

LET'S LEVEL

the Official Publication of the Wausau Area Builders Association

**JANUARY 2011
VOLUME 31 - ISSUE 1**

celebrating
45
YEARS
of Building
our communities
together

***Watch for great
changes to come this year!***



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MISSION STATEMENT:

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 consumer, building trades, industry suppliers and all facets of the building industry.

The primary goal of our association is to provide quality, affordable housing through community and government involvement, while promoting high standards of professionalism.



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Happen For
Local People*



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Joke of the month

The homeowner was delighted with the way the painter had done all the work on his house.

"You did a great job," he said and handed the man a check.

"Also, in order to thank-you, here's an extra \$80 to take the missus out to dinner and a movie."

Later that night, the doorbell rang and it was the painter.

Thinking the painter had forgotten something the man asked, "What's the matter, did you forget something?"

"Nope," replied the painter. "I'm just here to take your missus out to dinner and a movie like you asked."

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A Note from your Executive Officer



Happy New Year, and welcome to the 45th year of the Wausau Area Builders Association!!

There have been a number of changes that have occurred with our association entering the New Year. At the December Holiday Party we welcomed Bob Marcell as our new President. Thank you to Garry Volm for his years of service on the Board and as President. He will continue to serve as the Immediate Past President.

There has been quite a bit of turnover on the board this year. First, thank you to Jerry Jarosz for his years of dedication to the Association. He chose not to run for his Local Director position again to allow for new members to get involved.

While he will no longer serve on the board, or as the Golf

Outing Chair, he will continue to serve on different committees.

Welcome to Bob Gaffney, Gloria Fenhaus and Jonathon Smith as they join Kolby Muscha and Jason Brettingen as Local Directors. Our State Directors are now Larry Meyer, Sid Sorensen, Chad Sickler, Ray Bodenheimer and Bob Marcell

Chad Sickler will be taking over the Secretary / Treasurer position for Sara Holtz. Thank you Sara and best of luck as you further pursue your degree! Bob Kulp will now serve as the Chair of the Governmental Affairs committee, and Jonathon Smith will serve as the Builder PAC Trustee on the State level.

As we start our 45th year, you can look forward to a new look for the association and a positive outlook for the future!

One new item is you are now going to be able to pay your membership dues as part of a payment plan. When your renewal letter arrives it will include the instructions, but if you have any questions before that feel free to contact the office. You will be seeing a separate email from Kristin Flamang and me with a full description of the process.

Russ Utech and the Home Show Committee is looking for volunteers to take tickets at the Home Show, so if you're interested in taking one of the two hour shifts you can contact me and we will put you on the schedule. And as a last minute reminder, if you don't have your booth secured, time is most certainly running out!!

Lastly, seeing as there is no dinner meeting this month, we will see you all in February!

— Chris Briquélet



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President's Message



I would like to start off by thanking the membership for the vote of confidence you displayed by electing me as your President. With your help and support I know we can accomplish great things so my first action is to ask for just that. There are big changes for the WBA coming in 2012 which will result in changes for WABA as well. Please support their efforts and our efforts as we implement these changes.

My key focus for this year is a "Positive Attitude" by all members. We have all heard the negative rumors that have been floating around regarding our financial status and who is to blame. You have all heard who is to blame for our declining membership. You have all heard the rumors that

WABA isn't even going to exist in a year or two. Well I am here to tell you that all of that is nothing but unfounded rumors coming from people who for whatever reason, put their best efforts into destroying this Association rather than supporting it. If you want the facts I am asking you to call me.

Our Association like any Association has enough problems to deal with from outside influences much less from problems created by its own members. We all have two choices. We can either be part of the solution or part of the problem. I am asking all of you to be part of the solution. We are not going to always agree with the direction the leadership of this Association takes, but after a course has been set I am asking every member to support whatever decision has been made. If you cannot support the decision then I am asking you to engage in a constructive conversation with those people who were involved in making the decision you are not in agreement with. They are the only ones who can explain why that decision came to be and they are the only ones who can change it.

I am ecstatic about having three new members on our Board and the new ideas they will bring with them. I am excited about the challenge that lies ahead in retaining our membership and finding new members. I am excited by the challenges of finding new fund raisers or of finding ways to get more people involved. The thought of anything that will improve our Association is exciting. But mostly I look forward to a new positive attitude at our meetings, at our events and in our conversations. That is how we are going to turn things around. I am asking each of you to help me paint a new face on the WABA and it will be smiling.

