



BLUEPRINTS

A monthly publication of the Asheville Home Builders Association

OCTOBER

Parade of Homes

Asheville Area

October 9/10 & 16/17
12 pm - 5 pm

Don't miss the premier
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Pick up your copy of the
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See page 14 for details.

Upcoming Events

October 13

Parade of Homes Gala

Crest Center & Pavilion

6:30 pm Reception

8:00 pm Awards Presentation

Tickets: \$55

November 18

Professional Women in Building

Wine Tasting & Silent Auction

The Wine Studio of Asheville

6 pm - 8 pm

Tickets: \$20 in advance

or \$25 at the door

Come out to support the PWB as
they raise money for their
scholarship fund!

December 10

Annual Christmas Party

The Venue, Downtown Asheville

Details coming soon!

Builders Toss 'Business as Usual' Out the Window

No one seems to be sure when the market will fully recover from its current downturn, but those whose businesses are performing the best aren't waiting to see a substantial improvement. Instead, they have been changing who they are and how they operate, recognizing that their prospective customers have changed drastically as a result of the economic recession.

Builders and remodelers need to invest in professional business practices if they haven't done so already, especially in calculating their costs and profits so that they know how to price their work and how much revenue they need to bring in to sustain their operations. In a segment of the housing industry that is dominated by very small businesses, many of which are still operating out of the back of a pickup truck, many remodelers have yet to adopt these basic practices.

No matter when a recovery does materialize, remodelers should be focusing on redefining their businesses now and resist the temptation to just get by in soft times.

A 'Wake-Up Call'

Things won't return to the way they were five years ago. Aside from bruising consumer confidence, the recession has dealt a more direct blow to home owners, who have lost the equity they previously plowed into improving their homes but still have to rely on their own money for remodeling projects because it's hard to get loans, she said.

Prospective customers are just looking and in no rush to sign a contract. They are no longer grateful for a contractor calling them back. In today's perilous times, "they want you to provide a sense of security and help them make the rough decisions."

Thanks to the Internet, today's customers are also "better informed than ever" about products and can easily check out the track records of the remodelers they might consider hiring.

Customers "are looking for the biggest bang for the smallest buck. There is no more keeping up with the Joneses. They are looking at the contractor for guidance," and are searching for products that are "serviceable" and not at "the highest end."

Swapping Horses

As a result of the slowdown, remodeling companies have typically been shifting down, for example, from production to custom remodeling, from custom to full service, from full service to specialty remodeling, from specialty jobs to replacement contracting and from replacement to handyman jobs.

However, this process of "swapping horses" requires making fundamental changes in the business that are impeded by legacy issues.

Remodelers who used to sell on their workmanship may find that this is not working so much now that the distance between price and value has narrowed.

Among other dilemmas remodelers can expect to face as they carve out a new identity for their business: with sales and profits suddenly squeezed, owners may find that they are needed in the field and can't stay in the office managing business at the same time as a shift to a greater number of smaller jobs makes management more important than it was before.

With the hope of emerging as the last man standing, remodelers may also succumb to the temptation of taking any job to keep the guys busy. That is a formula for a financial debacle. You probably have too many guys, but remedying that situation isn't easy because you have so much invested in them. Employees will also have to be more flexible and able to adapt to new types of work, methods, products and clientele.

Identifying New Clients

Among other challenges of successfully transforming a remodeling business: the historical data may no longer be relevant for projecting what you need to know; production management requirements may change a lot; and estimating and pricing may have to be done in a vacuum until reliable

[continued on page 10]

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Calendar

— Meetings —

Professional Women in Building
Tuesday, October 5 @ 8:30 am
AHBA Office

Tuesday, November 1 @ 8:30 am
AHBA Office

Board of Directors Meeting
October 14 @ 3:00 pm

Parade of Homes Committee
Thursday, October 28 @ 3:30 pm

— Events —

Parade of Homes
Friday & Saturday October 9/10 & 16/17
WNC's premier homebuilding event! Pick
up your official guide at the AHBA Office or
any local Chamber to plan your trip!
Homes throughout western North Carolina

Parade of Homes Gala
Wednesday October 13
Cocktail Reception- 6:30 pm
Awards Presentation- 8:00 pm
Tickets: \$55
Crest Center & Pavilion

PWB Wine Tasting & Silent Auction
Thursday November 18
Tickets: \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door
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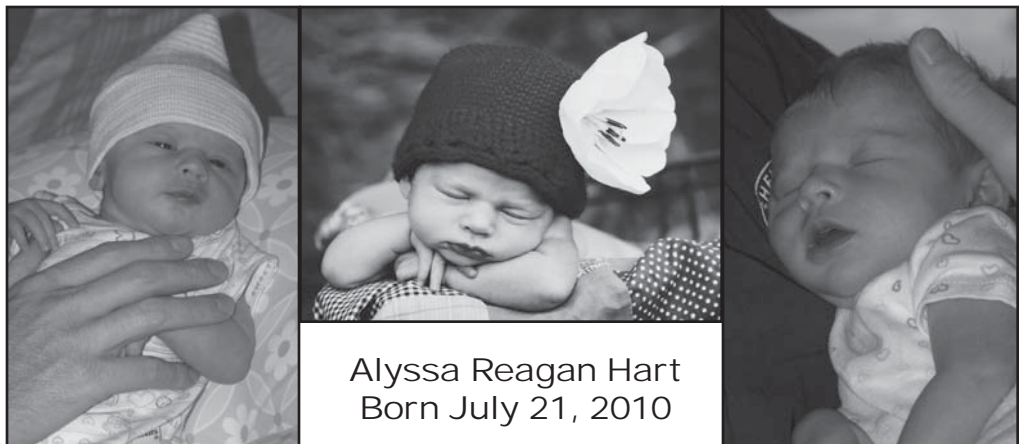
OCTOBER

— Education —

Asheville Home Builders Institute
The AHBA is looking for members to join our education committee! If you are interested
in determining the educational courses offered by AHBA for 2011, be sure to join this
exciting committee. Please notify the AHBA directly by emailing office@ashevillehba.
com.

