

CONNECTICUT BUILDER

The Magazine of the Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut



Summer 2016

Interactive Digital Edition



**Newest Sub-Zero Wolf Kitchen in
Clarke South Norwalk Showroom**

photo by Neil Landino Photography

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COVER PHOTO – Our cover photo captures the stunning new kitchen at the Clarke Sono showroom. Designed with transitional Dutch Made cabinetry and Wenge wood accents, it showcases Sub-Zero food preservation and the latest in cooking technology from Wolf. See Business Product News.

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From the desk of Norton Wheeler

Connecticut Housing Market Industry Review



It has been both educational and a source of pride for me to travel the state as your HBRAC President over the past year. Each local association is doing great work in education, advocacy and promoting

the housing industry and its HBRA members. This spring, Northwest HBA partnered with the Litchfield County realtors to host another outstanding Legislative Night; BAEC produced a well attended and successful Home Show and golf outing; HBRA of Central CT held its Spring Parade of Homes, which was resoundingly successful with both realtors and the general public; and Fairfield County HBRA held its 70th Anniversary Dinner attended by over 220 members and 9 Past Presidents, and EO Gina Calabro unveiled a membership video. Look for further coverage of these events in this issue.

Connecticut has been agonizingly slow in recovering from the Great Recession of 2008. This was evident at our state Board of Directors meeting in June and at the Sales & Marketing Council meetings held in Westport on May 17th and June 7th. The general consensus is that the single family market is flat, and it has been a struggle to get every sale.

Although I remain optimistic, we must be realistic as well.

According to a new study released last month by George Mason University, Connecticut is ranked dead last among the 50 states, when it comes to overall fiscal health. Connecticut's fiscal problems and overregulated business climate continue to have an adverse trickle down affect on housing. As economist Don Klepper-Smith describes it, "The health of

the housing market is tied to the health of the local labor market. Mild job creation translates into mild housing growth."

But demographics is also having a major impact on the housing industry in Connecticut and nationally. As noted housing industry consultant, Charles C. Schinn explains, "The historical bell curve for housing demand looks more like a bar bell, with the major demographic demands at the two extremes. As the Millennials enter the housing market, and the baby boomers downsize their housing and enter assisted care facilities, the housing industry is on the cusp of a major demographic change."

For several years, multi-family permits have dominated in Connecticut, and the demand for rentals has far surpassed that of for sale single family homes. As Baby Boomers enter their retirement years, the new demographic population that will be driving the industry for the next 50 years will be the Millennial generation, which is larger than the Baby Boomers at over 80 million people.

According to Charles Schinn, otherwise known as 'The Profit Doctor', "the Millennial population has been postponing its housing and family decisions, so there will be a lag from historic norms. The pattern is to start as renters, to purchase the first home (condo, townhome, single) with the first or second child, and move to the suburban single family home when the first child reaches school age. In the next several years, the industry will see the impact of the aging Baby Boomers, as they downsize their homes for smaller square footage with high levels of amenities - and most of this downsizing will occur locally."

(continued)

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Connecticut Housing Market Industry Review

(continued)



L-R Kevin Santini, Ken Boynton, NAHB Vice-Chair Greg Ugalde, Lieutenant Gov. Nancy Wyman, HBRAC President Nort Wheeler, HBRAC CEO Bill Ethier, Eric Santini Sr., Monica Rinaldo Deputy Commissioner CT Department of Correction, Jerry Howard NAHB CEO, and Karl Lewis, Director DOC Programs & Treatment Division

Housing Industry Advocacy

On June 14, 2016, HBRAC met with Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman at the state Capitol. Discussion was focused on integrating HBI worker training into Dept. of Correction (DOC) training programs to assist in reintegration to society. The program would be conducted within the correctional facilities, and geared toward paroled inmates, as this programming would be outside of the correctional facilities, and utilize private instruction. We also discussed the technical schools and programming geared toward bolstering our very much needed workforce in CT.

It was a great meeting, thanks to Eric & Kevin Santini, who are familiar faces at the Lieutenant Governor's office, and NAHB V.P. Government Affairs Stephen Gallagher, who had the pleasure of meeting the Lieutenant Governor at a recent National LG conference. It was at this conference that Lieutenant Governor Wyman heard about HBI's success with DOC's in other parts of the country.



We will be meeting again in July with the Lt Governor and representatives from the State Technical High School Superintendents office, as well as Dept. of Veterans Affairs.

Please see State Association News for coverage on this year's Home Building Industry day at the Capitol, Bill Ethier's Summary of this Legislative Session, and information about our critical Housing Defense Fund, which pays for extraordinary outside regulatory, legislative & legal advocacy efforts.

HDF depends on contributions from HBRA members and others who want to support a strong issues advocacy program to protect our industry.

Thank you again for your trust in me as your President of the HBRA of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Norton C Wheeler III
Graduate Master Builder
Chairman & President, HBRA of CT

HBRA OF CENTRAL CONNECTICUT
PARADE OF HOMES



South Windsor Woods Ives model

The HBRA Parade of Homes provides Central Connecticut's finest builders and developers the opportunity to showcase their innovative ideas, special design features, dynamic floor plans and fine craftsmanship while building awareness of the value of new construction.

At each Parade of Homes tour stop, there are educational opportunities for suppliers and subcontractors to highlight unique products or features in the home. The tours are conducted twice a year – in the fall in the Central and New Haven County market and in spring in the Northern CT and Hartford County market. And on the following Sunday an extensively advertised Parade of the Homes is held for the public. Mario DiGioia of DonMar Development sold several homes after the Public Parade last fall.

On Tuesday, May 10th, the HBRA of Central CT bus tour visited five new homes and developments in South Windsor, Glastonbury and Manchester. Participating realtors who obtain a signed contract to the builders by June 30th will receive a \$1,000 Upfront Bonus!

Breakfast was hosted by T&M Homes Greg Ugalde and Steve Temkin at the Ives townhouse model of *South Windsor Woods*.

