

LET'S LEVEL

the Official Publication of the Wausau Area Builders Association



Celebrating 50 years

APRIL 2017, VOLUME 36

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Apr. 27 | Silent Auction
at Weston Lanes |
| May 18 | Membership Dinner Meeting
at The Elk's Lodge |
| June 6-11 | Parade of Homes |
| June 23 | Golf Outing |
| July 20 | Woodchucks Game |
| Aug. 17 | WABA Picnic
at Marathon Park |
| Aug. 18 | Sporting Clay Shoot |
| Sept. 16 | Grand Celebration Banquet
at The Hoffman House |
| Oct. 19 | Parade of Homes Kick-off
& Table Top
at the Great Dane |
| Nov. 16 | Election of Officers/Directors
at Ferguson's |

2017 SPRING

parade
OF HOMES

JUNE 6-11 • 12 HOMES



**Thursday,
April 27, 2017**

**Weston
Lanes**

SILENT AUCTION

more information inside

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.



801 South 24th Ave.
Wausau, WI 54401
Phone (715) 842-9510
www.WausauAreaBuilders.com

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Vice-President Cindy Zuleger
Secretary Shelly Talley-Nelsen
Treasurer Julie Rajek
Past President Russ Utech
Business Manager Carolyn Wilde

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Through 2017: Gloria Fenhaus, Kyle VanOrder,
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Koenig, Travis Hoffman; Through 2019: Alex Forer,
Travis Hoffman & Sid Sorensen

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Marketing Lana Mohs
Membership Alex Forer
Nominations Russ Utech
Parade of Homes Travis Hoerman/Sam McLellan
Personnel James Wanserski
Scholarship Cory Sillars
Silent Auction Amber Gober
Golf Outing Phil Pesanka
Sporting Clay Alex Forer & Larry Meyer
Website Warren Pope
Facebook Kyle VanOrder & Sara Gast



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hello Everyone,

Spring has sprung with April showers and road limits and mud at our jobsites!

I'd like to thank Shelly Tally-Nelsen for stepping up and doing a super job making our Home Show in February a big success. We have a strong commitment for exhibitors for next year already to go along with our plans to improve the Show even more. Excellent job everyone.

We will have 12 homes in the Parade of Homes this year! Thank you to the builders that are participating. Hopefully we will have great weather and an increased attendance again this year. Please promote the Parade at your business. It will be June 6-11 this year.

April is the Silent Auction to help promote Builder related issues at the State Capital with our Legislators. You already have gotten an email from Amber and her committee regarding donating an item for the auction and attending the event as well. Besides the Auction, we will have another special Anniversary raffle with an Easter Bunny theme this time. Please try to attend to get to know the other members and have a great time socializing and networking while we support the Building Industry.

It is with heavy hearts and our deepest sympathies that we remember the victims of the tragic shootings on March 22. We pray that the power and love of the Holy Spirit come to the families of Diane Look, Karen Barclay, Sara Quirt Sann, and Officer Jason Weiland. Although we do not understand why this tragedy has taken place, we do know that because of Jesus and God's love and grace for all of us, that these four individuals are now resting for eternity in heaven.

Give your family a big hug and thank our heavenly father for each day that he allows us to be together and walk on this earth that he created for us.

HAPPY EASTER to everyone!!!

Cory Sillars, 2017 WABA President

With Sympathy ...

We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the families of Erv Huckbody who passed away on March 1st at the age of 93. Erv was a charter member of our association.

MEMBER INFORMATION

NEW MEMBERS

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RENEWING MEMBERS

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REI Engineering Inc.
Snowbelt Fireplace & Stove
Stratford Homes Ltd.
TW Masonry LLC
Wausau Supply Company



*We are
thinking of you
and wish you well!*

Many of you have probably already heard that our Past President, Russ Utech has been in the hospital for over a month now. Russ is very active in our association and his absence has not gone without notice. While we appreciate all he has done for us, our biggest concern is his health. So, Russ, we wish for you to get better. We'll be here when you get back and we'll join you for that beer!

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APRIL

2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4 Home Show Committee Meeting - 4:00 pm	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 POH Committee Meeting - 12:00 pm	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 BOARD MEETING - 4 pm	19	20	21 ITEMS FOR NEWSLETTER DUE	22
23	24	25	26 Membership Committee Meeting at 4:30 pm	27 Silent Auction	28	29
30						

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MAY

2017

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2 POH Committee Meeting - 12:00 pm Home Show Committee Meeting - 4:00 pm	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 BOARD MEETING - 4 pm	17	18 Dinner Meeting	19 ITEMS FOR NEWSLETTER DUE	20
21	22	23	24 Membership Committee Meeting at 4:30 pm	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

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HOME SALES

Reprinted from NAHB website

NEW HOME SALES UP 6.1% IN FEBRUARY



Sales of newly built, single-family homes continued to expand, rising 6.1% in February to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 592,000 units, according to newly released data from HUD and the Census Bureau.

