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President's message: RIBA is still your greatest ally

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As the weather finally starts to improve, let's look forward to an improving economy as well, along with higher consumer confidence than we've seen lately. But whether we see this improvement this spring, this year or next year, we have to realize that we will see it sooner or later. That's because the economy and the shelter industry always bounce back. So for us, it's a matter of holding on, playing it smart, and trying not to make any costly mistakes in the meantime.

Another important fact to keep in mind is that the Rhode Island Builders Association is your greatest ally, especially when the economic chips are down. No matter what the economy is doing, RIBA is fighting for you and your business at the State House. The association also is working hard to keep your health insurance and workers' compensation costs down, to keep your people safe on the jobsite, and to keep them - and you - educated in areas of vital industry and regulatory concern. And RIBA regularly keeps you informed on crucial matters through The Rhode Island Builder Report.

The most important commodity in your business life is information. And RIBA is your greatest source for it. As a matter of fact, given all the member benefits you receive, RIBA is also one of the greatest bargains for your business.

Beyond education and information, RIBA offers action. We have committees that monitor issues and plan proactive moves related to apartments (landlord/tenant), building codes, contractor registration and licensing, education and workforce development, environmental matters, fire codes, "green" building trends and training, insurance matters, land use, lead abatement, legislation, programs and events, remodelers' issues and training. We have an active Women's Council, a national model that engages in support and image-building activities for us in the wider community.

Don't forget that your RIBA membership also makes you a member of the National Association of Home Builders, which offers formidable member resources of its own, including discount programs like Member Advantage, to save you money on products you use every day.

To take full advantage of your membership, don't just use RIBA's resources, contribute to your fellow members by getting involved. There's always room for new committee members. If you have a favorite issue and would like to offer your talents, please contact executive director Roger Warren at rwarren@ribuilders.org or (401) 438-7400 and let him know.

But to gain all these opportunities and advantages, you have to remain a member. In this weak economy, some of you might be thinking of letting your membership expire when that renewal bill comes in. That's like cutting off a foot so you can save money on socks! It's one of those costly mistakes you don't want to make.

It's at times like this that you need your membership the most. This is the time to take advantage of all that RIBA has to offer. And don't just remain a member, but actively recruit new members. RIBA's success is your success, and that's best achieved with a large, strong, active membership.

Take full advantage of the classes offered, the social and networking events, and the 60-plus years

of experience available to you with only a phone call or an e-mail.

Together, with all these resources, we'll come through and see better days soon!

Micheal Artesani is president of the Rhode Island Builders Assn., East Providence.

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