Nestled amongst the trees is a 155 unit PUD on over 49 acres including 128

townhomes with private walking trails, a private clubhouse, and two recreation areas. Two and three bedroom townhomes range in size from 1200 sq. ft. to 2300 sq. ft. There are several models to select from. Open floor plans, first floor master bedrooms, private decks and patios, lofts, private individual elevators and state of the art Caseta lighting systems from Ct Lighting are just a few of the features available. This maintenance free community has easy access to Route 291, Route 91 and Interstate 84 with prices ranging from \$189,900 to \$325,900. The Ives model is decked out with unique T&M upgrades, like the adorable built-in doghouse tucked under the stair, that keep potential buyers thinking about the home long after they leave. (See related article *Pet Friendly Features a Growing Trend*)

Connecticut Lighting V.P. Todd Director explained the benefits, operation and app controls of the Nest thermostat and Lutron Caseta lighting app control



South Windsor Woods CT Lighting

systems. Lutron Caseta lighting allows the homeowner to create indoor/outdoor scenes and receive feedback on what lights are on and off with either an Android or Apple app. In fact, the iPhone comes loaded with the Lutron Caseta app. Caseta motorized shade with integrated control are only \$300-400, down from \$1,200 a few years ago. Connecticut Lighting is the fastest growing Lutron dealer in the country,

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Dufford's Landing



Dufford's Landing Design elevations

tom home at Dufford's Landing in South Glastonbury is built by George Catarino, Catarino Custom Builders, for a family of six. The performance home has \$10-15,000 in steel bracing walls.

"All new construction in CT must be hurricane proof, And this affects both the design and the budget."

- Jack Kemper,
Kemper Associates Architects

"What drives the house design is the site," said Jack Kemper. The house is designed by Kemper Associates Architects to take full advantage of seasonal views of the Connecticut River from the great room, kitchen, sunroom and terrace.

The master suite is located on the first floor, with four bedrooms above, one for each daughter. The walk-out basement is designed to be finished future

living space. Interiors are by Richard Ott Interior Spaces, and landscape design is by Diane Barnes.

The exquisitely detailed house is approximately \$1.5 million with land cost for a 1 acre lot at Dufford's Landing approximately \$300,000.

Next stop FN Builders. Frank & Joe Nuzzolo and Frank's wife Therese, specialize in building neighborhoods with houses that look and feel good. FN Builders mixes contract with spec homes, and details, such as hand made 2 & 3 piece crown moldings and soffits, raised end panels on kitchen cabinets, a kitchen pantry, picture frame moldings and integrated shoe moldings – are all standard. The



Parade of Home attendees at Dufford's Landing



L-R: Richard Ott, Jack Kemper, Armenio Catarino & George Catarino



Frank & Joe Nuzzolo with Central CT HBRA Exec Officer, Eric Person

(continued)

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Parade of Homes

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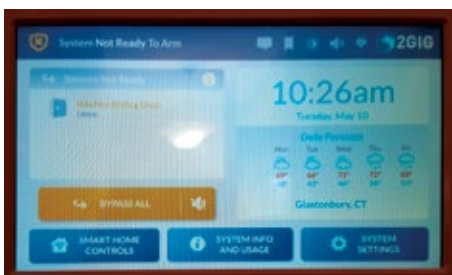
differences in taste and detailing between Hartford County and Fairfield County are evident. For example, FN builders used a bevel edge granite island and counter tops, compared to the transitional style square edge marble countertops popular in lower Fairfield County.



F.N. Builders Homes at Sturgeon River

There are only two home sites left in FN Builders Sturgeon River cul-de-sac neighborhood in Glastonbury. The 4,800 sf, four bedroom, 3.2 baths colonial home on the tour is beautifully detailed and offers an open floor plan with a chef's kitchen, master bedroom suite with granite topped island in the master bath, plus a finished lower level. The home features a 2GIG home technology system. Jim Sweeney of Hometronic Lifestyles explained the very simple panel which provides home security and home automation, complete with 3G, Wi-Fi, DVR capability and video solution. 2GIG is the #1 home security & automation platform in the country with over 3 million users.

The homes are located on a 1 acre home site. Prices start at \$799,000 and Therese Nuzzolo of Berkshire Hathaway is the listing agent.



FN Builders 2 GIG system



FR with Heat & Glo 6000 CL direct vent gas FPL supplied by Superior Hearth & Spa



Jim Sweeney Hometronic Lifestyles explaining the 2 GIG home tech system

(continued)



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Parade of Homes

(continued)

Location and luxury living at an affordable price top the list at *Village at Red Rock*, conveniently located off Tolland Turnpike in Manchester. This is Nordic Builders 3rd PUD, and the two bedroom, 2 ½ bath townhouses feature a spacious open floor plan with island kitchen, hardwood floors, 9' ceilings and tile and stone baths. There are several models with 1 and 2 car garages, as well as one level ranch end units with two car garages. Buyers can customize their kitchen and bath colors, paint, carpeting and tile. This 32 unit Village is an affordable option for maintenance free living with prices starting at \$249,900.



Nordic Builders Village at Red Rock

Nordic Builders Alan & Liz Koiva

The last stop on the tour took attend-

Condo Vs. PUD

The appearance of the community does not determine whether a complex is a condo or a PUD (planned unit development); it's a matter of ownership and how the community was set up. Some communities look like PUDs, but are actually condominiums. For example, Lakewood in South Windsor, CT is a PUD (sometimes called PAD for Planned Area Development) whereas Whitney Crossing in Vernon, CT (which is a community of detached homes) is listed as a condominium.

In a condominium, the individual units are owned by each tenant, but all the common areas are owned by the tenants jointly (as tenants in common). In a planned unit community, each tenant owns the unit and may have rights and responsibilities to the property the unit sits on; ownership of the common areas is shared among the association. The type of ownership will have a great impact on the type of financing and insurance you will need.

Red Rock is what they call a Planned Community. The terms PUD is actually not legal in Connecticut – the legal term is Planned Community. The advantage of a Planned Community is the financing. There are no pre-sale requirements, and the complex does not have to be “approved” by lenders. The financing works the same as a single family home.

– Liz Koiva, Nordic Builders

The advantages seem to be largely with the buyer end loans. You don't have to worry about the entire condo being approved by some agency such as FHA. Each unit is independent as far as obtaining financing, very similar to a single family house.

There are certain requirements to avoid being a condo, one of the biggest being that units cannot be on top of one another. So if there were second floor units that had their own exterior door which led to a private stairway up, but the living room was on top of a ground level unit below it, that complex would not be a PUD candidate. Both South Windsor Woods and Village at Red Rock have attached units but not stacked units.

– Steve Temkin, T&M Homes

(continued)





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Parade of Homes

(continued)

ees back to South Windsor Woods where T&M Homes hosted a lunch sponsored by Bender and Superior Hearth & Spa at the Francis Grand Plus and Griswold Grand Plus models.