Congratulations to KC & Flave - New Baby Arrives!

The AHBA is excited to announce the arrival of Alyssa Reagan Hart, a beautiful little girl born July 21 at 2:30 am to AHBA Marketing & Communications Director, KC Hart and her husband Flave! Weighing in at 4 lbs. 11 oz. and 17 inches long, the new arrival is a healthy new addition to the AHBA! The new family is doing great and we are excited to have KC back in the office. Congratulations to the Hart Family!



Alyssa Reagan Hart
Born July 21, 2010



September's Tipping Point *President's Message by Richard Soderquist*

September has marked the tipping point in the pivotal ebb and flow of our markets. Local permits being acquired is on the upswing and many companies are seeing modest increases in their revenues. We have been over stimulated with the news of how the Tea Party has influenced our voting and the impact that it has had on each of us. Employment numbers have gained some ground, but the talk on the street is just above neutral and the media is enthralled with negetiva. Wow - do you find it difficult to remain positive with all the negative being reported and the entire positive being overlooked? We shouldn't because we are smart, intuitive, and have learned to tune out and filter out the static that fills our lives. Besides, we are so engaged in making our businesses successful we hardly have time to dwell on the negative. Our challenge is avoid tuning out too much and missing things that really matter to us. Stick with a plan that works and support causes that brings us financial benefit and personal rewards.

Your leadership team here at AHBA has had our own share of challenges, we are certain to face many in the months to come. I must praise your Board of Directors for the wisdom, foresight, and responsiveness they have shown at every juncture. This particular Board has an uncanny ability to make tough decisions and then carry them out in a timely manner. Leadership and direction from my perspective appear seamless. The nominating committee recently recommended to the Board that Skip Brewer be nominated for the President position for 2011. His nomination received a unanimous vote. I am personally thrilled at Skip's decision and at the Boards wisdom to recognize Skip's leadership. He is part of a team that truly has your best interests in mind in every decision made.

We have recently completed our special membership drive and the numbers at this time continue to come in. Many of you make an effort to recruit new members all year long and we try to recognize you and emphasize the importance of this action. Let me thank each of you personally for your efforts. We will continue as a Board calling every member around the time of your renewal to ask again for your support and thank you for renewing your membership.

We have successfully opened many doors for our association with hard work, dedication, and persistence. We have opened those doors through strong leaders who are not only business minded, but also exercise a willingness to give to the community. We are looking for those folks to serve on the Board of Directors who would be a good fit to an already strong mix of character and action. Please make those recommendations of fellow members to your nominating committee either through any Board member or me.

Have a great October, enjoy the Parade and I look forward to visiting with many of you at the Parade Banquet.

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[builders tips]

Builders' Tip: Building a Blueprint Clipboard For 36-Inch Wide Building Plans

This tip was born out of the frustration of not being able to find a commercially available clipboard big enough to accommodate a 24-inch by 36-inch set of building plans. After making one too many sets of prints unreadable because I had to hold them down with 2x6 blocks, I finally decided to build a clipboard and headed to the hardware store for supplies — including two sets of inexpensive, spring-loaded screen-door hinges.

Here's what I did:

As shown in the accompanying drawing, I screwed the hinges to a piece of scrap birch plywood left over from a cabinet job.

I attached each pair of hinges to a 2-inch by 22-inch clip.

I screwed the spring-loaded leaves of each hinge to the plywood back through blocks the same thickness as the clips.

To counter the strength of the hinges, I snagged two handles left over from the same cabinet job and affixed one to each clip.

To smooth the edges of the clipboard, I ran the backing through my router table with a roundover bit.

Then I drilled three holes — one centered, two on 16-inch centers — to hang the board.