"February's increase in new home sales is consistent with builders' growing confidence in the housing market," said NAHB Chair Granger MacDonald. "Builders are encouraged by heightened consumer activity and by the expectation that regulatory costs will decline in the year ahead."

"The uptick in mortgage interest rates is having a minimal effect on new home sales thus far," said NAHB Chief Economist Robert Dietz. "Ongoing job creation, rising household formations and affordable home prices should keep the market on an upward trajectory in 2017."

The inventory of new home sales for sale was 266,000 in February, which is a 5.4-month supply at the current sales pace. The median sales price of new houses sold was \$296,200.

Regionally, new home sales increased 30.9% in the Midwest, 7.5% in the West and 3.6% in the South. Sales fell 21.4% in the Northeast.

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MARCH DINNER MEETING



CONGRATS TO OUR WINNERS ...

The Building Youth into Builders / Youth Apprenticeship Job Fair that was held at the Home Show in Feb. had a drawing for the students who took part. The winner is Eli Duerkop.

Our membership outreach program held in Merrill in March also had a drawing. That winner is Ross Kaiser.

ADVOCACY DIGEST



Great showing for Advocacy Day at the Capitol

On March 16 members and staff from across the state joined forces to descend upon the Wisconsin State Capitol for the 2017 WBA Advocacy Day at the Capitol.

Members were first joined by fellow WBA member and

President of the Wisconsin State Senate Roger Roth. Senator Roth thanked members for making the trip to Madison to advocate for sound public policies that make sure Wisconsin families have good housing options. Roth also commented that it was important for members to make trips like this because “politics is a participatory sport.”

Members were brought up to speed on the issues to discuss with members of the legislature which included:

- 1.) Support for various provisions included in the WI State Budget
 - Elimination of state forestry tax on property tax bill
 - Further reduction of the income tax burden on WI families
 - Merging the duties of the Contractor Certification Review Board & Building Inspector Review Boards into the Uniform Dwelling Code Council
 - Approval of a \$4 million expenditure for the DSPS to upgrade information technology in the department, including the creation of a “state REScheck”
- 2.) Improvements requested to a provision in the WI state budget calling for the capping of the historic rehabilitation credit at \$10 million
- 3.) Support for the current draft of the Commercial Building Code & Electrical Code

Governor Walker also joined the group to give members an update on his recently introduced state budget, and to take questions from the group as well. One of the items that Governor Walker touched upon was the merger of the Contractor Certification Council and the Building Inspector Review Boards into the Uniform Dwelling Code Council which is part of the WBA Advocacy Agenda for 2017-2018.

After lunch and meetings at the capitol with legislators and staff, the day continued with a panel discussion between Christian Schneider of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and John Nickels of The Capitol Times where they discussed and debated a number of key issues facing Wisconsin and the nation.

Finally, members attended a cocktail hour to conclude the day, catching up on the results of their meetings.

Thank you to all of the members who attended Advocacy Day at the Capitol this year. We’d also like to issue a big thank you to local Executive Officers and government affairs staff members who partnered with WBA staff on the planning and execution of this event in 2017.

Those in attendance of the event this year will be receiving a short questionnaire via e-mail soon to help plan the event in 2018.

Governor Walker releases his state budget

In an address before both a joint session of the Wisconsin Legislature on February 8th, Governor Walker laid out his vision for the next two years and hit on the high points of his state budget bill that legislators will soon begin deliberating on.

Some of the highlights of the speech included increased funding for K-12 schools, a property tax cut, an income tax cut, a cut to tuition, increases to local municipality road aids, and no tax increases. The documents released by Governor Walker highlighting his state budget highlighted his “Reform Dividend” that will provide a total of \$592.7 million in tax relief for “our hard-working taxpayers.”

