

# Code creation and interpretation

In 2009, IBA will be working with the Indiana Association of Building Officials (IABO) and other interested parties on the development of a new residential code. It remains to be seen what model code will be chosen as the model code for Indiana, whether it will be the 2006 International Model Residential Code, or the 2009 (newly completed) International Model Residential Code, or something else!

Either way, the choice of an updated model code for Indiana will entail much discussion, collaboration, negotiation and consensus-building among the code user groups, with many points of disagreement and opposition to be resolved. (To say nothing of amendments to it.)

As stated by Mike Christoffersen, a long-time IBA member and an ICC code development committee member, there were over 2,400 proposed code changes recently reviewed and voted on - just between the 2006 and the 2009 models. Many of these changes will be addressed in Indiana. The notable items include: fire sprinklers in one and two family dwellings and townhomes, new wall bracing requirements, window sill height requirements and new energy requirements.

How will the discussions go? How will the collaboration fare?

Let's look for a moment at how some non-IBA code users look at the code, because this is the mentality that IBA will be dealing with in the code development process.

One recent interpretation of IRC Sec. N1102.1.7 was to require that vented crawlspaces must have floor insulation.

N1102.1.7 says, "Where the floor above the crawlspace is uninsulated, and the crawlspace is not vented to outside air, insulation shall be installed on crawlspace walls as required by Table 11-5." (The table tells you how much insulation, i.e., the R value - and where to place it on the wall, i.e., how far down the wall.)

Do you see the thought process here? It seems the following logic was performed on the sentence (in short form): *Where uninsulated floors and not vented, there-*

## Codes Corner



Marlys Pedtke

Carlie Hopper

*fore insulation on walls = Where not uninsulated floors and not not vented, therefore insulation not on walls.*

This is not IBA's interpretation of N1102.1.7. In our view, logically speaking, "where A and B, therefore C" does NOT equal "where not A and not B, therefore not C". In fact, "where A and B" says nothing at all about, "where not A and not B." IBA believes that N1102.1.7 is providing an insulation requirement for only those unvented crawlspaces that have floors that are uninsulated. Period. If the code wants to provide a second requirement for a different situation, it can, but it is not appropriate to attempt to infer a code requirement from another code requirement.

It may take some time to discuss this specific code issue with everyone involved. It may take a long time to fully understand each others' points of view and come to consensus on what the clear and correct code language should be for this provision. But that's not our point.

The point is: how do we come to the table in 2009 in such a way as to ensure the greatest possible collaboration for all of IBA's interests in the code? How do we enhance the code process for everyone through our own ability to communicate and collaborate? And where do we draw our line for housing affordability? It will not be an easy task, but we know our members and the IBA are up for the job.

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