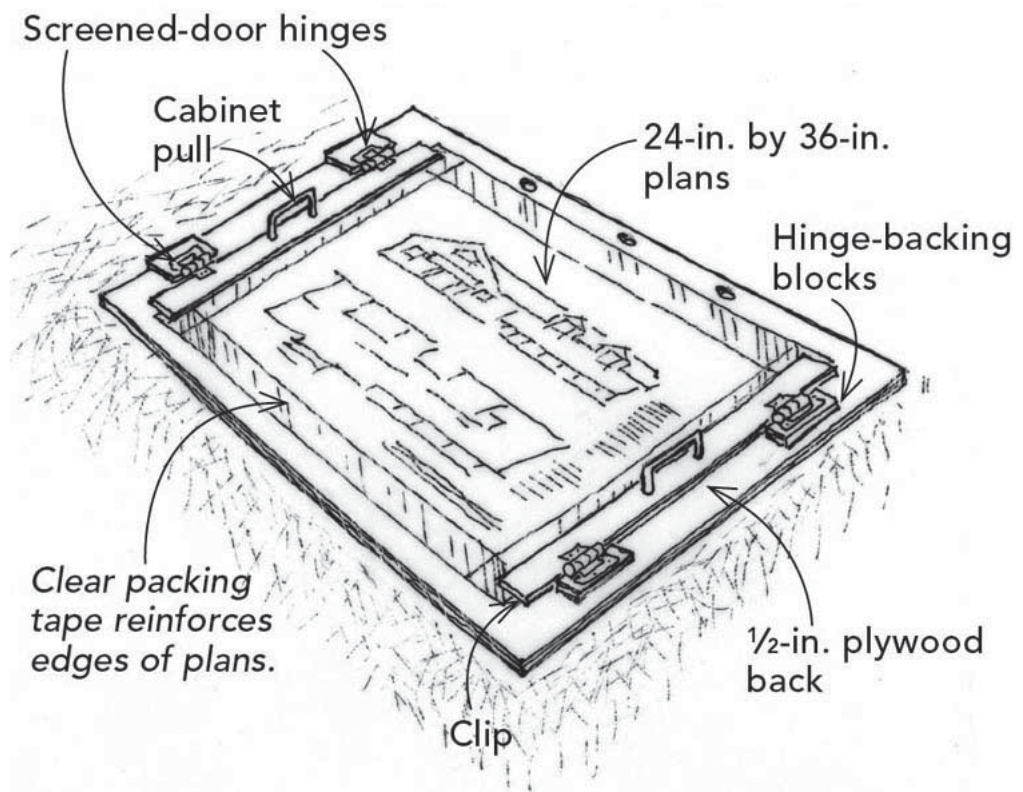
The result is a pretty handy tool that keeps my blueprints from blowing all the way to the next development. It has survived two houses so far — and attracted more than a few suggestions that I should put a patent on it.

One last tip: Use wide, clear packing tape around all the edges of your prints to prevent tears from starting on the edges. You only have to put the tape on one side. The tape works almost as well as laminating the prints and it's much cheaper.

— Ben Miller Kalona, Iowa

Tips & Techniques provided by
Fine Homebuilding.

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New Member Orientation Attendees

The following individuals/companies are new members of the AHBA. Please be sure to say hello at the next AHBA event and welcome them to our Association Family!

Acanthus Interiors - Heather Allen
 Atelier 359 - Leslie McCormick
 Athos Properties – John Moutos
 Bella Hardware & Bath - Jeff Goodridge
 CertaPro Painters - Bryan Chambers
 Ductmasters - Marshall Adams
 Energy Pros – Phillip Richardson
 General Equipment Rental - Craig Franz
 Harmony Interiors - Scott Varn
 Insignia Painting LLC - Tyler House
 Mercer Design Group - Eric Allen
 Milestone Contracting, LLC - Dustin Penland
 Mountain Marble & Granite, Inc. - Hank Strauss
 PlumbSmart Technologies - Don Hildebrand
 Talli Roberts Interior Design LLC - Talli Allen-Roberts
 The Integrity Design Group – Charlene Cook
 Waste Pro of North Carolina - Tim Petree
 Winterwood Homes - Chad Scoggins

Q & A with the WNCGBC:

How do I know if I am purchasing “Healthy” Paints?

Paint has three components: pigment, the binder or the carrier or solvent. Pigments add Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) to the base paint, so actual VOC emissions are usually higher than what is listed on the base paint. The darker the shade, the more pigment that is added, and therefore darker paint contains more VOCs. If you need to paint with dark colors, select a low-VOC product that includes zero- or low-VOC pigments. Check the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for the toxic substances such as cadmium, chromium and mercury. Many paints are made with other toxic substances and chemicals that come from nonrenewable resources or are energy-intensive to produce, so even zero-VOC paints have an affect on the environment. Look for paints that meet the “GS-11” paint standard (identified by the Green Seal (GS) logo, or check their website for a complete list). Green Seal’s paint certification prohibits numerous non-VOC compounds, including heavy metals, carcinogens, and ozone-depleting compounds.

Natural paints are made mostly of renewable materials such as citrus oil, lime, clay, linseed oil, casein, and chalk and are a healthier, more environmentally friendly alternative than latex. Natural paints do not contain petroleum products, though they may contain VOCs from ingredients like citrus-based solvents. Milk-based paint, made from milk protein, is probably the simplest, least toxic and least environmentally damaging paint. It contains no VOCs, lead, formaldehyde, oils, or biocides. The drawback to natural paints is that they generally cost more, take longer to dry and may require extra prepping.

Adapted from: <http://greenhomeguide.com/know-how/article/selecting-green-paint>.

The Western North Carolina Green Building Council (WNCGBC) is a community partner of the Asheville Home Builders Association.

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MEMBER NEWS

Share your accomplishments, awards, and announcements with fellow members. Send your news to kc@ashevillehba.com and we will be glad to include it in the newsletter!

CE Courses Offered by AHBA Members

Join Cox Industries & Henson Building Materials for a Free 7 hour CE Class at Asheville Home Builders in Swannanoa, NC.

Date & Time: November 3, 2010, Wednesday, 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Location: Asheville Home Builders Association Education Room

AIA/LU Approved - 1 Sustainability & 6 HSW Credits

Contact: Jeff Wolfe today 828-669-9602, jwolfe@hensonbuildingmaterials.com

A series of continuing education classes will be offered at Salon Blue Ridge on November 12th. RSVP by November 1st to Maria Aponte at maponte@salonblueridge.com.

8:30-9:30 am: Classical Orders of Architecture and how they combine with moulding design, ornamental motifs, etc. (AIA & NKBA-approved).