Some of the top items in the just-released budget that hopefully will be good news for both WBA members and homeowners include:

- Elimination of the state forestry tax on property tax bill to provide additional property tax savings to Wisconsin families. This was one item contained in a WBA study a number of years ago that looked at ways to decrease the property tax burden in Wisconsin.
- Further reducing the income tax burden on Wisconsin families that will save the typical family \$139.
- Merging the duties of the Contractor Certification and Building Inspector Review Boards to the Uniform Dwelling Code Council. This was one of the items in the WBA Advocacy Agenda and we are pleased that Governor Walker included this in this budget proposal.
- A \$4 million expenditure for DSPS to upgrade information technology at the department. This increased funding could allow for DSPS to work with an outside vendor to build a “state REScheck.” so the one and two family building code in Wisconsin will no longer be mandated to make changes to comply with unnecessary mandates by the U.S. Department of Energy (another item contained in the WBA Advocacy Agenda).
- Elimination of requirements by an owner of a rental unit to

have the building inspected by DSPS and be issued a certificate stating that the unit meets the minimum energy efficiency standards.

Additional documents are now being created by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau that will provide additional details on the items above and all aspects of the governor's budget bill. Once those summaries are available, the Joint Committee on Finance will hold public hearings and briefings on the topics, and eventually they will start taking votes to affirm some aspects of the governor's budget and make changes in other areas.

No Duffy for US Senate in 2018

Recently, Congressman Sean Duffy announced that he would not give up his congressional seat to challenge U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin in 2018.

In a statement released by his campaign, Duffy said of his decision that, "after much prayer and deliberating, Rachel and I have decided that this is not the right time for me to run for Senate." Duffy concluded by stating: "I'll continue to work my heart out for the families of the 8th district, and I'm excited about the great things we will accomplish with our united Republican government."

Congressman's Duffy's announcement was the one that most election observers were watching, because his decision was likely to have the greatest effect on who may or not be in to join the GOP primary field.

The names most often mentioned as considering a bid for U.S. Senate on the republican side include State Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald, State Representative Dale Kooyenga, State Senator Leah Vukmir, businessman and Marine veteran Kevin Nicholson, businessman and former candidate Eric Hovde, and Wisconsin Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch.

Candidates typically hate contested primaries because they argue that the time and money expended upon beating each other up could better be spent targeting the the opponent of the other party. However, some election watchers argue that competitive primaries force candidates to work harder earlier, helps to raise the name identification of candidates, and focuses a negative light on the general election opponent.

With the large number of candidates considering a GOP bid for U.S. Senate, and with the recent announcement that Congressman Duffy will not be running, it appears that it is highly unlikely the field will be cleared for only one chosen republican candidate to get a free ride in the primary election.

WBA joins coalition to repeal the personal property tax with caveat

Recently, the WBA was approached by a coalition of various business groups who are advocating for the elimination of the personal property tax during this legislative session. The coalition's work this session contained some key language

which made it easier for WBA to support their efforts.

Past proposals to eliminate the personal property tax in Wisconsin had proven tricky because many (including the WBA) feared that the revenue lost by municipalities would simply be shifted to residential property taxpayers. This session, the Coalition to Repeal Wisconsin's Personal Property Tax includes specific language to avoid a tax shift to residential property taxpayers.

The revised position statement for this session is that "the coalition supports exempting new equipment from the personal property tax effective in tax year 2017, and a phase-out of the remaining items subject to the personal property tax over 10 years. The coalition does not support a shift to real property taxes, and further believes municipalities should be reimbursed for lost revenue."

It is likely that this effort will be discussed this session as a standalone bill, and as part of the discussion in the Joint Committee on Finance when they review and revise Governor Walker's state budget draft.

DNR Split looks like a non-starter

During the most recent WBA Advocacy Group meeting, one of the topics discussed was a proposal to split the functions of the Department of Natural Resources into various state agencies. As reported in the last Blueprint, member reaction to this proposal was very mixed, and the decision was made to monitor the legislation this session.

Recently, the La Crosse Tribune reported that, when asked about the DNR split proposal, State Senate Majority Scott Fitzgerald stated that "The governor didn't do it. So I guess my point is, I don't see the Legislature going there."

Never say never when tracking issues being considered at the Wisconsin State Capitol, but it appears there is a lot of work to be done by supporters of this proposal before it would be close to being passed into law this session.

Brad Boycks

WBA Director of Government and Political Affairs
Wisconsin Builders Association@bboycks@wisbuild.org
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Visit our web site: www.wisbuild.org



ECONOMICS

Reprinted from NAHB website

SKYROCKETING LUMBER PRICES PUT BUILDERS IN A BIND

Relations between the U.S. and Canada haven't exactly been neighborly thus far in 2017. The disputes over potential changes to the North American Free Trade Agreement are causing some serious international rifts.