Sincerely,

— Bob Marcell



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JANUARY

2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Martin Luther King Jr.	17 BOARD MEETING	18	19	20 ITEMS FOR NEWSLETTER DUE	21
22	23	24	25 WABA OFFICE CLOSED	26 WABA OFFICE CLOSED	27 EARLY BIRD DEADLINE FOR WBA CONVENTION WABA OFFICE CLOSED	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY

2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3 HOME SHOW	4 HOME SHOW
5 HOME SHOW	6	7 COMMITTEE MEETINGS AT WABA OFFICE POH - 12 PM HOME SHOW - 3 PM	8 IBS SHOW	9 IBS SHOW	10 IBS SHOW	11 IBS SHOW
12 Lincoln's B-Day	13	14 BOARD MEETING	15 PARADE OF HOMES CONTRACT FOR 1ST HOME DUE	16 DINNER MEETING	17	18
19	20 ITEMS FOR NEWSLETTER DUE President's Day	21	22 Washington's B-Day	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

MARCH

2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6 COMMITTEE MEETINGS AT WABA OFFICE POH - 12 PM HOME SHOW - 3 PM	7	8	9	10
11 Daylight Savings	12	13 BOARD MEETING	14	15 DINNER MEETING	16 PARADE OF HOMES CONTRACT FOR 2ND HOME DUE	17 St. Patrick's Day
18	19	20 ITEMS FOR NEWSLETTER DUE	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

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We'll Tell You Why

The Wisconsin Builders Conference is right around the corner on Wednesday & Thursday Feb. 22-23, 2012 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. We've told you for months why you should attend, but now it's time to hear from your peers.

Ten builders and associates answered one question: Why do you attend the Wisconsin Builders Conference? Their responses were captured on short 1-2 minute videos that are now on YouTube, search "Wisconsin Builders Association" for the wisbuild channel (Click on the member name to go to their video link).

2012 Conference Chairman Mark Brehmer of Sterling Premium Building Systems and member of the Madison Area Builders Association noted the outstanding lineup of classes offered this year "you'll have two days to earn all the credits you need to set yourself apart or improve your business. Our classes and Vendor Showcase offer something of interest for just about any builder or associate industry professional." This is one of the main reasons the conference is open to both members and non-members of the Wisconsin Builders Association.

Brandon Bartow of Bartow Builders and member of the Manitowoc County Home Builders Association has been a vocal leader for introducing his employees and subcontractors to the value of attending the Conference. "There are many networking opportunities to meet with respected builders and trades people from across the state and get all the credits you need."

David Belman of Belman Homes in Waukesha, vice chair of the Wisconsin Builders Conference and member of the Metropolitan Builders Association is also excited about all the different courses offered this year. "Whether you are a builder, remodeler or associate, you will find classes from how to properly install a window to social media and marketing. We are also looking forward to offering our first tradeshow, will all different sorts of vendors to meet and see their great new products."

2011 WBA President Don Esposito, member of the Madison Area Builders Association remarked "over the years I have found attending the Conference to be an invaluable opportunity for networking and to meeting new vendors. Plus it is just a good time to spend with your fellow association members."

A builder member from Habitat for Humanity in Rock and Jefferson County (South Central Wisconsin HBA) Evan Thomas supervises volunteers in his work and finds "the education I get at the conference helps me stay one step ahead of questions why you have to build a house the way we have to build." Thomas also remembered "one year at conference I met the head of a company in the hospitality suites who gave me his card and offered to help our organization. You just don't make those kind of connections if you don't attend this conference."

Incoming 2012 President Gary Roehrig from Roehrig & Savola in New Holstein, and member of the Mid-Shores : "I'm looking forward to picking up the education credits, meet some old friends, some new friends and have a really good time in the middle of winter!"

Gerry Lycholat, Knudson Bros. II Remodeling out of East Troy, WI and member of the Lakeland Area Builders Association has been attending the WBA convention since 1989. "I'm a big believer in education, and the networking is fantastic, I have

friends all over the state because of it, and those relationships for sounding board or references have been priceless."

Harvey Kessel from Wisconsin Building Supply, member of Madison Area Builders Association, has been coming to the annual event for a long time. "For the first couple of years it was out of curiosity, what is in it for me? Now I want to give back to the association that has helped me be successful in my career."