10-12: Explore stone's journey from quarry to finished product (AIA & IDCEC-approved).

12-1:30 pm: Lunch

1:30-2:30: Development of the bathroom, from Roman to Modern times (NKBA & IDCEC-approved).

Visit www.AshevilleHBA.com for more information.

Carpentry Contest Accepting Entries

The N.C. Department of Labor is accepting applications for the Carpentry Contest at the N.C. State Fair on Thursday, October 21, 2010. The contest is open to high school students, and they will compete in two person teams! There is no entry fee. Each student should fill out the application form and make clear who their teammate is through a school cover letter or by stapling the applications together. The contest will fill up quickly, so get your entry done now. Call Kep Paylor @ NCHBA with any questions (1-800-662-7129).

21st Century Building Expo a Success

NCHBA hosted the eighth annual 21st Century Building Expo & Conference last week at the Charlotte Convention Center. More than 380 students participated in continuing education courses and seminars, and approximately 3,300 attendees visited the Expo Floor.

Both attendees and exhibitors reported positive results from the Expo. Many attendees said they were able to see new products that could help save their business money. Others were able to obtain their Certified Green Professional designation, one of the most popular designations NAHB offers, over the three-day educational conference.

Sign up to Sing National Anthem

NAHB members and their immediate family members are invited to enter the NAHB Star! talent contest — the online voting-style competition to find the NAHB member or family member who can best belt out the national anthem to kick off the 2011 NAHB International Builders' Show in Orlando on Jan. 12-15.

Submit entry forms and audition videos of a cappella performances of "The Star-Spangled Banner" to nahbstarinfo@gmail.com by Oct. 1. The winner will sing the national anthem during the Grand Opening Ceremonies on Wednesday, Jan. 12.

For more information about the NAHB Star! competition and rules, visit www.BuildersShow.com/Star or e-mail nahbstarinfo@gmail.com.



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First-Time Home Buyers Stoke Demand for Smaller, Less Expensive Homes

A growing segment of the housing market, first-time home buyers are contributing to an increase in demand for smaller and less expensive new homes, according to research from economists at NAHB.

Delving into data from the most recent biennial American Housing Survey, which was conducted by HUD and the Census Bureau in 2009, the study, "Characteristics of New and First-Time Home Buyers," finds that 41% of the 8.4 million households who bought a home between 2007 and 2009 were first-time buyers.

The market share of first-timers was up from 35% in both 2005 and 2007. Although some of the demand was fueled by the initial version of the home buyer tax credit in mid-2008, which was specifically targeted to those buying a home for the first time, the upward trend is expected to continue as children of baby boomers — members of a generation that is larger than their parents' — move into their household formation years in the period ahead.

Although new housing is significantly more expensive than the existing housing stock, 13% of first-time buyers between 2007 and 2009 purchased new homes. By comparison, 17% of all the homes sold during that period were new.

Competing with foreclosures and large house price declines in the existing home market, new homes lost ground disproportionately during the housing downturn, falling from a 21% share of the homes sold in both 2005 and 2007.

The average market value of a new home purchased was more than \$315,000, compared to more than \$238,000 for existing homes. Less than half as many new homes as existing homes were purchased for less than \$150,000 — 19% compared to 41%, respectively. On the other end of the price spectrum, 10% of new homes were purchased for \$600,000 or more, compared to 6% of existing homes.

First-time buyers for the two years of the study had an average age of 34, compared to 46 for those trading up. Sixty-two percent of the first-time buyers were under age 35, while only 6% were over 55.

The average income of first-timers was over \$67,000, about 30% below the average household income of trade-up buyers of \$97,000.

About half of the first-time buyers earned less than \$60,000; a third earned between \$60,000 and \$99,999; and about 18% earned \$100,000 or more. Almost twice as many trade-up buyers had incomes of at least \$100,000.

About two-thirds of first-time buyers were white, non-Hispanics, compared to 82% of trade-up buyers. Of the remaining third, 12% of the first-time purchasers were black, non-Hispanic; 11% were Hispanic; 8% were Asian and 2% were some other race or ethnicity.

Following a steady decline from 2.87 persons in 2001, the average household size for first-time home buyers was 2.58 persons in 2009. This was slightly less than a 2.71 average among trade-up buyers, a group that experienced a similar decline in household size since the start of the decade.

The average size of first-time buyer households has been on the decline because of a rise in the number of single-person households from 18% in 2001 to 22% in 2009 and a decline in those comprised of married couples with children from 33% to 26% over the same period.

Nineteen percent of the first-time buyer households in 2009 were married without children and 8% were single-parent households.

Trade-up buyers were more likely to be married than first-time buyers. About 7% more trade-up buyers were married without children and about 8% more were married with children.

First-timers bought homes with an average market value of about \$184,000, compared to more than \$297,000 for trade-up buyers.

First-time buyers bought homes averaging 1,874 square feet, significantly below the 2,549-square-foot home purchased on average by those trading up. Forty-six percent of first-timers bought homes smaller than 1,500 square feet, compared to 24% of those trading up.

The large majority of first-time buyers — 82% — purchased single-family detached homes. The remaining 18% were split evenly between single-family attached homes and multifamily condominiums.

Looking at survey findings on the reasons that buyers chose a particular home, the NAHB study notes that:

Price was a top consideration for 38% of the first-time buyers. By comparison, it was cited by 27% of trade-up buyers.

The yard or view, layout and design, quality, size and exterior of the home were all more important considerations for those trading up than households buying for the first time.