Home builders are particularly concerned with the now-expired Softwood Lumber Agreement. The uncertainty surrounding a new trade agreement is impacting businesses on both sides of the border, as it was the primary culprit behind the surging lumber prices between mid-January and mid-February.

Tim Jackson, president and owner of Tim Jackson Custom Homes in Allen, Texas, says his market is already challenged with increased labor costs due to the labor shortage, and any increase in the price of materials only compounds the problem.

"Our company does fixed-price contracts so we are on the hook for any price increases from the time of the contract to the actual time of material purchases," Jackson said. "We do have a small contingency built in, but the recent price increases have far exceeded this contingency. The bottom line is that our margins will be eroded."

It's a similar situation for Kurt Dinnes, senior partner of Sun Custom Homes in Oklahoma City, who estimates lumber prices in his market are up about 15% from a year ago.

"It's impacting us the most with our custom homes that we bid on several months ago when prices were much lower," Dinnes said. "Even then, we were trying to adjust for the inevitable price increases, but we didn't adjust high enough."



"Our dilemma is that we have to stay competitive; that's the key," Dinnes said. "So when we bid on a project, we still err on the conservative side because the last thing we want is to price ourselves out."

In a recent Eye On Housing post, NAHB's

tax policy analyst David Logan explains in greater detail why lumber prices began to skyrocket. Logan notes "the framing lumber composite price rose \$25 between February 3 and February 10, the largest one-week increase since August 2003."

In the weeks since then, buyers and traders have determined that prices "overshot lumber's true market value, and consequently they've flattened out," Logan said.

The outlook of a new agreement is "highly uncertain" at this point, according to Logan. But he predicts additional hikes looming in the near future, as more tariffs will be announced in April and again in May.

HEALTH CARE

Reprinted from NAHB website

HOUSE APPROVES NAHB-SUPPORTED ASSOCIATION HEALTH PLAN BILL



The House today approved the Small Business Health Fairness Act (H.R. 1101), association health plan legislation that would put small businesses on an equal footing with large employers and unions when it comes to negotiating lower insurance costs.

NAHB has been a long-time proponent of association health plans and continues to work with Congress to ensure that this market-based health care option remains a viable alternative for small businesses and their employees.

Of note to the home building community, the bill includes an amendment which clarifies that small businesses that have already established and administer association health plans, including some HBAs, can continue to operate under existing state and federal law.

Prior to the House vote, NAHB sent a letter to lawmakers designating passage of this bill as a "key vote" due to its importance to the housing industry.

The letter stated that association health plans would grant small businesses access to better and more affordable health care plans. By providing the ability to create pooling arrangements across state lines, the bill would ensure a level playing field for smaller firms that want to help their workers and their families with their health care needs.

With passage of the Small Business Health Fairness Act, the House could vote as early as tomorrow on the American Health Care Act, a comprehensive bill that would repeal and replace much of the Affordable Care Act, also commonly referred to as Obamacare.

For more information, contact Alexis Moch at 800-368-5242 x8407.



April 27, 2017

Silent & Live Auction

The annual
WABA Silent Auction
will be held
Thursday, April 27th 2017
Dale's Weston Lanes

This is a **HUGE** event for WABA and we need all the participation we can get. We are looking for businesses to donate items that we can auction off for our silent and live auction. We also need all of you to come that night and bid on the items!

Please contact **Amber Gober** at
715-847-4022 or
amber.gober@bankpeoples.com
with any questions.

Donation Form

Member Name: _____

Company Name: _____

Description of Item: _____

Retail Value of Item: _____

_____ I will deliver the item to Dale's Weston Lanes by 5:30pm the evening of the auction

_____ I cannot attend and would like someone to pick the item up at my office

_____ I will drop off item at WABA office prior to April 27th

Please return by, Friday April 14th to:

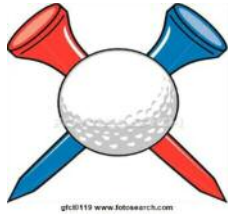
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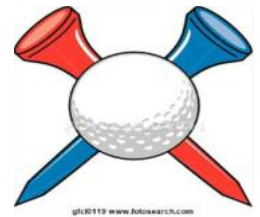


WABA Golf Scramble

Friday, June 23, 2017

10:30 Lunch/Registration

11:30 Shotgun Start



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Sign Included for all sponsors

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Putting Contest -**\$75** (\$100 prize by sponsor) _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Please send registration and payment to the above address before June 15, 2017 to secure your spot. To ensure a sign for your sponsorship please have in by June 9th.

