

# LET'S LEVEL

the official publication of the Wausau Area Builders Association



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FEBRUARY

21-23rd WABA Home Show!

27 - Membership Dinner

Meeting/Vendor Showcase

@ The Great Dane

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## OUR MISSION

The Wausau Area Builders Association chartered in 1967 and affiliated with the Wisconsin Builders Association and National Association of Home Builders, is a professional non-profit trade association. Serving the community, we represent the interests and concerns of the customer, building trades, industry suppliers, and all facets of the building industry.



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Secretary..... Shelly Talley Nelsen  
Treasurer..... Deann Zobrak  
Past President..... Russ Utech  
Association Manager..... Cara Spatz

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Norman Larson, Amber Gober

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Rachel Cota, Ashley Dupuis Bohman

Through 2022 Kevin Porter, Jeremy  
Voigt, Kyle VanOrder

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Membership..... Cory Sillars  
Nominations..... Russ Utech  
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..... Sam McLellan  
Personnel..... Kyle VanOrder  
Scholarship..... Cory Sillars  
Silent Auction..... Amber Gober  
Golf Outing..... Phil Pesanka  
Social.....

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hey Everyone,

Welcome to February! I hope you are ready for all of the exciting things that are going to happen this month.

To start off Friday February 7th will be the first WBA Member Meeting Day of the year along with the President's Installation Dinner. This will take place at the Stone Harbor Resort in Sturgeon Bay and is always an informative and exciting event.

Later in the month the 21st through the 23rd is our annual Home Show. This is a fantastic event for Builders and Associates alike to present their product or service to the community. The entire Home Show Committee has been working hard since the last event to make sure this year's show is another smashing success. As always, they are looking for volunteers to take tickets and such so reach out to Cara at the WABA office if you would be able to spare a couple hours.

Finally, for this month is a new event put on by the Parade of Homes Committee. Since their Vendor Showcase in October always goes so well, they decided to create an additional similar event for this month's Member Dinner. This is a great way for additional Associates to talk with Builders about the products they have to offer.

Oh, how could I forget, I believe there is something else happening around the 14th.....what could that be?

With everything taking place this February, I for one am glad that they gave us an extra day!

Again, thank you all for all that you do for our Association, Industry and Community. Can't wait to see you all at these events!

Alex Forer  
715-297-0559  
[alex@larrymeyerconstruction.com](mailto:alex@larrymeyerconstruction.com)

Home Show

Feb 21-23

Woodstock  
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Homes

Central WI Convention & Expo Center

# MANAGER'S MESSAGE



I don't know about you but my fingers are crossed that good ol' Punxsutawney Phil does not see his shadow this year, we could really use some sunshine to match all the excitement happening in the association!

We have had 10 new member applications since the beginning of December, 10!! Our committee are also growing and we have our first event of the year this month!

We'd love to see the associaiton grow to and stay at 200 members, we are soo close. Please welcome the new members and promote us to your friends and colleagues. The stronger we are the stronger impact we can make in our community for our industry.

The committees are such a fun way to get to know your fellow members and the association better while helping us meet our goals. If you are interested in finding out more about them, please let me know or reach out to the committee chairs who are listed on the previous page.

I look forward to being at the Home Show with many of you. If you do not have a booth and would like to participate we are still in need of volunteers!

With Gratitude,

*Cara Spatz*

## WELCOME!

### NEW MEMBERS

TDS

CliftonLarsonAllen LLP

Weichert Realtors, Jarpo Group

Keeney Home Services

Oak Grove Custom Kitchen

### RENEWING MEMBERS

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# MONTHLY MEETING - FEBRUARY 27TH @ THE GREAT DANE



Mark your calendar folks for "The WABA Membership Meeting / Vendor Showcase!!" HELD @ THE BEAUTIFUL "GREAT DANE" on Thursday, February 27th @ 2305 Sherman Street Wausau. Our event Will start 30 minutes earlier @ 5:30PM (I will have the Complimentary Soda, Water, and Beer Setup-your choice of 4 different flavors brewed right @ The Great Dane!) Cocktails / Cash Bar. Then @ 6:30 PM "Walk Around Dinner" including the popular "Potato Bar!" Rumor also has it...that Gloria has arranged for NOT 1, but 2 "Special Desserts!" YUM!

Watch for your reservation email soon...You don't want to miss this one!

