our new remodelers committee, which has wasted no time in coming up with a great schedule of educational events for our remodeler members. And it certainly is working: The February 27th meeting attracted twice as many participants (nearly 50) as the inaugural session on January 23rd.

This can-do spirit extends to our national building community too. Your RIBA membership means that you also belong to the National Association of Home Builders. Talk about power and resources! NAHB is a federation of over 800 state and local home builders associations with a total of 235,000 members. As a part of all that, you can get further educational opportunities and professional designations, incisive and practical publications, networking opportunities, personalized business help and more.

One program is "Member Advantage," which actually can save you big money on necessary business purchases. Participating companies include General Motors, Dell Computers, UPS, Hertz, Office Depot, Paychex, Pitney Bowes and more. So by working together through our trade associations, there's plenty in it for all of us. Together, we really can do it! To find out more, visit www.ribuilders.org or www.nahb.com.

Thomas McNulty is the president of the Rhode Island Builders Association, East Providence.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540