South Windsor Woods offers 12 Duplexes and 15 free standing homes with T&M's unique choice of standard, grand and grand plus version styles. Customize your home with the many options available to suit your individual needs. Three bedroom Capes and Colonials have features that include first floor master bedroom suites, private sitting areas, lofts, two story foyers and breakfast nooks, walk-in pantries, linear fireplaces by Superior Hearth & Spa and oversized five foot showers from Bender Plumbing with shower doors and shelving from Cyclone Home Systems. The homes, set on a private road, range in size from 2100 sq. ft. to 2700 sq. ft. and are priced at \$369,900 to \$476,900.

"We focused on angles and view lines in the landings, halls, and common areas," said Steve Temkin, "using features like a turned staircase, so light permeates from the second floor. In the Francis model, a 2nd private stair in the master bedroom leads to a meditation room." Kris Abramowitz of T&M outfitted the interiors with appealing, whimsical furnishings

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Steve Temkin



South Windsor Woods duplexes & SF



South Windsor MBR with stair



South Windsor meditation room

(continued)

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Parade of Homes

(continued)



Debra Wolfenson

manager, Debra Wolfenson produced the original SAM Tram tours in New Haven County, and she has been a sponsor and committee member for all three Central CT HBRA Parade of Homes tours. Superior supplied a striking Heat & Glo electric linear fireplace with multiple colorful scenes for the single family model at *South Windsor Woods*, and a vent free linear fireplace in the townhouse model. Debra is providing Heat & Glo fireplaces with direct vent technology from \$3,000-6,000 in Avon, Marlborough and Southington communities.

Nina Bender demonstrated the Moxie shower head with Pandora, which is offered as an option at South Windsor Woods, and pointed out that at \$184; Bender is less expensive than Home Depot. Bender is also supplying the *Kohler Touchless toilet* with night light, as seen on You Tube. Just wave your hand over the top of the toilet and it flushes.

During lunch, there was a presentation by DeYoung Media on social media. According to Adam DeYoung, there are 5 million Facebook users and 50% of them log on every day, so the most critical platform for your company is Facebook.

“Advertising on Facebook is affordable, targetable and measurable,” said Adam, a digital consultant who manages social media for clients. “Think about how you can connect. To do it right, spend 5 hours per week, and use 80% non business content and only 20% of your content business related.”

To wrap up the event, Sheila Leach and Eric Person revealed the raffle winners with multiple popular prizes donated by Parade of Home sponsors including: Bender, Hocon Gas, Great Closets of New

England, Superior Hearth & Spa, CT Lighting Centers, Simscroft Echo Farms, Simonton Windows, Cyclone Home Systems, Tamko Building Products, Holloways, Glasco HVAC, Tiger Inspections, Kemper Associates Architects, ABC Supply, CHFA, Forestville Lumber, ProBuild, Dalene Flooring, Overhead Doors of Hartford & Hometronic Life-styles. □



South Windsor Sheila & Eric



Heat & Glo electric linear fireplace



Nina Bender explaining Moxie shower head



Adam DeYoung, DeYoung Media

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Pet Friendly Features – A Growing Trend in New Homes



Dog storage

“Only 35 percent of today’s homes have children, but 60 percent have pets,” says Steve Temkin of T&M Homes, “so we’re focusing on pets.” At South Windsor Woods, visitors to the townhouse sales model can’t miss the adorable doghouse tucked under the stair, offered as a \$750 option, and T&M’s new Suffield community features a 40 sf fiberglass pet shower supplied by Bender.

According to a recent survey by Houzz, more than one-third of homeowners have done some pet-related remodeling in the last two years, including upgraded flooring and reconfigured room layouts.

“It’s a part of a growing trend,” says Wilmington, Delaware based kitchen and bath designer Ellen Cheever. “We are no longer pet owners; we are pet parents. These animals are family members. Out clients want a place for



South Windsor Woods doghouse option

their dogs to be comfortable. Kitchens are not exclusively for cooking anymore, and our four-legged friends want to be part of the gathering.”

The National Kitchen and Bath Association’s 2016 Trends Survey says “fully half” of its members included pet-friendly features in kitchens in 2015, and 35 percent of its members are expecting to do more of them this year — from hidden dog food and water bowls to marble-lined dog crates and custom dog-gate pocket doors.

A good first step that’s also relatively inexpensive is to get dog bowls out of the way by putting them at the base of a cabinet or installing a pull-out toe-kick drawer. The end of a cabinet run, under an island or under banquette seating are ideal spots for a dog bed — Wellborn Cabinet Inc. makes a pet center designed to hold a dog bed and bowl.

(continued)



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Pet Friendly Features – A Growing Trend in New Homes

(continued)

Bathing beauties

As a practical solution to muddy paws and dirty coats, washing stations often make the top of the new construction or remodeling wish list.

Brent Gunsbury, president of Bercher Design & Construction in Baxter, Minn., recently completed a bath for clients that include an open shower in a laundry room. Leroy Johnson, co-owner of Four Brothers LLC in Washington, D.C., built a wash station adjacent to doggy “bunk beds” in what was once a hallway and laundry area. See photo bottom right.

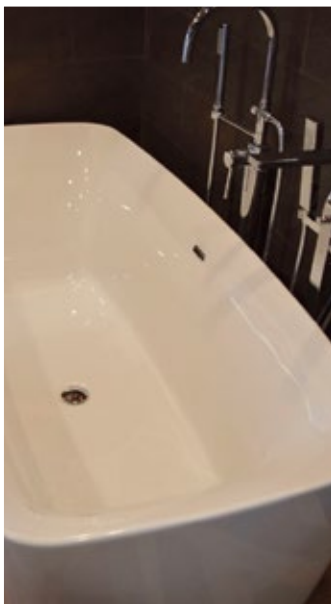
“It’s a part of a growing trend,” says Wilmington, Delaware based kitchen and bath designer Ellen Cheever. “We are no longer pet owners; we are pet parents. These animals are family members. Our clients want a place for their dogs to be comfortable.”

Todd Whitney and Linda Axnick of Caledonia, Wis., were tired of carrying muddy dogs upstairs to the bathtub and of dealing with all the feeding bowls in the kitchen. So Whitney and Axnick, both veterinarians, hired S.J. Janis Co. of Wauwatosa to revamp their mudroom into a spa fit for a dog, or six — two golden retrievers and four flat-coated retrievers.

S.J. Janis custom-built a 3-by-5-foot raised dog-washing station with a one-piece base made of Vikrell, a nonporous composite material. “It’s low-maintenance and has no grout to clean,” says director of sales Nathan Wachtl.