Mrs. Gloria Fenhaus  
Director & Chairman of Events



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# FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- 4\_ Membership, 830am
- 4\_ Parade of Homes Committee Meeting, Noon
- 5\_ Home Show Committee Meeting, 3pm
- 5\_ Silent Auction Committee Meeting, 330pm
- 5\_ Building Youth into Builders, 430pm
- 11\_ Finance Committee, 300pm
- 11\_ Board of Directors Meeting, 400pm
- 21\_23\_ WABA HOME SHOW



## Highlights

2019 Builder and Associate of the Year were awarded at Holiday Party

## CONGRATULATIONS!



Builder of the Year  
Alex Forer

Presented by Russ Utech



Associate of the Year  
Russ Utech

Presented by Roger Lang



# Highlights

## WABA Donates to K\_9 Patriots

WABA Made 3 Donations to the K\_9 Patriots last year!



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# REMODELER'S SUCCESS ROOTED IN BUILDING A FAMILY LEGACY

ARTICLE FROM NAHB.ORG



Ray Kennamer with his daughter Kelly Godwin, who serves as co-owner of Ray Kennamer Construction Inc., and will one day take over the family business. Maintaining a successful, family-run business is often challenging. But establishing that family legacy can better enable the business to thrive. That's been the case for Ray Kennamer of Ray Kennamer Construction, Inc., in Albertville, Ala., and it's part of the reason why he was named NAHB's January Remodeler of the Month.

"I wanted to continue the legacy of quality construction in and around Marshall

County by carving a niche in the home remodeling and renovation side of the industry," said Kennamer. "I remember when I was five years old, my father took me along to a jobsite. As I was sitting in his truck, I watched him directing his men, and I knew right then I wanted to do what he was doing."

At the helm of a third-generation business, Kennamer gains inspiration and support from not only his father and grandfather who came before him, but also other area business owners and members of his local home builders association. Finding advice in those who have similar businesses has been key to his success.

"[Being a part of our local home builder's association chapter] is a tradition of excellence that was passed down, and it is important for our business to be involved and to support the local chapter," Kennamer said. "It is vital to support the local chapter to encourage this trade in our community and to promote remodeling as a profession through involvement with the local association."

Finding skilled labor is one of his biggest business challenges right now. With low unemployment and a limited number of skilled workers in the industry, it's become increasingly difficult for Kennamer to find employees with the right skill sets and values that his family instilled in him. But despite his challenges, Kennamer still finds great motivation and satisfaction in his work.

"At the end of the project, when the customer is satisfied with the project and gives us a big hug, that is what motivates me the most and lets me know we have succeeded," he said.



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# Trends in Housing Conference

March 5, 2020

The Ingleside Hotel, Waukesha



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In lieu of WBA Advocacy Day, join us for our inaugural Trends in Housing Conference. Agenda is jam packed with speakers who will discuss important trends and outlooks as it pertains to the housing industry.

#### Agenda

9:00 AM - Check-In & Continental Breakfast

10:00 AM - Workforce Housing Shortage, Kurt Paulsen; UW Dept. of planning and Landscape Architecture

11:00 AM - Trends in Energy Efficiency & Smart Home Technology, Joe Nagan; Focus on Energy (1.5 credits free for dwelling contractor license)

12:30 PM - Lunch

1:30 PM - Wisconsin Workforce & Economic Outlook, Dennis Winters; WI Dept. of Workforce Development

2:30 PM - Housing Outlook Forecast, Robert Dietz; Chief Economist, NAHB

3:30 PM - Cocktail Hour

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# ADVOCACY DIGEST



## Uniform Dwelling Code Council Meets for First Time Since December 2018

In December 2019, the Uniform Dwelling Code Council (UDC Council) reconvened for the first time since December 2018 and the first time since Governor Tony Evers took office. The council's first order of business was to elect a chair and vice chair for the next two years and unanimously reelected two WBA members; Mike Coello and Mary Schroeder respectively.

During the meeting, staff from the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) were also reminded of webpage that allows anyone to suggest a code change for consideration by the UDC Council. This will ensure that at the next meeting, the council will have the opportunity to review any comments that have come in from December 2018 – December 2019 which will hopefully result in a longer, in-person meeting.

Other than the reelection of Coello and Schroeder to again lead the UDC Council, the council did not take up any other matters that would change the current one- and two-family building code. In a conversation after the council meeting, Chair Coello indicated his desire have an in-person meeting of the council during the first quarter of 2020 to address several issues that have been previously discussed which include: concrete foundation inspection and code issues, tweaks to the current deck code, and changes to the code related to stairways and elevated areas.

## Session Likely to End March 2020

All signs are pointing to both houses of the legislature wrapping up their legislative session by the end of March 2020 according to statements by State Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald.

At a recent event, Speaker Robin Vos' chief of staff stated the state assembly was looking to possibly adjourn sometime in February of this year. In past years under Vos' leadership, the assembly has wanted to conclude their floor period in February, but the last few sessions have extended into March.