Mike Check from Mike Check Builders in Cato, WI and member of Manitowoc County Home Builders Association: "I've been going to the state conference since 1985. The reason I go is for the people and the relationships that I've developed with people from all over the state."

Pam Jewell from Blenker Building Systems in Amherst, WI and member of the Golden Sands Home Builders Association is excited about the new Vendor Showcase "Blenker will be there with not one, not two but four booths this year. You will see vendors there who want to do business with you and show you new ideas and product lines. The two days of education is also outstanding this year. I know if I learn one new thing at a conference it is worth going to."

These are successful business people and long-time members who know the power of education, networking and giving back to their association. They are not keeping a secret one of the keys to their success: attending the Wisconsin Builders Conference.

Two dates to act on:

January 27, 2012 early bird registration ends

February 1, 2012 room rate discount ends

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The Wausau Area Builders Association magazine concept has become a reality! After a great deal of planning, it is my pleasure to introduce you to *Home Inspiration*. Some of you may have already been contacted directly by me about this project, and if you haven't you will be soon. I'd like to highlight just a few of the countless benefits this publication will offer you and your company as a marketing tool in the four counties covered by our Association. It will also serve as an additional marketing tool to help promote our signature events in the community, and provide additional recognition for our association.

Please take a moment to review the information and if you have any questions, comments or contributions contact me at the office, I look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas. ~ Chris Briquetet – Executive Officer

HOME *inspiration*

Free - Take One

January 2012



HOME *inspiration*

Central Wisconsin now has a home magazine offering its readers a source for design concepts, need-to-know features and photographs, and fresh resources that will inspire anyone. *Home Inspiration* targets your customer as no other media available in Central Wisconsin as it will be released prior to the WABA Home Show, the WABA Parade of Homes as well as an issue being released entering the fall season. The publications released before the events will showcase the event offering must sees, sneak peeks, maps and additional information about the event. Home Inspiration allows you to focus your message on the consumers most interested in your products and services. All of the issues include a full listing of names and contact information for all the current WABA members.

The featured articles & pictures are member contributed

Home Inspiration is available 24/7 on the WABA website

Use *Home Inspiration* as a marketing tool for your company. Copies of the publication can be available at your location besides numerous distribution locations throughout the four counties in Central Wisconsin covered by the Wausau Area Builders Association to be distributed FREE

Home Inspiration is distributed FREE to attendees of the WABA Home Show and the WABA Parade of Homes; don't miss this tremendous opportunity to maximize your advertising value.

Home Inspiration Member Rates

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Inside Cover	\$900	\$765	\$650
Inside Back	\$750	\$637	\$542
Full Page	\$500	\$425	\$361
Half Page	\$300	\$255	\$217
Quarter Page	\$220	\$187	\$159
Eighth Page	\$150	\$128	\$109

(prices are for each issue)

Please Note: The advertising rates quoted above are for camera ready ads. Contact the office if graphic design assistance is needed.

2012 HOME SHOW



Join the 2012
WABA Home Show
February 3-5
at the
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Go to www.WausauAreaBuilders.com
and click on the live interactive link to
register your booth today!

social MEDIA TIPS **for the construction industry**

Over 50 percent of social media users connect with brands. Yes, that does include big brands and industry leaders like those you'd find in the construction industry. Although many big companies are already utilizing social media in some shape or form, there are things companies in the construction industry can do to be industry leaders online as well as in business. Here are a few social media tips that are sure to lead you in the right direction with your customers:

Social Media Tip #1: Create a LinkedIn Company Page

There are over 135 million users on LinkedIn, and despite it being the third largest social network, LinkedIn still seems like that social network in the corner that people forget is there. That's why having a LinkedIn company page is so crucial. Have your sales team send prospective customers to the page to check out new products and services. Add status updates in a location that few others are doing so. The best thing about LinkedIn is that there's tons of uncharted territory, especially in the construction industry. You can really position yourself as an industry leader by taking full advantage of a company page.

Social Media Tip #2: Create a Twitter Landing Page

If you have a Twitter account (and you should), do something a little extra by linking the Twitter account to a specific landing page on your website. This allows you to customize the experience of the person who chose to follow the company and to check out your website, while offering the chance for you to outline your Twitter policies regarding spam and tweet topics. A Twitter landing page also provides a great opportunity for your company to have a call to action, or a request of what you want the website visitor to do. Would you like the visitor to check out your newest project, or to contact you for more information about services? Let them know on the Twitter landing page.