The basin is surrounded by a durable, nonporous acrylic solid surface known as Hi-Macs with a seamed corner and no grout joints and sits on top of a custom cabinet from Plato Woodwork. A retractable step pulls out for easy access to the waist-high station. “This way the homeowners don’t have to lift the dog or bend over to wash them,” Wachtl says. □





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Builder Panel Discusses Challenges & Obstacles of Home Building in Fairfield County & Westchester



L-R Michael Murphy, Arnold Karp, Albert Annunziata, Gina Calabro, Ed Plotkin, Andrew La Sala, Jr., Chris Wright, zoning attorney, Kenneth Finger, and Westchester builders Eric Abraham & Eric Messer

The HBRA of Fairfield County was invited to participate in an April 14th panel discussion with the Westchester Building and Realty Institute (BRI) on the “Challenges and Obstacles to Home Building in Westchester and Fairfield Counties”. The 60+ attendees were interested to hear what builders and remodelers are facing, as they continue to emerge from the recession.

Albert Annunziata, Executive Director for the Westchester BRI, started the evening with a video clip homage to New York and Connecticut, “Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House.” The 1948 film was based on the book of the same name by Eric Hodgins, who decided to leave his New York apartment to build a dream home in New Milford, Connecticut in 1939. Anticipating a budget of \$11,000, it ultimately cost him \$56,000 to finish. The house Hodgins built still stands in New Milford, and sold in August 2004 for \$1.2 million.

Kicking off the panel discussion on how private development is dependent on infrastructure was Ed Plotkin, who had recently ended a 50-year tenure as chair of Dobbs Ferry planning board, and was a former Westchester County commissioner of public works. The most telling statement of his address was his contention that “if roads,

bridges, schools, and hospitals are not continually maintained, and the zoning departments continually hold up development, the home building and development industry will continue to suffer.”

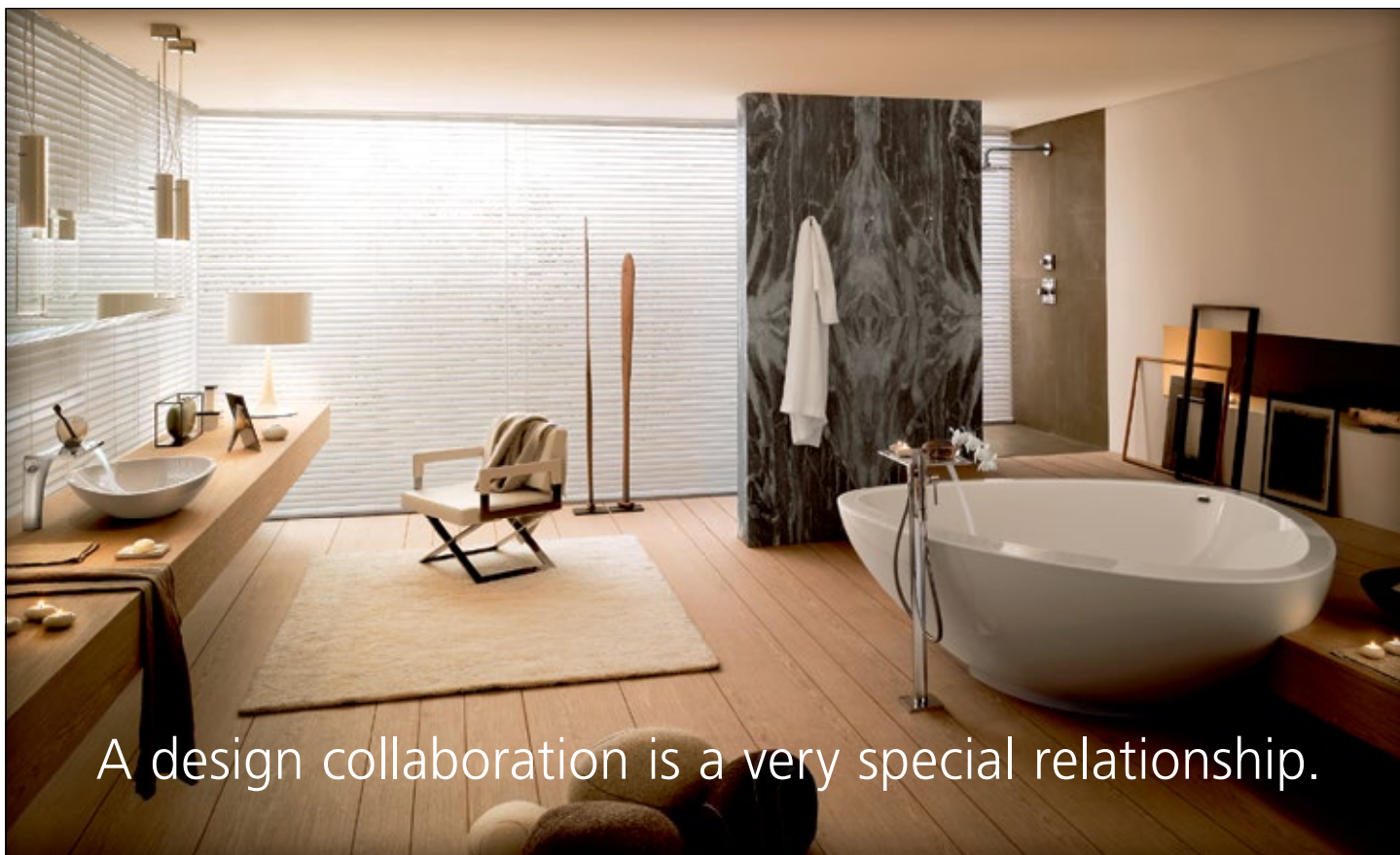
The Fairfield County panel that included Andrew LaSala, Jr., Cannondale Building and Design, Arnold Karp, Karp Associates, Michael Murphy, Murphy Brothers Contracting, and Chris Wright, Wright Building Company, began the discussion on what is currently happening with the residential, remodeling and commercial markets in Fairfield County. Although the markets are stronger than they have been in the last seven years, all of the builders on the panel agreed that Fairfield County has a long way to go to completely come out of the last recession. Besides the economic aspect, one of the top challenges facing builders is the permitting process and regulations, which vary in each town and city. Infrastructure has also been an issue, especially due to Metro North train lines and environmental issues.

Arnold Karp explained, “50% of my time and 40% of my budget is spent dealing with planning and zoning and paying environmental consultants”. He gave



L-R Michael Murphy, Arnold Karp, Fairfield County HBRA Exec. Officer Gina Calabro, Andrew LaSala & Chris Wright.

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Builder Panel Discusses Challenges & Obstacles of Home Building in Fairfield County & Westchester

(continued)

an example of a recent \$5 million spec he built on the water in Old Greenwich. The Town of Greenwich determined that (FEMA) building height regulations were not severe enough, and decided to add an additional 1-foot to the base flood requirement.

