

## Work begins on Indiana's next statewide residential code

**B**y a vote of 13-10 in favor of the 2009 edition of the International Residential Code (IRC), the 2009 Residential Code Review Committee of the Fire Prevention and Building Safety Commission begins work on Indiana's next statewide residential code.

The Committee is comprised of 24 voting members with eight Indiana Builders Association (IBA) members, eight Indiana Association of Building Officials (IABO) members, and eight independent voters. IBA and IABO voters are selected at each meeting by the respective codes committee chairs, Lynn Madden and Jim Markle. The independent voters, ratified by the Committee, are not members of the IBA or IABO and must be Indiana residents. Independents are experts in the areas of fire safety/services, public utilities, product suppliers, architects, building designers, engineers, and manufactured housing.

IBA's eight voting members at the Committee meeting on April 9 were Calvin Bolt, Warsaw; Matthew Brown, CGP, Merrillville; Houser Canter, New Albany; Steve Dean, Indianapolis; Matt Lancia, CGP, Fort Wayne; Lynn Madden, Centerville; Matt Sigler, Noblesville, and Jeff Washler, Auburn. Other IBA members present were Doug Crook; Bill Fox, Jr., CGB; Phil Gettum, CGB, CGR, CAPS; Joe Heinsman; John Kremke II, CGB, CGP; Tom Mullen, CGB, CGP; Kris Owen; Chuck Skopelja; Steve Washburn, CGP, and Will Wright.

Now that the Committee has decided on a code, the review process begins and will last anywhere from six months to a year. During the review process anyone may submit proposed code changes. The Committee discusses the proposals then votes on



whether or not to amend the code. When the Committee has finished its work it submits the revised code, in the form of a proposed rule, to the state to begin the promulgation process.

IBA will work diligently with the state's Committee to ensure that safety is balanced with affordability when it comes to fire sprinklers and many other mandated provisions in the 2009 IRC.

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend these Committee meetings: May 21, June 11, July 9, July 30, August 20, September 10, October 1, October 22, and November 12, 2009. The meetings are open to the public. The meeting notice, minutes, and agenda for upcoming meetings are posted at <http://www.in.gov/dhs/2494.htm>.

To propose a code change, complete and return the Proposed Code Change Form 41186R to the state of Indiana. The form can be downloaded from the code services section of the state's website at <http://www.in.gov/dhs/2375.htm> or contact Carlie Hopper at [Carlie@BuildIndiana.org](mailto:Carlie@BuildIndiana.org) or (800)377-6334 for a Word template.

## Brace for changes in braced wall lines in the 2009 IRC

*Written by Joe Heinsman, P.E., IBA Codes Committee Vice Chairman and Technical Services Manager with Stock Building Supply, a Wolseley Company, 2801 N. Morton Street, Franklin, IN USA. For more information, contact Heinsman at (317)738-3211 or at [joe.heinsman@stocksupply.com](mailto:joe.heinsman@stocksupply.com).*

**J**ust what is a "Braced Wall Line"? As with almost everything in the residential code, wall bracing was simpler in past codes. Back in the CABO code days (before the IRC existed) exterior walls required bracing and interior walls were not addressed and therefore had no requirements. In the 1995 CABO code, the text of wall bracing was less than half a page and the wall bracing table, which was the only table or figure for wall bracing, was about 2" tall. In the CABO code each wall segment, from one corner to the next, was treated separately and met the requirements on its own.

The term "braced wall line" debuted in the 2000 IRC and the addition of the requirement for interior braced wall lines came with the 2003 IRC. The Indiana Residential Code, 2005 edition reads "Braced wall lines shall consist of braced wall panel construction methods in accordance with Section 602.10.3. The amount and location of bracing shall be in accordance with Table R602.10.1 and the amount of bracing shall be the greater of that required by the Seismic Design Category or the design wind speed. . . . Braced wall panels that are counted as part of a braced wall line shall be in line, except that offsets out-of-plane up to 4' shall be permitted provided that the total out-to-out offset dimension in any braced wall line is not more than 8'". The intent was to allow combining of several parallel wall segments into a single wall line so they could be considered together when trying to meet the wall bracing requirements. This was a helpful change since over time the average house had become considerably bigger, more complex, and had a lot more offsets in the walls. Treating each wall segment separately on such a house was becoming increasingly difficult, especially when one or more of these

wall segments consisted of mostly openings.

Generally speaking, the wording was interpreted to mean the braced wall line was on top of one of the wall segments, generally the "main" or longest one. As you jogged back and forth from one parallel wall segment to the next, no offset from one wall segment to the next could be over 4' and from the left most to the right most parallel wall segment could be no more than 8'. All these segments could then be considered together and the amount of bracing required for these segments together would depend on the length of the wall line from the beginning of the first wall segment to the end of the last wall segment.

The 2009 IRC will, however, make it clear that this is not the case. In the 2009 IRC a braced wall line is just a line on the page wherever you choose to put it. It does not need to be on top of any wall segment. The offsets between wall segments are completely irrelevant and they can be any amount. The 4' offset is the offset from the wall line to a particular wall segment. Any wall segment parallel to the wall line and within 4' of either side of it is included in that wall line. Generally (the exceptions are not important for this discussion) the length of the wall line is from the beginning of the first wall segment included to the end of the last wall segment included. Braced wall panels may be placed in any of these wall segments following the rules for braced wall panel location.

The interesting thing about this is that there is no reason not to interpret the Indiana Residential Code, 2005 edition in this manner. If you read the wording of the current code above you will see that it talks about the offset of the braced wall panels from the braced wall line and not about the offset of wall segments from each other. The wall line is never said to be on a wall segment. In fact walls are never mentioned but only the braced wall panels as if isolated and separated from the walls that contain them. Discuss this way of looking at braced wall lines with your local building officials if they agree you will find that it creates even greater flexibility in complying with the bracing requirements.