Don't forget to have your corporate website link back to your Twitter page. Many companies actually forget to do that.

Social Media Tip #3: Encourage Your Employees to Use it

Two-thirds of employees are proud of their employer, but only 19 percent of them share stories on social media. That's a huge potential of customer interaction and engagement that goes unused. And no, encouraging your employees to use it doesn't mean hiring a social media manager or assigning your marketing team to the task. Why not get a foreman or a project manager tweeting or blogging about the great work your company is doing? Or have a few of your best salespeople jump on Tumblr and document the time and work they do at your workplace? If anything, this will add human faces and voices to your company and your brand, and break through that corporate speak and advertising that's beginning to turn people off.

Social Media Tip #4: Go to the Networks Your Customers Go To

This is especially important if you have a lot of international clients, as you should probably have a presence on the networks popular in Europe and Asia. Facebook is pretty universal, so that's a no brainer, but Vkontakte is very popular in Eastern Europe. MySpace also remains pretty popular in Europe and Asia, despite its fallout in the United States. Bebo is the second-most popular social media site in the United Kingdom, while Badoo and Orkut are popular in emerging economies. China is a unique case with its own platforms, such as RenRen and Sina Weibo..

Taken from the Industry Leaders Magazine

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ANNUAL PARTY HIGHLIGHTS



Kevin Moore and Steve Freehill from Tuscan Road

BUILDER **OF THE YEAR**



Sid Sorensen receiving his the 2011 Builder of the Year award from last year's winner, Larry Meyer.

ASSOCIATE **OF THE YEAR**



Russ Utech receiving his the 2011 Associate of the Year award from last year's winner, Kristin Flamang.

Congratulations Sid and Russ on honors well deserved!



NTC Scholarship Recipients



Support Governor Walker online with a contribution through WBA

In an effort to make giving personal contributions to Governor Scott Walker as easy as possible for members, WBA has set up an online giving center which will allow members to give personal contributions to Governor Walker.

Members may simply go to WBA's homepage, www.wisbuild.org, enter in an amount under the title "Support Governor Walker" and click the "Donate" button. Members will then be taken to a page which will prompt them to enter a personal credit card and then simply press the "Submit Donation" button. Your personal contribution will be given through the WBA conduit, the Builders Direct Fund, to Governor Scott Walker.

Making this contribution through WBA will allow members to help their local association achieve their annual fundraising goal.

Please spread the word to fellow members, co-workers and business partners who support Governor Walker to make a contribution through WBA's new online giving page.

Taxpayer cost of a Walker Recall: \$7.7 million

Many members have asked how much it will likely cost local municipalities to administer a statewide recall election. The best way to estimate what a statewide recall election will cost is to look back to the cost of the state senate recall elections this past summer. The nine state senate recall elections were estimated to have cost taxpayers \$2.1 million to administer, which breaks down to approximately \$233,333 each.

This math is not perfect, but considering there are 33 state senate districts in Wisconsin, using the figures above would mean the total estimated cost would be \$7.7 million ($\$233,333 \times 33$) for clerks to administer a statewide recall of the governor.

Public lands bill signed into law (AB 275)

Recently Assembly Bill 275 (AB 275) was signed into law by Governor Walker. WBA supported AB 275 because it will give municipalities one additional tool to help fund economic development and infrastructure projects.

AB 275 will provide municipalities, particularly smaller municipalities, with another means to finance important utility and economic development projects without needing to further commit limited general obligation debt capacity. In addition, revenue loans made by the Board of Commissioner of Public Lands could provide a more cost-effective method for financing small projects as compared to the issuance of conventional revenue obligations. In general, the change will provide communities another option and additional flexibility to finance municipal projects.

"This bill gives the Board of Commissioner of Public Lands another tool to invest money, help improve our communities, and ultimately carry out the mission of the board," said Governor Walker. "I would like to thank State Senator Dale Schultz, State Representative Ed Brooks and Executive Secretary of the board, Tia Nelson, for supporting this Legislation."

Ross, Wendle to WBA Executive Committee

Recently the WBA Executive Committee was treated to an address by the two head officials in the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS), Secretary Dave Ross and Deputy Secretary Bill Wendle.