The design and layout of the home was the single most important factor for trade-up buyers — 41%. It was second most important for first-timers, cited by 36% of them.

The size of the home was a deciding factor for 25% of trade-up buyers and 21% of first-timers.

Examining survey results depicting the home-buying process experienced by buyers, the study finds:

On average, first-time home buyers looked at 15 homes before making their purchase, similar to trade-up buyers, who looked at 16. Half of the first-time buyers looked at 10 or more homes, but 10% looked at only one home before making their purchase.

Sixty-three percent of first-timers used their savings as the source of their downpayment, down from 72% in 2001, but up from 57% in 2007.

Twenty-two percent of those buying a first home had no downpayment — down from a peak of 25% in 2007, reflecting a tightening of credit standards in the mortgage market.

Forty-two percent of trade-up buyers used the sale of their old home as the downpayment and 36% used their savings. Twelve percent made no downpayment.

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[member news]

August Builder After Hours Showcases Technology

The Builder After Hours held at Hi-Tech Integrated Systems on August 26 showcased the many ways that their company can bring technology into your building projects. Their showroom boasts an intricate media room, with all the bells and whistles including theater style seating, walled in speakers and remote control *everything*. Close to 100 AHBA members and guests attended the event, where Wally Capps (Hi-Tech's owner) wowed the crowd with his delicious home cooking. Prizes were given from Hi-Tech and Sunny Hill Nursery, a new AHBA member who helped set up the outside festivities of the event. Hi-Tech's newest employee and AHBA member, Angela Ramsey, was seen giving tours of the showroom and explaining the benefits of high end technology in today's homes. With a convenient location close to downtown, you can quickly stop in to speak with one of their qualified employees to assess your needs for home technology.



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In the Know...

2010 Committees and Councils

Associates Committee

Renee Maxwell- Co-Chair

Make plans now to exhibit at and/or attend the 2nd annual AHBA Home & Garden Expo set for April 16-17 at the WNC Ag Center. The expo also features a Builder Preview Event the evening of April 15. Feedback from AHBA members, consumers and expo exhibitors provided helpful suggestions that the committee and AHBA staff have taken to heart to improve this year's expo. Exciting new features include: a 3,000-square-foot outdoor garden section showcasing landscapers, plant wholesalers and nurseries; increased advertising and promotions; guest experts for the education seminars; properly working A/C; and more! Call the AHBA office to reserve your booth space today.

Legislative Committee

Thomas McClain- Chair

The legislative committee has finished interviews with several candidates running for office. Currently we are waiting for all of our questionnaire's to be returned so that we can make our final decisions on which candidates we are going to give money to, but more importantly which ones we are going to endorse. This is the first time we are going to endorse specific candidates. The reason we have decided to endorse candidates is to help our members understand who is supportive of our industry and who is not. We will be posting candidate questionnaire's on our website as well as sending info regarding who we have chosen to endorse by the middle of October. This is an important election for our industry, please take the time to review the information we will be sending out, and please make it a point to vote in November.

Parade of Homes Committee

Steve Royster & Jason Weil- Co-Chairs

The Parade of Homes Committee is very excited about this year's Parade. We have 23 fine entries in the Parade of Homes this year. The Parade is set for the weekends of Oct. 9th-10th and Oct. 16th-17th, so get out there and support your fellow AHBA members and take a look at the excellent work they have accomplished. The Parade of Homes Awards Gala will be on Wednesday October 13th at the Crest Center. This year the event will be a Cocktail event, with a heavy hors d'oeuvres reception followed by the awards presentation. Contact the office to purchase tickets to this fun, popular event.

Professional Women in Building Council

Gina Kidder – Secretary/Treasurer

The PWB's quarterly luncheon meeting was hosted by Core Installations, who was excited to have the opportunity to show more about audio and video equipment and the different A/V services they provide.

Join us for the PWB's Wine Tasting and Silent Auction – an evening of "Wines for the Thanksgiving Table" on Thursday, November 18, 2010 from 6-8 pm at the The Wine Studio of Asheville located on 169 Charlotte St. in Asheville. Proceeds from the event will go to our scholarship fund. Each year the PWB gives a scholarship to a qualified student attending college to attain a degree in a construction-related field. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. To purchase tickets, contact a PWB member or purchase online at www.AshevilleHBA.com. Click "Pay Invoice" and fill out your information. Type "PWB" as the PO Number. If you are interested in donating items for our silent auction please contact Maria Aponte at maponte@salonblueridge.com.

The PWB has a Fan Page on Facebook, search for Asheville Professional Women in Building and follow us online! Everyone is welcome to join and if you are interested in being a part of the PWB please contact Gina Kidder with Core Installations at gina@coreaudiovideo.com.

Next meeting date:

October 5 – 8:30am @ AHBA

November 2 – 8:30am @ AHBA

December 7 – 12noon on location TBD

Build-PAC Update

Sean Sullivan- NCHBA Build-PAC Chair

Special thanks to all the Build Pac donors so far!

Alan Best, Best Built, Inc.

Amanda Ballew, more SPACE place

Angela Ramsey, Hi-Tech Integrated Systems, Inc.

Bill Hodges, Expressions In Design

Brad Kee, Kee Mapping

Brenda Dunlap, Sears Commercial

Charlene Cook, The Integrity Design Group

Chris Craddock, Carolina Drywall

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Christopher Fox, Christopher Fox Builders

Clint Farish, DRA Living

Dale Krog, Krog Homes

Damion D. Brookshire, On Time Construction & Remodeling Inc.