Karp Associates is developing a new mixed use building of offices and apartments, as well as building a carousel and a skating rink and fountain for the Mill River Collaborative – “another of my non profit projects,” said Karp.

Andrew LaSala recently completed a 63 unit rental community on West Main Street in Norwalk that has been recognized as the *Best Smart Growth Community* in Connecticut.

“We worked with then Norwalk Planning & Zoning Director, Mike Greene, to rewrite the multifamily D-

Zone regulation. The new zone moves multi-family 20 feet closer to the street; requires that front doors face the street; that garages are located on the side or rear; and it encourages front porches. Instead of unattractive “sidewinder” buildings with a blank side wall facing the street, Summerview Square townhomes are colonial and Victorian-style buildings that sit just 22 feet from the street and blend in with the neighborhood’s older two family homes, right down to their long front porches.”

Michael Murphy, Murphy Brothers Contracting was the only participant on the panel belonging to both the HBRA-CT and the BRI... “I was in great company, real professional business competitors from both sides of that thin line that separates Westchester and Fairfield,” said Murphy. “It was interesting to note

that we face the same business challenges as we are equally blessed to work in a region that can afford the quality it demands. I did use the occasion as a forum to encourage the training and hiring of more women on the field level as project managers, site supers and tradespeople. I think we fall behind the rest of the country in this line of forward thinking.”

The Westchester County panel agreed that infrastructure is key, as new spec housing is being built along train lines. Knockdowns have been the biggest draw, since similar to lower Fairfield County, there is very little developable land left. As the evening closed, the builders on both panels agreed that the current political climate and elections on the federal and state level will have an impact on the building industry. □





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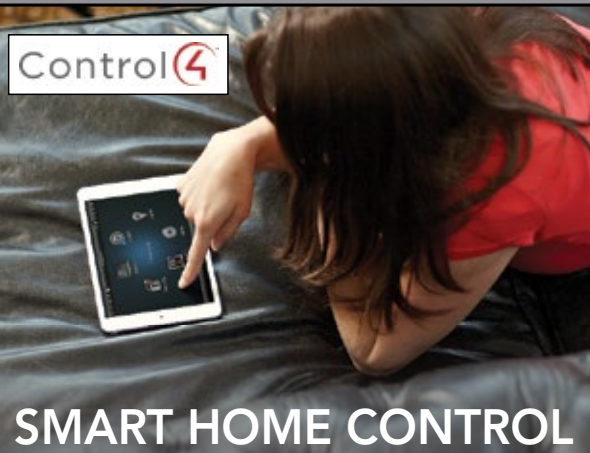
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A Further Tightening in the Standards for Variances?

By Joseph P. Williams and Beth Bryan Critton, Shipman & Goodwin

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Practicing land use law in Connecticut can be unpredictable and is heavily fact-driven, as no two parcels of property are alike. Nonetheless, there are certain rules of thumb. One is that in a court challenge to a zoning board of appeals decision on a variance application, usually the granting of a variance will be overturned and a denial will be upheld. This is due to the elusive “unusual hardship” test, which is regularly honored in the breach throughout our state but is very difficult to satisfy.

Recent decisions by our state courts have ignited debate in the land use bar as to whether satisfying the hardship standard has become even more difficult. The most recent among them, *Caruso v. Zoning Board of Appeals of the City of Meriden*, 320 Conn. 315, a Feb. 2 decision by the Connecticut Supreme Court, provides useful guidance to practitioners about what constitutes evidence of “practical confiscation” sufficient to justify the granting of a variance.

In 2003, Mark Development LLC purchased 48 undeveloped acres in Meriden with the intention of developing a large used-car dealership. The land was one of three Meriden properties zoned as a Regional Development District, where six uses are permitted by right. A used-car dealership was not one of the permitted uses.

After unsuccessfully attempting to amend zoning regulations, Mark Development convinced the Meriden Zoning Board of Appeals that the regulations resulted in a “practical confiscation” of its property, and the board approved a use variance that would allow a car deal-

ership on that property. Meriden, its city planner and zoning enforcement officer, represented by the authors, appealed.

The trial court sustained the appeal on the basis of a conflict-of-interest claim, but found that the record supported the board’s decision to grant the variance. Both sides appealed. The Appellate Court reversed the trial court’s ruling, finding that the developer had failed to prove practical confiscation, and remanded with direction to sustain the plaintiffs’ appeal.

The Supreme Court affirmed. The court recognized that practical confiscation is a form of unusual hardship where a landowner is prevented from making any beneficial use of its land. The test is whether the zoning regulations render the property “practically worthless” and deprive it of any reasonable use.

All Reasonable Use

Notably, in *Caruso*, the Supreme Court stated for the first time that the standard for practical confiscation in variance cases is the same test as that for establishing a taking under the Constitution (an area in which the court has not been known

for its generosity). But *Caruso* is most instructive because of what it teaches about the high bar for proving practical confiscation.

The Supreme Court held that Mark Development failed to prove practical confiscation because it did not demonstrate that its property had been deprived of all reasonable use and value. The developer did present some evidence that the use and value of the property had been impacted by the regulations. This evidence included a letter from an appraiser opining that there was no demand for several of the uses permitted in the district, the purchase price was below market, and that the zoning placed the property at a competitive disadvantage, as well as a similar opinion by local land use counsel. However, the court noted, Mark Development presented no evidence that the property was unfit for any permitted use, of value other than the purchase price of more than \$1 million, or of its efforts to market, sell or develop the property for a permitted use. The evidence did not explain why the property was suitable for a used-car dealership but not for offices or other permitted uses.

The Supreme Court distinguished its earlier decisions finding practical confiscation without proof of diminution in value where the property owner demonstrated that no reasonable use was available. It also confirmed that deference is afforded to zoning board decisions but stated that “a court cannot take the view in every case that the discretion exercised by the local zoning authority must not be disturbed, for if it did the right of appeal would be empty.” Finally, the court reiterated that it is not proper for a board to grant a variance “merely because the

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A Further Tightening in the Standards for Variances?

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regulations hinder landowners and entrepreneurs from putting their property to a more profitable use,” and that any grievances with the zoning plan should be directed to the zoning commission that adopted it, not the zoning board of appeals.

Caruso instructs practitioners that in order to satisfy the hardship test on grounds of practical confiscation, a variance applicant must provide specific evidence that its property has no reasonable use or monetary value under the zoning regulations. Evidence that some of the value or some of the uses have been lost will not suffice.