Both men stated they are taking a hard look at everything the agency currently does with an emphasis on making things run smoother, cost less money for the taxpayer and the agency customer and first taking a look at current regulations before adding any new regulations.

One point of emphasis members made to DPS was a longstanding concern with the current wall bracing rules. Members asked for these rules to be rescinded and to go back to the 2003 standards which were much more reasonable and still offer the consumer a very safe structure at a fraction of the cost of the current rule. WBA staff professionals have followed up with both Secretary Ross and Deputy Secretary Wendle thanking them for joining us and again asking for quick action on the wall bracing issue and nine other code changes we are seeking to reduce the cost of housing in Wisconsin.

Secretary Ross made a point that is he is willing to travel to local builders associations to get as much input from members as possible. Locals that may be interested in having Secretary Ross

join you for a board meeting, GA meeting or GMM should contact his office directly at 608-266-1352 and ask to speak to Greg Gasper.

DNR Reg reform bill passes committee

Recently both the Assembly and Senate Natural Resources committees convened to vote on a package of DNR regulatory reform matters contained in bills AB 421 and SB 326. The concept of DNR regulatory reform was first introduced as a special session bill, but with the special session adjournment last week, regular session bill drafts were introduced by Representatives Jeff Mursau and Senator Neil Kedzie.

Contained in these bills are items that allow for one grading permit and not multiple permits, presumptive approval of Chapter 30 permits and the ability to remodel boathouses that were in existence on December 16, 1979 (in the past remodeling of these structures was forbidden).

WBA had been working to include an amendment that would have changed current law regarding shoreland zoning regulations after annexation. We had secured all of the GOP members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee to vote in favor of this amendment but because the amendment was not sent from the bill author to the committee chair 24 hours prior to the meeting no vote was taken on the matter. We are now looking at doing an amendment on the floor of the state Assembly or introducing this provision as a standalone bill.

With the passage of these bills out of committee on partisan votes, it is expected that they will be considered by both houses mid-January 2012.

Senator Johnson comes up short in leadership bid

Freshman Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson (R-Oshkosh) came up short in his bid to become the Senate Republican Conference Vice-Chair, the fifth position on the leadership team. Johnson was bested by fellow Freshman Senator Roy Blunt of Missouri. The final vote was close with Blunt besting Johnson 25-22. While technically a senate freshman Blunt had served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and formally served in leadership in the House.

Many saw this as a battle between the GOP establishment (Blunt) versus the Tea Party/outsider wing of the party (Johnson).

Johnson said of his bid, "while I did not win this race, I am tremendously grateful for the level of support I received. I want to thank my colleagues who supported my bid, those who encouraged me to run, and those who spoke to others on my behalf. I also want to thank the grassroots voices outside the Senate who supported my candidacy."

Governor Walker: A Year of Progress for Wisconsin's Job Climate

"We've worked hard this year to create a business environment that encourages job creation," said Governor Walker. "Business rankings are one way to show the progress we've made in moving Wisconsin in the right direction. They also remind us that we must keep working to encourage job creation in our state. Our most important goal remains helping Wisconsin families prosper; these rankings show we are laying the right foundation."

Earlier this month, the new Forbes 2011 Best States for Business ranking was released. Wisconsin improved to 40th, moving up from 43rd in 2010 and 48th in 2009. Illinois fell behind Wisconsin for the first time in 3 years, falling to 41st. Illinois was 37th in 2010 and 24th in 2009.

Earlier this year, CNBC ranked Wisconsin 25th---up from 29th in 2010.

The Chief Executive Magazine ranking placed Wisconsin at 24th, up from 41st in 2010. Wisconsin's improvement was the biggest jump in the nation and in the history of the magazine.

All three business rankings improved in 2011---after falling under the previous administration.

Wisconsin also recently ranked 24th in the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Council's Small Business Survival Rankings. Wisconsin moved up from 31st in the previous year.

Brad Boycks

WBA Director of Government and Political Affairs

Wisconsin Builders Association@bboycks@wisbuild.org

(608) 242-5151 ext.16

Visit our web site: www.wisbuild.org

(This is a monthly report from the Wisconsin Builders Association, our "political arm" at the state Capitol in Madison. Each month, the Monday Morning Review will highlight the going's on under the Capitol Dome with an eye toward what matters to the housing industry.)