Dave Davis, Southern Concrete

David Rand, DRA Living

Demetri Ibarra, O & D Framing

Don Thompson, Thompson-Rhodes Builders, Inc.

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Dwayne Brome, Labor Finders of Asheville

Frank Taylor, Westall Chandley

Frank Turchi, Living Stone Construction

Gerry Stewart, Your Floor Stop

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Howard Ferree, Ferree Construction

J. Koehn, Concrete Specialties, Inc.

James Bound, Greencraft, Inc.

James Carr, Mountain Town Carpentry

Jan Coleman, J Coleman Waterproofing

Jason Weil, Retro+Fit Design LLC

Jennifer Duvall, Asheville Savings Bank

Jill Jones, Westall Chandley

Jim Demos, Demos Builders

Jim Foley, More Space Place

Jim Joly, Builder/Architect Magazine

Jim Roberston, ProBuild

John & Nancy Thompson, Thompson Properties, Inc.

John Gustafson, Gustafson Construction Co.

John S. Ray, Building Environmental Solutions

Jorg Ronke, Pella Carolina, Inc.

Josh Abrams, More Space Place

Josh McGee, Westall Chandley

Joshua Abrams, more SPACE place

Judy Dinelle, 84 Lumber

Ken Dinkins, Nova Kitchen & Bath

Kevin Jackson, Accurate Accounting

Kirk Johnson, Johnson Construction

Laura Livaudais, Preferred Properties

Lorraine Plaxico, Plaxico Architectural Illustrations

Maria Aponte, Salon Blue Ridge

Marty Williams, Foundation Specialists, LLC

Matt Sutton, Tucker Materials Inc.

Michelle Snowden, more SPACE place

Nancy Padgett, High Country Homes

Nathan Lawrence, Pioneer Construction & Development

Patti Haberstock, Beverly-Hanks & Associates

Paul Franklin, Architectural Photographer

Renee Maxwell, Progress Energy

Rich & Patty Kubica, K-Wall Poured Walls

Richard & Katherine Soderquist, Soderquist Construction

Robert Duffy, Biltmore Farms

Robert Spear, Spear & Wills Builders, Inc.

Robi Eckley, Ferguson Enterprises

Ron Bradoc, R & J Woodwork

Ron Mahaley, Southern Concrete

Ryan Mclellan, Copperwood Builders

Sean Sullivan, Livingstone Construction

Shawn Busby, Jennings Builders Supply

Skip Brewer, C. Skip Brewer AB, CGP, Custom Builder

Positive Employment Numbers

Recent employment figures indicate that there still are signs of life in the U.S. economy's recovery. The August Employment Situation report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) confirmed that the U.S. economy is on the mend, albeit slowly.

Indeed, total nonfarm payroll employment was down 54,000, a figure dominated by the loss of 114,000 temporary Census Bureau workers who have completed their work on the decennial census.

But at the same time the public sector was reducing its temporary work force, the private sector added 67,000 workers in August, the eighth consecutive monthly increase. Further, July's private sector increase was revised up 36,000 jobs to 107,000, as was the June increase, from 31,000 initially to 61,000.

The August increase included the addition of 16,800 temporary workers, which following a loss of 900 temporary jobs in July. With the exception of the July setback, temporary worker employment has been on the rise every month starting in October 2009.

The reliance on temporary workers in the private sector at this stage of the recovery indicates that employers are still uncertain about the recovery's strength — in particular, how long a rise in demand for their products and services will last. Temporary workers enable employers to hedge their hiring bets until they are certain that demand is sustainable.

If demand is sustained — as NAHB forecasts — many of the temporary positions in the private sector will become permanent.

Private sector job gains were realized in health care and social assistance (up 40,200) and professional and business services (up 20,000). But job losses in such areas as retail trade (down 4,900) and transportation and warehousing (down 7,400) partially offset the gains.

Employment stability and job growth — keys to housing's recovery — are needed to help boost the confidence of households that are considering buying or renting a home. NAHB continues to forecast slow employment gains for the remainder of the year as economic activity shows modest growth.

With home builders in a holding pattern due to weak housing demand, residential construction jobs fell 9,800 in August, following the loss of 15,400 jobs the month before and the 21,400 jobs lost in August a year ago. The continued decline corresponds with the slowing of single-family housing starts, down for the third consecutive month, and July's sharp drop in housing completions.

On a more positive note, total construction jobs, which include non-residential employment, rose 19,000 in August, the first monthly increase since April. However, the overall unemployment rate for construction rose to 22.5%, up from 20.7% in July.

Business as Usual

[continued frompage 1]

data from the new business becomes available. In today's market, the value of the job to the resale of the house won't be the reason clients decide to purchase a remodel but comfort is a big selling point.

Among the unique things that the remodeler can offer are expertise with the financing process, tax credits for energy-efficient upgrades, paperwork, home performance, specialty products and value engineering. Two-day bathrooms — something remodelers used to say could never be done — are popular, she said, and remodelers can help make a name for themselves by partnering with specialists in energy performance, becoming an energy auditor, establishing partnerships with vendors and initiating a less-hurried sales process.

There is a tendency for remodelers to imitate each other and go after the hot jobs, and businesses can veer in the opposite direction by going after "what's not hot, what nobody else wants to mess with." A prime example is lining up work related to the renovation, repair and painting rule recently implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Finance Is Pivotal

Also pivotal in reconstituting the business model for a tighter market is finance. Remodelers need to reduce their overhead and job-related costs. That includes asking for discounts, increasing efficiencies in the office, eliminating necessary overhead, retraining employees to make them more productive, maintaining and repairing tools instead of throwing them out and replacing them, and working out more favorable payment terms and pricing with suppliers and subs. When it comes to pricing jobs, a strategy of breaking even can lead to nowhere.

