

NAHB – Working for you on the national front



National Report By Tom Mullen, MIRM

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Green Building

Green was the word heard throughout the NAHB International Builders Show. Feb. 14 was “Green Day” calling attention to NAHB’s new green standards, which will soon be released.

Development of the National Green Building Standard is well underway. The consensus committee held a third round of public hearings Dec. 3 and 4, 2007. A final draft was released for public review on Dec. 21, 2007, with comments due by Feb. 4. The standard is currently on track for publication in late spring.

Pilot testing for NAHB’s National Green Building Program, NGBP, was completed Dec. 15, 2007.

Meetings were held Dec. 3, 2007 and Jan. 9 to solicit input on the NGBP from three stakeholder groups comprised of representatives from individual builders, high production builders and executive officers. After receiving this input, the NGBP Oversight Group, chaired by VP/Secretary Bob Jones, met on Jan. 21 in Chicago to work through unresolved programmatic issues.

A new Certified Green Professional Designation was unveiled at the Convention. IBA is already holding three-day sessions for members to obtain the new designation.

A toolkit, “Green Building Legislative Responses: Find the right shade of green for your community,” is available from NAHB to assist HBAs when confronted with green building mandates in their state and local legislatures.

For more information on green, visit www.nahb.org/greenbuilding, or contact NAHB’s at 1-800-368-5242, John Ritterpusch, ext. 8325 or Calli Schmidt, ext. 8132.

Credit Crunch

At the Convention, we heard from the heads of Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the Federal Home Loan Bank all with pretty much the same story, “no one in recent history has seen a more trying period than the current credit crunch.” The forecast is not encouraging for much of the country.

On Jan. 24, the Bush administration announced an agreement on a planned stimulus package. The plan includes a \$300 tax rebate for most income-earning Americans as well as a 50 percent bonus depreciation allowance on new equipment; Section 179 expensing that allows employers to fully expense \$250,000 in new and used tangible property in the year it is purchased; and a temporary increase in FHA and GSE loan limits to 125 percent of the area median home price up to a max of \$729,750.

Immigration

The Department of Homeland Security has changed the old I-9 form for verifying the identity and work authorization of every new employee. See the article on page 22 for more information.

Inclusionary Zoning

Eighteen months of research have now been completed on inclusionary zoning and alternative approaches to affordable housing at the state and local level.

The first project, conducted for NAHB by Legal Action Committee Attorney Tim Hollister, provides a national perspective based on research on state statutes, case law and ordinances around the country. A resource manual is now available for members and associations facing inclusionary zoning ordinances. This manual includes a list of 45 elements that communities should address when implementing such ordinances, showing that inclusionary zoning should not be taken lightly.

The second project was conducted for NAHB by the University of Maryland and focuses on the economic effects of inclusionary zoning on home prices and production. It is one of few such thorough studies on this subject, finding that inclusionary zoning programs had significant effects on housing markets in California from 1988 to 2005 and demonstrating that such programs act like a tax on housing cost.

The third study focused on what other approaches are being used at the state and local level that can be recommended as alternatives to inclusionary zoning. The final report is a 350-page compilation of state and local approaches, including nearly 30 case studies. It’s the most comprehensive report on non-federal solutions and should be very useful in the federation’s outreach on effective housing affordability strategies.

All three reports are available within the Guidebook to the Housing Affordability Toolkit at www.nahb.org/hartoolkit or by calling Deb Bassert at NAHB at 1-800-368-5242, ext. 8443.

Infrastructure Finance

NAHB’s now extensive group of resources on innovative infrastructure financing solutions continues to attract lots of interest among HBAs, local communities and other national associations that are looking for alternatives to impact fees. Staff is therefore keenly aware of the need to keep these resources up to date.

Research conducted for NAHB by the National Conference of State Legislatures reveals that there has been surprising, positive movement across states over the past few

years, with more states now authorizing the use of infrastructure financing alternatives.

An updated publication, “Infrastructure Finance: Does Your State Encourage Innovation,” documents these changes and shows at a glance which states authorize the use of 12 key tools.

Fatality Study

A NAHB-commissioned study on the frequency, rates and causes of fatal work-related injuries in the U.S. construction industry is now complete. “Residential Construction Fatalities 2003-2006” is the most comprehensive analysis of fatalities in the home building industry to date. It is intended to highlight hazards in the industry and serve as a baseline for future study.

The research clearly demonstrates that work-related fatalities occur far less often on residential construction sites than on other construction sites. The residential construction industry accounted for only 29 percent of all construction-related fatalities in the study period. Also, the residential construction fatality rate was 8.35 deaths per 100,000 full-time employees, compared to 11.59 deaths per 100,000 full-time employees in all of construction.

NAHB has produced an array of worksite safety resources that are available for ordering or downloading online to help members reduce worksite hazards and injuries.

For a copy of the study and for more information visit www.nahb.org/fatalitystudy, www.nahb.org/osha or contact Rob Matuga at NAHB at 1-800-368-5242, ext. 8507.

Municipal Finance Expertise

NAHB has formed a collaborative relationship with the Council of Development and Finance Agencies to bring municipal finance expertise to the local level at a reduced fee at the request of our HBAs. CDFA members are comprised of public and private sector public finance experts who understand such tools as tax increment financing, community development districts and creative bond financing. These individuals can assist local associations and governments to apply and structure the use of such tools.

The Building for Tomorrow series is available in hard copy and also downloadable format at www.nahb.org/financingalts or by calling NAHB at 1-800-368-5242.



Several members from Indiana attended the NAHB Area 9 Caucus meeting at the International Builders Show in Orlando, Florida. Representing Indiana are (left to right): Tom Mullen, MIRM, NAHB Area 9 Vice President; Dale DeVon, BUILD-PAC Trustee; Tom Slater, National Associate Director; Barbara Carmichael, St. Joseph Valley Executive Officer; Cindy Bussell, IBA Chief Operating Officer; Rick Wajda, IBA CEO; Mike Bell, GMB, CGB, CGR, CAPS, NAHB State Representative; Stephen Robinson, GMB, CGB, CGR, CAPS, CGP, NAHB BUILD-PAC Trustee; Jeff Moser, National Director; Heath VanNatter, NAHB BUILD-PAC Trustee, and David Compton, IBA President.