Read in conjunction with *E&F Associates v. Zoning Board of Appeals*, 320 Conn. 9, which was decided by the Supreme Court on Dec. 22 (overruling three prior Appellate Court decisions applying looser hardship requirements), *Caruso* affirms that the variance power is to be sparingly exercised and reserved for exceptional circumstances. What are those circumstances? After *E&F Associates*, it remains to be seen whether any set of facts can satisfy the hardship test when a property has other viable uses and economic value without the requested variance. But that debate must await other forums. Shrewd land use counsel may wish to focus their strategy on satisfying the only available exception to the hardship test: where the proposed variance reduces nonconformities such as setbacks or a nonconforming use is reduced to a less offensive use.

In another recent decision, *Verrillo v. Zoning Board of Appeals*, 155 Conn. App. 657 (2015), the Appellate Court suggested in dicta that noncompliance with fire or building codes might constitute a hardship sufficient to justify a variance in order to attain compliance. But the court subsequently rejected a similar argument (bringing a grocery store and deli up to code and increasing accessibility) in *347 Humphrey Street v. Board of Zoning Appeals*, 160 Conn. App. 214 (2015). The Appellate Court in recent years also has held that there is no de minimis deviation exception that would excuse the need for property owners to prove hardship.

Morikawa v. Zoning Board of Appeals, 126 Conn. App. 400 (2011); and that the variance power rests solely in the zoning board of appeals, not the zoning commission. *MacKenzie v. Planning and Zoning Commission*, 146 Conn. App. 406 (2013).

Caruso and other recent appellate decisions arguably raise the bar with respect to both the evidence required and the standards applied to variances. How much the bar has been raised will undoubtedly be the subject of nightly chatter in town halls across our state.

Joseph P. Williams is a partner at Shipman & Goodwin and a member of the real estate, environmental and land use practice group. His practice focuses on environmental and land use permitting and litigation. Beth Bryan Critton is an associate at the firm and practices land use, environmental and municipal law. □



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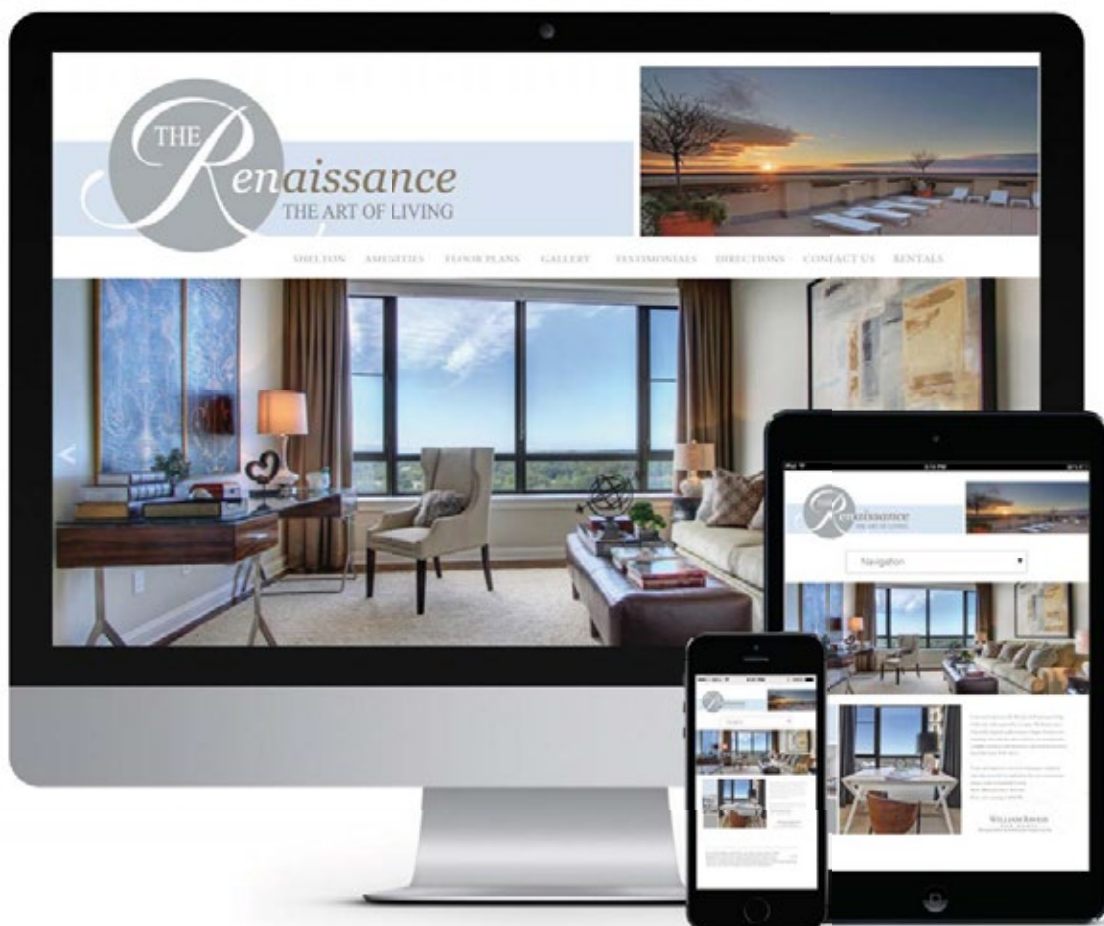
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The SIR Signature Formula for Building Successful Luxury Homes

by Rob Haroun, SIR Development



Rob Haroun

"To live a creative life, we must lose our fear of being wrong," said author Joseph Chilton Pearce. Design is not an objective science; there is no definitive right or wrong. Yet, somehow, most of us are able to recognize good design when we see it. We may not know exactly what it should look like or how to do it, but if we see something that is poorly executed or misses the mark, we are painfully aware why good design is critical when building luxury homes.

SIR Development has been building luxury homes in Westport, Connecticut for over 23 years. In the fall of 2012, we launched SIR SIGNATURE HOME elevating our brand from reliable, quality homes to more grand offerings with distinctive, unique architecture and exquisite interiors. We also established an in-house design team headed by Shawna Feeley. We are proud to have won 14 HOBI Awards for our outstanding work since our



SIR interior designer Shawna Feeley in SIR Design Gallery.

first entry three years ago. SIGNATURE HOMES has been recognized as the leading luxury home brand in the Westport area. What we have learned from our experience with a design team is invaluable.

The most important benefit to a builder having an in-house design team and design studio is creating unique and innovative designs that make the home salable over other competitors. Rather than identifying what is in the house as "packages", (ie. molding, trim, appliance), unique designs create a customization that a homeowner can distinguish over other "package" builds. Moreover, with this capability, builders are able to stay ahead of the trends, and in most cases, set the bar even higher.