To illustrate that point, Hogdon here is an example of a remodeling job that brings in \$35,000 in income and costs \$23,000, leaving \$12,000 in gross profit. Subtracting \$10,000 in overhead brings in \$2,000 in net profit. If the identical job is repeated four more times, the remodeler has \$10,000 in net profit. However, when the sixth job comes along, for whatever the reason, the costs run over and there is zero gross profit. The \$10,000 in overhead on this last job "offsets all of the accumulated profit, bringing profit to zero." The remodeler will then need to do this job five more times to make up for the loss.

In considering various cost strategies:

"Be sure to plan for the margin you need."

"Slice and dice until you get a price you need."

"If you can't mark up materials, charge for your unique expertise."


"Test your pricing strategy."

"And never buy a job." Lowering the price will lower the margin, and "lowering margins will force you to utilize a higher volume to cover the same overhead." Another recommendation against price discounts, "they set customer expectations for more price discounts."

Use available financial tools, including Judtih Miller's forecasting tool on Remodeling magazine's website, information on this site — www.melaniehodgdon.com, and Google's "markup calculator."

When operating in a new environment, plan ahead, test the results, keep what's valid and abandon what no longer works. This should result in a new pricing model that's reliable, enabling remodelers to leverage their resources to do something different.

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PLEASE READ

In compliance with our Bylaws and the policies which have been put in place by our Board of Directors and the Membership Committee, Association procedure is to have new member applications approved by the Board of Directors and by the General Membership. Please look at the lists of all Members. If you know of any compelling reason that any applicant should not be considered for membership, please contact any AHBA staff member at 828-299-7001 or email your comments to the AHBA at info@ashevillehba.com. **All information given to the AHBA is held strictly confidential.**

- New Members -

To educate and engage new members within the association, AHBA Members are required to attend the one hour New Member Orientation as the final step in the application process.

1-800-Water Damage

Nathan Holmes
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Cleaning – Water, Mold & Sewage
Damage
SPIKE: Greg Spicer

Pending New Member Orientation*Abode Contractors LLC**

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Modular Homes
SPIKE: Steve Wallin

Cameron Builders

Mike Cameron
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Carpenters
Kitchen & Bath
SPIKE: Greg Spicer

Pending New Member Orientation*Evaristo Garcia dba Custom Drywall**

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SPIKE: Greg Spicer

Henson Building Materials

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Lumber Companies
Kitchen & Bath
SPIKE: Ryan McLellan

Henson Building Materials

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Lumber Companies
Kitchen & Bath
SPIKE: Ryan McLellan

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Alarm & Security Systems
Structured Wiring
SPIKE: Wally Capps

Blue Skies Construction & Renovation, Inc.

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Residential Remodeling – Builder
SPIKE: Douglas McKinney

Insignia Painting LLC

Tyler House
196 Walnut St.
Arden, NC 28704
828-606-3247
Painting Contractors
Additions & Remodeling
SPIKE: Chris Craddock

Pending New Member Orientation*Jack Presnell Sr.**

Jack Presnell Sr.
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Flooring & Floor Coverings
SPIKE: Greg Spicer

Pending New Member Orientation*M D Roberts & Co., Inc.**

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SPIKE: Richard Soderquist

Bella Hardware & Bath

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Hardware, Decorative
SPIKE: Chris Brock

Mercer Design Group

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Water, Sewer & Storm Drainage
SPIKE: Angie Brock

Pending New Member Orientation*Petra Seal Inc.**

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Marble, Stone, Granite & Tile
SPIKE: DJ Harrington

The Integrity Design Group

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Home Staging
Decorating & Interior Design
SPIKE: Lorraine Plaxico

Stone Gallery Granite & Marble

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Kitchen & Bath
Marble, Stone, Granite & Tile
SPIKE: Richard Soderquist

- Pending Members -

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Winterwood Homes, LTD.

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Log Homes
SPIKE: Skip Brewer

Carolina Ductmasters

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& Smoke Damage
SPIKE: Nathan Holmes

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Outdoor Power Equipment Suppliers
SPIKE: Jennifer Jones

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Landscape, Lawn & Garden
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SPIKE: Greg Spicer

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Marble, Stone, Granite & Tile
SPIKE: Skip Brewer

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Plumbing Contractors
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Sunny Hill Nursery, Inc.

Stephen Ward
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828-230-4099
Landscape Contractors
Garden Design & Installation
SPIKE: Angela Ramsey

Talli Roberts Interior Design LLC

Talli Allen-Roberts
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828-271-4350
Decorating & Interior Design
Kitchen & Bath
SPIKE: Sean Sullivan

Thomas E. Hayes Construction, LLC

Tom Hayes
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Residential Remodeling - Builder
Commercial Remodeling
SPIKE: Josh Abrams

[member news]

2010 Annual Parade of Homes and Parade of Homes Awards Gala

In partnership with our 2010 Parade of Homes builders, sponsors and advertisers we are pleased to bring to you the 29th Annual Asheville HBA Parade of Homes themed "At Home In The Mountains." The month of October brings beautiful leaves, cool crisp weather and the ever so popular Parade of Homes! With this year's Parade of Homes in full swing we would like to highlight this year's entries and sponsors below. The 2010 Parade of Homes is no exception, encompassing the craftsmanship of our builders and fine products and services of our members in 23 homes that will be on tour during both weekends of this year's Parade of Homes. With homes ranging in location, price and features, consumers are sure to find a match for whatever type of construction and products they are looking for in our area!