Whether it is February or March, there are only a few days remaining to get some additional items completed before things wrap up on the 2019-2020 session of the Wisconsin Legislature.

Don't miss the inaugural "Trends in Housing Conference" on March 5

On March 5, WBA will be holding its first ever "Trends in Housing Conference" conference at the Ingleside Hotel in Pewaukee.

Early bird pricing for members (\$65) and nonmembers (\$75) is now open at [wisbuild.org/wba-events/2020/housing](https://wisbuild.org/wba-events/2020/housing).

Please sign up today for this brand new offering from WBA and generously sponsored by the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago.



# From NAHB Housing Starts Finish 2019 Strong

Total housing starts increased 16.9% in December to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.61 million units, according to a report from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development and Commerce Department. This is a 13-year high for housing starts.



The December reading of 1.61 million starts is the number of housing units builders would begin if they kept this pace for the next 12 months. Within this overall number, single-family starts increased 11.2% to a 1.06 million seasonally adjusted annual rate. The multifamily sector, which includes apartment buildings and condos, increased 29.8% to a 553,000 pace.

Total housing starts for 2019 were 1.29 million, a 3.2% gain over the 1.25 total from 2018. Single-family starts in 2019 totaled 888,200, up 1.4% from the previous year. Multifamily starts in 2019 totaled 401,600, up 7.3% from the previous year.

“The solid housing production numbers are in line with strong builder sentiment, supported by a low supply of existing homes, low mortgage rates and a strong labor market,” said NAHB Chairman Greg Ugalde.

“The year ended on a high note with solid gains in single-family and multifamily production,” said Danushka Nanayakkara-Skillington, NAHB’s Assistant Vice President of Forecasting and Analysis. “And while the December estimates will likely be revised down, the trend moving forward is still positive.”

On a regional and year-to-date basis, combined single-family and multifamily starts in December are 3% higher in the Northeast and 8.6% higher in the South. Starts are down 0.8% in the Midwest and 4.7% in the West.

Overall permits, which are a harbinger of future housing production, decreased 3.9% to a 1.42 million units annualized rate in December. Single-family permits decreased 0.5% to a 916,000 rate while multifamily permits also fell 9.6% to a 500,000 pace.

Looking at regional permit data on a year-to-date basis, permits are 13.4% higher in the Northeast, 0.1% higher in the Midwest, 5.1% in the South and 0.1% higher in the West.



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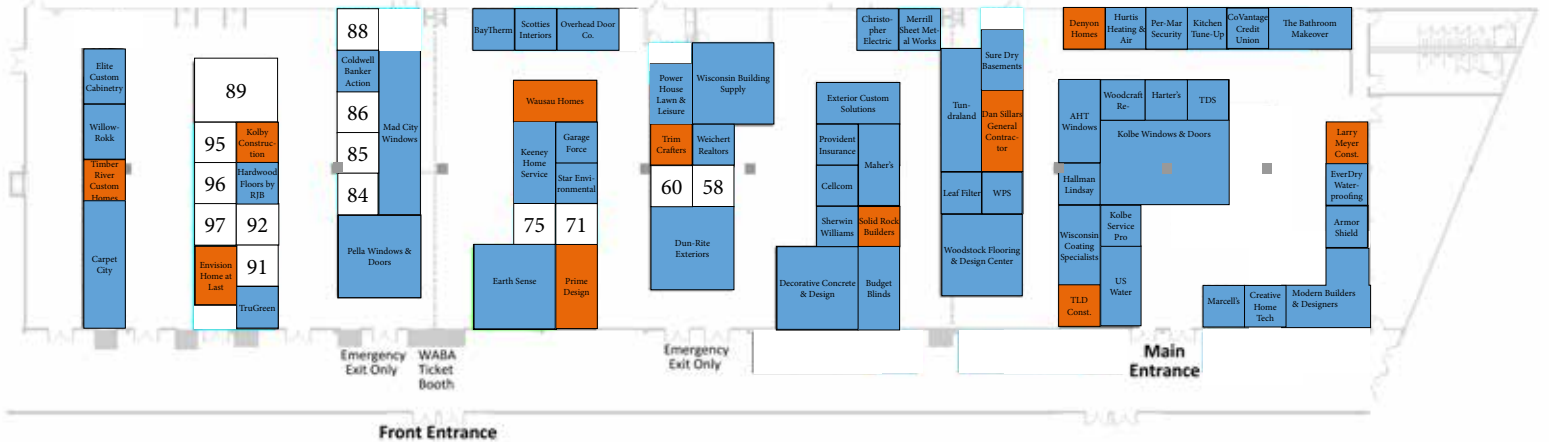


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