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President's message: Demand that something be done now!

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I wish I could remember the name of it. But many years ago, there was a movie about the day the devil came up with a simple and ingenious plan to capture more souls. He just kept repeating three words to people who had important things or good deeds to do: "Do it tomorrow."

Talk about the road to hell being "paved with good intentions"! That's exactly what happened, and the road was choked with souls.

From the way some of our lawmakers act, you'd think "Do it tomorrow" was engraved over the main entrance to the State House. Certainly the most serious example of that attitude in modern times must be the way the General Assembly is treating the state's nightmarish budget problems.

This was brought home to the Rhode Island Builders Association's Board of Directors on June 2nd through a very sobering presentation by Susanne Greschner, director of policy and research for the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council (RIPEC).

Greschner made it clear in no uncertain terms that lawmakers must act now to avoid financial disaster for Rhode Island by the 2011-2012 budget year. That's when there will be no tobacco settlement money or federal stimulus funds left to plug the state's growing deficit.

Without action now, the house of cards will come crashing down, she stated.

Greschner stressed that the most effective way to promote this action is for all segments of the state's population - homeowners, business people, community activists, professionals, workers, municipal leaders - all to rally and demand that the General Assembly stop the "business as usual" and the "do it tomorrow" routine and start making those difficult decisions now. Start working now to fix the pension and personnel systems, cut entitlements, and reduce Medicaid spending. And start cutting the waste at lower levels.

We need to rally our members too. RIBA members need to contact their lawmakers on this issue. Get on the phone with your state senator or representative, or send e-mails and letters. If you need contact information, call RIBA executive director Roger Warren at (401) 438-7400.

Demand that something be done now!

If we raise enough dust on this, maybe they won't try to put it off until tomorrow.

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