This event comes only once a year and brings with it a very special evening hosting our awards gala. This year's Parade Gala will be held under the stars at the Crest Mountain Pavilion. The event will feature an evening of heavy hors d'oeuvres, beverages and great networking all while honoring the best of the best in WNC homebuilding. The evening will include a special awards presentation for the 2010 entries by category as well as some other special awards. Be sure and reserve your ticket by October 6th as you won't want to miss this exciting evening! Members & Guest tickets for this event are available for \$55 each. Please contact the AHBA office today.

The Parade of Homes is made possible each year by a collective team of committee members, staff, AHBA builders and Associates. The Parade of Homes has grown to be a staple event in our WNC area and we strive to put on a stellar event that spotlights construction and our industry. Community members and visitors to our area travel in every year to be a part of this extraordinary event and we hope you will take part in supporting the Parade and it's builders this year by visiting the homes and celebrating with us at the Parade of Homes Gala on October 13, 2010.

We would like to thank our sponsors, without these dedicated companies, the Parade of Homes would not be possible! Special thanks to our featured Builder with the coveted front cover photo shot, C.Skip Brewer, AB, CGP and our Presenting Sponsor will be CWB Technologies.



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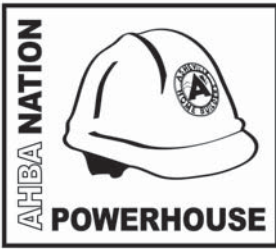
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NAHB Asks EPA to Amend Lead Rule

In a letter sent on Sept. 17, NAHB has petitioned U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson to amend the agency's Lead: Renovation, Repair, and Painting Rule "to reflect the lack of an improved EPA-recognized test kit and the economic ramifications stemming from the unavailability of such a test kit."

"Without an affordable means to determine whether a property contains regulated amounts of lead-based paint, millions of properties that have no lead-based paint hazard will be subject to costly lead-safe work practices," the letter said.

Remodelers, window installers, painters and other contractors working in homes built before 1978 are required to use federally mandated work practices and fulfill other requirements, including training and certification, if they "disturb" more than 6 square feet of painted surfaces inside or 20 square feet on the exterior of the home.

Homes with no children under the age of six or pregnant women — referred to as "target housing" by the EPA — had been exempt from the rule until July, when the agency removed the "opt-out" provision for those home owners.

Exceptions are made when there is proof that no lead paint exists in the work area — and the home remodeling industry has been waiting for the EPA to recognize a new, improved and inexpensive test kit.

The EPA told NAHB in a meeting earlier this month that no new kit is on the horizon; it had expected to roll one out by this month.

The alternative to an inexpensive test kit is having a risk assessor or lead inspector certify that the building components to be disturbed during the renovation are free of lead-based paint — using a much more expensive testing process that costs at least \$150 and up to \$2,000 per home, depending on the type of testing and the extent of lead paint present. "NAHB believes that if the true costs of the lead paint rule were considered, the agency would not have finalized the rule as it exists today," the letter said.

"NAHB strongly urges the EPA to examine the breadth of options available to reduce the costs and burdens," the letter said. At "a minimum, NAHB urges the EPA to reinstate the opt-out provision for homes built after 1960, where only 24% of homes contain lead-based paint. Under this scenario, compliance costs would be decreased, and the use of lead-safe work practices would be focused on those homes with a higher probability of the presence of lead-based paint," the letter said.

To mitigate the effects of a rule that has become "substantially more expensive and complex than ever envisioned," NAHB made four specific requests: Propose an amendment to clarify that existing test kits may be used after Sept. 1, 2010. While the EPA indicates that today's unreliable test kits are still valid, the rule is not clear.

Revise the economic analysis and reconvene with the U.S. Office of Management and Budget to ensure the costs of the rule are in line with expected benefits and that the final rule is the most cost-effective alternative.

Delay the effective date of the rule for post-1960 homes — those least likely to contain any lead paint — until an improved test kit is recognized.

Consider alternative regulatory options to reinstate the cost savings that would have resulted with the existence of a commercially available, improved test kit.

For more information, visit www.nahb.org.

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[inside this issue]

Calendar 2
 Committee Update 3
 Builders Issues 4-5
 Member News 6-14
 AHBA Nation 15

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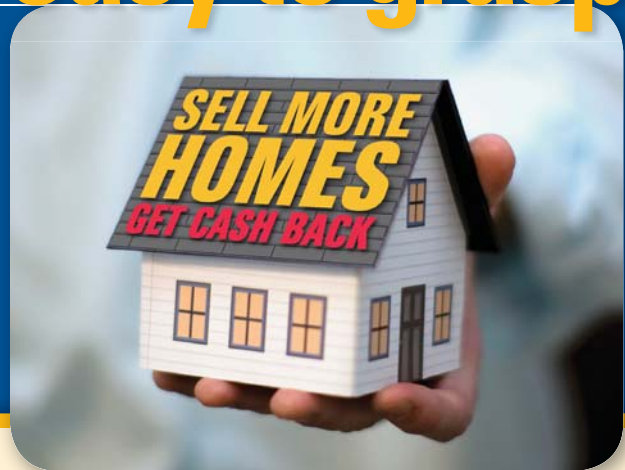
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