



CELEBRATING
55 YEARS

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President's message: Thank you for letting me serve you!

October 09, 2008 - Rhode Island

It is with gratitude, hope, optimism and faith that I write my last official message to you as president of the Rhode Island Builders Association.

I write with gratitude because it has been a great honor for me to serve as president of this outstanding organization that allows us to work together to help each other and our industry...an industry so vital to our state's economy.

I'm also grateful because I have had the privilege to serve with such fine officers, directors, committee chairs and association staff. No one could ask to serve with more dedicated and competent people!

I write with hope because we face tough times. Business isn't what it should be, and potential home buyers are intimidated by financial challenges and consistently gloomy media reports. My hope is based on you because members of RIBA are, or are at least striving to be, the best of the best. You are the ones who are serious about our industry, who seek to learn all you can about business and your trades. You are the hope of our industry in Rhode Island and, therefore, the hope for our economic recovery.

I write with optimism because our members have the tools to survive and to prosper. We know that each downturn only paves the way for the next recovery. With those tools - education, knowledge, cooperation, determination and business savvy - we will weather the current storm and be positioned for success when it ends.

I write with faith because that's what we all must have in our own capabilities, in our association, in each other, and in America. We make mistakes, sometimes we get fooled or simply take the wrong path, but nothing can keep Americans down for long! We all must have faith in that.

Meanwhile, I look back on a busy and challenging two years.

We have strengthened the coalitions RIBA helped establish within the shelter industry. These involve liaisons with the Rhode Island Association of Realtors, the state chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors, local chambers of commerce, and others. This allows us to present a united stand for our industry, especially at the State House.

I believe this united front has prevented much harmful legislation, and many unnecessary regulations, from seeing the light of day. Together, we have fought bad land-use legislation and stood up for property rights.

We have also worked hard to protect members from unfair local regulations and fees. One result was a recent \$58,000 settlement with the town of Johnston over its high "fire fees."

In December 2007, we worked out details of a \$250,000 settlement with the Town of Lincoln over that community's former "open space fee," charged to builders and developers over the previous three years.

We also have worked hard to improve our industry's image. Education of the public has been a big

part of that, and one of our most successful educational outreaches has been our weekly radio show, You're Home with the Rhode Island Builders Association. The show debuted in September 2007 on WHJJ 920 AM. It will shortly move to WPRO 630 AM, where it will air every Saturday afternoon from 3 to 4.

Illegal and fly-by-night contractors haven't helped our image, but RIBA has worked closely with the state contractors' registration and licensing board both to educate our members and to strengthen that regulatory agency.

I thank you once again for the honor of serving as your president, and you can be sure that I'll continue to be active on all levels of our association. I urge you to do the same!

Tom McNulty is the president of E.A. McNulty Real Estate, Cumberland and is the president of the R.I. Builders Assn., East Providence.

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