L-R Gaelle Dudley, Elayne Landau, Shawna Feeley, partners Rob & Julie Haroun & Sandy Rappaport



SIR unique moldings at 4 Sprucewood Lane

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The SIR Signature Formula for Building Successful Luxury Homes

(continued)



SIR master bath at 7 Peach Lot Place

At SIR, our design team, in cooperation with our experienced subcontractors, accomplishes this goal of making the home unique. It is a comfortable space for our buyers to “shop” and collaborate with the keen eye of our trusted designers. We are able to manage budgets and expectations with our clients. We have professionals who oversee our client’s needs and remain in constant contact with our homebuyers. Our clients can expect to receive photo and email updates on huse progress, and the answering of tens, if not hundreds of questions about paint, tile and lighting. Our buyers have the comfort of knowing the design professional is part of the SIR SIGNATURE HOME experience.

Good design is collaboration, and there are many players. Great relationships are imperative between designers, distributors, and the craftsmen executing our ideas. Our design team has built relationships with our vendors, guaranteeing that we have an inside scoop on what’s new and amazing and “must have” vs. “not worth the hype.” Constant communication and mutual respect is key in establishing great partnerships. Collaborating with companies like Rohl, Circa Lighting and Porcelenosa give us an edge over other builders. These partnerships create a strong understanding of cutting edge technologies and promote forward thinking. Insight into the newest features or latest trends is must-have knowledge and keeping these relationships fresh is an integral part of a designer’s job.



SIR mud room at 5 Melon Patch

What is also unique to SIR Development is that SIR has its own crew of framers, master finish carpenters, project managers and our own cabinetry shop. We have the highest-skilled workers in the business, and these relationships are nurtured, because their input and collaboration with our design team makes for a superior product. There is an ease and understanding that grows within a strong team. We have similar relationships with our exclusive subcontractors, who do our tiling, plumbing and lighting. Their opinions on our product selections are invaluable to us. They are working in the field, physically handling the materials we select, and their opinions about quality and feedback on new ideas is crucial. If a “new” faucet looks great, but has terrible water flow, they’ll tell us. If a beautiful white marble looks great, but fractures easily like chalk, we need to know. These relationships, between designer and craftsmen, keep our homes as durable and functional as they are stylish and beautiful.

The goal of a builder is to provide a positive and seamless experience for buyers. At SIR, we focus on that goal, whether they break new ground with us, or come in after a home is

completely staged. We want to meet all of their demands without bothering them with the “behind the scenes” or logistics. We are inclusive with our buyers; offer them the privilege of putting their “signature” on their new home; and will make it work. We pride ourselves on superior service during construction, customization, and for our one-year homeowners guarantee. Our design team is the crux of this relationship. □



SIR in house designer Shawna Feeley & marketing consultant Gaelle Dudley



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Greenwich Brothers Use Millennial Generation Traits to Grow a Successful Home Building Business



DeRosa Builders Michael & Anthony

In the six years since 30-something Greenwich brothers, Anthony and Michael DeRosa established their custom home building company, they have been multi-tasking, tech-savvy and connected. This has allowed them to contribute to their Greenwich community, take initiative in their industry, and gain the attention of both investors and custom home clients.

As millennials, the two partners love variety and juggling many responsibilities at once. Anthony DeRosa is vice-president of the Fairfield County HBRA, and will lead his industry's organization in two years, while Michael serves on the board of directors of its charitable foundation, Building Hope. The brothers build ramps for the disabled and sponsor Junior League of Greenwich outreach programs, such as the Red Cross *Touch a Truck* event, while building several spec and custom homes each year.

From its founding, DeRosa Builders has acted as a builder for investors, who like working with DeRosa because the company builds quality, economically designed homes that sell quickly. On Bramble Lane in Riverside, they built three luxury spec homes, which sold before completion, each one to 30-something buyers.

Anthony and Michael are tech-savvy

with social media and connected. These millennial traits have led to beneficial relationships with architects, real estate brokers, investors and the media.

In keeping with their generation, the brothers work with talented young

designers like Lucien Vita, as well as environmentally conscious architects like Richard Granoff, and their custom clients are successful millennials with young families.

In 2013, DeRosa Builders were the up and coming winners of three state HOBI Awards. They were recognized for a stunning shingle style spec home designed by Lucien Vita with cedar roof and finished attic, which sold for \$1.95 million.

Demonstrating their versatility, DeRosa won a HOBI Remodeling Award that year by transforming a Riverside home designed by Granoff Architects into a charming cottage style with cedar roof, and a challenging addition. DeRosa Builders won a 3rd HOBI Award for this exquisite remodel of an Old Greenwich kitchen.

Last year, the company won two more state HOBI Awards, the first, for a custom home in Darien featuring a beautifully detailed kitchen with pop-up TV in the marble island, a vaulted beamed master bedroom, a stunning master bath



DeRosa 2 Hyatt Westport

(continued)

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Greenwich Brothers Use Millennial Generation Traits to Grow a Successful Home Building Business

(continued)



DeRoas Builders Darien custom home



DeRosa 2 Hyatt FR



DeRosa Darien Custom Home Kitchen

with plank tile floor and a gracious rear patio. The blower door test on this highly energy-efficient, green home scored an outstanding HERS 3.2.

DeRosa was also recognized for a master suite addition on Midwood Road

in Greenwich, which features an elegant study, new his and her master baths and a home gym.

On December 5th at Water's Edge in Darien, Anthony and Michael DeRosa, became the youngest recipients of

their industry's highest honor, *Fairfield County Builder of the Year*. This award recognizes DeRosa Builders contribution to the Home Builders and Remodelers industry, and their reputation with clients and community. □



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Builder News

HBRA Member & Builder Bob Fusari – A Housing Hero Power of Partnership Awards Breakfast

On Friday, April 22, 2016, the Middlesex County Coalition on Housing + Homelessness celebrated three housing heroes who have leveraged the power of partnership for our homeless neighbors.

Bob Fusari

Real Estate Services of CT

Howard Reid

Chair MCCHH Steering Committee

City of Middletown

The Hon. Dan Drew, Mayor, City of Middletown



Bob Fusari

For many years, Bob Fusari has been an indefatigable proponent of private sector builder involvement in producing affordable housing. His role as Co-Chair of the Middlesex County Coalition and founder of the Middlesex Chamber Affordable Housing Committee, have been crucial in the ongoing success in the effort to

end chronic homelessness in Middlesex County. His work in the construction of new units of permanent supportive housing has been instrumental in reducing homelessness in Connecticut.