Philip J Pesanka ***** 715-298-4186 ***** ppesanka@abbybank.com

Committee Chairman

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SAFETY

Reprinted from NAHB website

5 STEPS TO A STRONG SAFETY CULTURE ON THE JOBSITE



Saying that safety on the jobsite is a priority is very easy. Implementing a culture of safety throughout a company takes commitment.

“Construction is dangerous, but it doesn’t have to be that way if we include safety first and foremost in our operations,” said Tony Lombardi, director of safety at Centennial Contractors Enterprises Inc., a Reston, Va. consulting firm.

Lombardi offers five tips for promoting safety with employees, subcontractors and suppliers:

Lead by Example. A commitment to safety must start at the top to ensure that it remains the No. 1 priority. Employees should always see safety demonstrated by their leaders and peers. Senior management sets the example by making safety key to all strategic planning efforts and the first topic of discussion at every meeting.

Management should also engage in a thorough evaluation of every incident to discover how it happened, support the employee and family, and review historical data of the site where the incident occurred, including the status of safety inspections and prior issues to prevent future occurrences.

In addition, maintaining a department of safety professionals that includes director of safety and an executive safety officer allows a company to conduct periodic and regular training and thorough site inspections.

Empower All Employees. All employees and subcontractors must have the right and responsibility to stop work if they see an unsafe situation, even if it compromises timelines or budgets. Employees and subcontractors should feel comfortable bringing up issues and concerns so that managers can address them prior to an incident occurring.

Keeping safety local keeps it top of mind. Each jobsite should

contain safety personnel. Large projects or regions should have full-time safety managers. Small projects should appoint a superintendent or project manager to serve as the project safety officer.

Train, Train, Train. Require regular safety training. New employees should complete safety training within seven days of being hired. Within 60 days, new employees and interested subcontractors should complete the 30-hour Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training course.

Numerous training sessions, fairs and luncheons can help reduce workplace accidents.

Short weekly toolbox meetings focus on one aspect of safety each week. They should cover topics relevant to the work at that particular job site using safety lesson plans available on the company website. These meetings should be mandatory for all employees at the site.

Luncheons provide a little more depth into safety topics over a two- to three-hour period. Employees receive hands-on and lecture training and take away knowledge to help them do their job better.

Fairs require a full day and include demonstrations of safety equipment, discussion sessions, and lectures on safety issues ranging from fall protection and scaffolding to excavations and writing safety plans. The site must close for the day so that all workers on the site and in the office can attend safety training fairs.

Set Benchmarks and Goals. Set goals and objectives such as zero accidents, no lost time, education and training, performance improvement, and attitude and commitment. Track the performance of both the project team and subcontractor performance.

In addition to overarching company goals, set specific goals for specific projects before the work begins. Convey to all parties involved in the project that if an incident occurs, work will stop until the root cause of that incident is discovered and resolved.

Offer Incentives for Good Safety Practices.

Recognition programs help to foster performance improvement and loyalty, as well as increase the quality of construction projects. Recognize the efforts and results of employees and subcontractors who work hard to maintain a safe environment. Consider monetary rewards or token gifts for the sites with the best safety records as well as people using safe practices on the spot.

Establishing positive relationships with subcontractors and trust with employees goes a long way in establishing a safety culture. It gives them the confidence to come forward with issues and incidents, no matter how small, that can be dealt with prior to a major accident occurring.

Company-wide commitment and an aggressive passion for doing the right thing is the catalyst for a successful safety program. A safety culture will show through everything the company does.

For additional information on jobsite safety, contact NAHB’s Rob Matuga.

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What's in a name?



In our case, quite a bit.

A name like "Pella Windows & Doors of Wisconsin" comes with expectations. Not only do building professionals expect Pella's high-quality materials, colors, and styles, they want local insight and a work ethic worthy of Wisconsinites. Our strong values and integrity complement a true consultative approach, so your next project is worry-free, rewarding, and a good value.



Andy Bauer ABauer@pellawi.com Office: 800.242.1008 Cell: 920.461.0372



WISCONSIN
BUILDERS
FOUNDATION

2017 GOLF OUTING

Following the WBA Member Meeting Day on Wednesday, July 12th, please join us for a day of golfing for a good cause Thursday, July 13th! Your attendance will assist the WB Foundation's efforts to promote and support future builders in the state of Wisconsin by raising funds for trades student scholarships. With your help, we can ensure that Wisconsin students receive the opportunities they need!



WHEN: Thursday, July 13th, 2017

WHERE: SentryWorld Golf Course, Stevens Point

Sponsorships Available

Registration Details To Be Announced

Stay Tuned at www.wisbuild.org