- ▶ President & Director of Martin House for over 30 years. This 55 Single Room Occupancy facility serves homeless individuals, many with mental illness issues.
- ▶ Thames River Community Service. TRCS major function is a 2 year transitional program for formerly homeless single mothers in a 24 unit 2 and 3 bedroom facility in Norwich. President and a director for over 20 years
- ▶ HOPE Partnership in Old Saybrook. HOPE is a non-profit organization that addresses the affordable housing needs along the Connecticut shoreline from Madison to East Lyme. Bob was director and now serves on the Property Committee and the Education & Advocacy Committee. HOPE built Ferry Crossing, the 1st project built using HOMECT regulations, otherwise known as the Incentive Housing Zone.
- ▶ Real Estate Service of CT, Inc. built a 108 unit 8-30g condominium project called SeaSpray in East Lyme.



L-R Bob Fusari, Co-Chair of the Leadership Council, Middlesex County Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, Ben Florsheim, Outreach Assistant for Sen. Chris Murphy, Sal Nesci, Chief Public Health Sanitarian for the City of Middletown and Howard Reid, Chair of the Steering Committee for the Middlesex County Coalition on Housing and Homelessness.

Bob's leadership on the issue of affordable and supportive housing brings great pride to all of us in the Connecticut housing industry and the HBRA.



L-R Howard Reid, State Representative Matt Lesser, Bob Fusari and Sal Nesci.

In addition to award plaques, recipients each received a State of Connecticut Citation from the general Assembly commending them on their efforts.

The keynote speaker at the Awards Breakfast was Nadim Matta, President, Rapid Results Institute. Nadim spoke about Zero 2016: a statewide initiative to end chronic homelessness in Connecticut. He has worked all over the globe and in Connecticut to bring local leaders together for 100 Day Challenges, and was named a Top 100 Thinkers by Foreign Policy Magazine in 2012

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Builder News

(continued)

Connecticut's Home Building Industry Recovers Slowly

When builder, Johnny Carrier, broke ground in 2006 on Samuel's Crossing in Plainville, he expected to complete the home development in five, maybe six years at most.

A decade later, the subdivision of 116 single-family houses is just a little more than half complete.

"The story of 2008 is an old one now, but it's a story we are still dealing with."

— Johnny Carrier, By Carrier Inc.

The state's home building industry — hit hard by the last recession, and particularly in 2008 — is still struggling to recover. U.S. census data released by DECD week shows some encouraging gains last year: The number of permits issued for single-family houses, condominiums and apartment units rose 14 percent in 2015, compared with the previous year. That's the highest level since 2007.

But the 6,077 housing permits granted in 2015, is still far below the 9,000 or so that would indicate a healthy market. It's also below the most recent peak of 11,885 in 2005 and the record of 28,000 in the 1980s.

"The health of the housing market is tied to the health of the local labor market. Mild job creation translates into mild housing growth."

— Donald Klepper-Smith,
DataCore Partners, New Haven

Klepper-Smith said he expects it will take between three and five years to reach the healthy market level of 9,000 permits. That forecast bars another recession, or an abrupt rise in interest rates, neither of which Klepper-Smith foresees. This

year, he sees the permit number settling between 6,000 and 7,000.

The number of units approved for building permits does not mean the housing stock is increasing by that number. In 2015, 1,230 units were demolished, making for a net gain of only 4,847 units.

However home building — a well-watched indicator of economic health — is getting a lift in Connecticut from strong apartment construction. In 2015, multi-family projects of five or more units outpaced single-family construction by a wide margin: 3,493 apartment units compared with 2,436 single-family units.

Single-family houses are selling. For more than a year, monthly housing reports have consistently disclosed double-digit gains in sales. But there is plenty of competition, with for sale inventory increasing, and overall prices struggling to stabilize.

In Plainville, By Carrier has sold seven or eight houses in Samuel's Crossing annually in recent years, with prices, so far, ranging from \$329,900 to \$420,000. The sales made for a "decent" year in 2015, when combined with a half-dozen other projects By Carrier has in the works, mostly in Hartford County. However, Johnny Carrier would like to see 10-12 sales per year at the Plainville development. He says that foot traffic has not rebounded well this year, despite the mild winter, and he believes the state's budget woes — and all the talk of layoffs — is making would-be buyers more cautious.

Across the state, Fairfield County had the strongest showing in 2015, with 800 single-family houses and 1,767 multi-family units in projects of five or more units. By contrast, Hartford County had 491 and 384 for the same categories.

Klepper-Smith believes that the strength of the apartment construction market clearly shows there is an abiding desire for housing options that don't commit to the long term.

"Flexible housing alternatives are essential," he said.

**Homeownership has been declining since the peak of the housing bubble. The national rate slipped in the first quarter to a near four-decade low of 63.5%, according to the Commerce Department. The homeownership rate for households headed by someone under 35 years old fell to 34% in the first quarter of this year, the lowest level since at least 1994.

For First Time in Modern Era, Living With Parents Edges Out Other Living Arrangements for 18- to 34-Year-Olds

Broad demographic shifts in marital status, educational attainment and employment have transformed the way young adults in the U.S. are living, and a new Pew Research Center analysis of census data highlights the implications of these changes for the most basic element of their lives — where they call home. In 2014, for the first time in more than 130 years, adults ages 18 to 34 were slightly more likely to be living in their parents' home than they were to be living with a spouse or partner in their own household.

A variety of factors contribute to the long-run increase in the share of young adults living with their parents. The first is the postponement of, if not retreat from, marriage. The median age of first marriage has risen steadily for decades.

In addition, trends in both employment status and wages have likely contributed to the growing share of young adults who are living in the home of their parent(s), and this is especially true of young men. Employed young men are much less likely to live at home than young men without a job, and employment among young men has fallen significantly in recent decades. The share of young men with jobs peaked around 1960 at 84%. In 2014, only 71% of 18- to 34-year-old men were employed. Similarly with earnings, young men's wages (after adjusting for inflation) have been on a downward trajectory since 1970 and

(continued)



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(continued)

fell significantly from 2000 to 2010. As wages have fallen, the share of young men living in the home of their parent(s) has risen.

Other key findings:

- ▶ The growing tendency of young adults to live with parents predates the Great Recession. In 1960, 20% of 18- to 34-year-olds lived with mom and/or dad. In 2007, before the recession, 28% lived in their parental home.
- ▶ In 2014, 40% of 18- to 34-year-olds who had not completed high school lived with parent(s), the highest rate observed since the 1940 Census when information on educational attainment was first collected.
- ▶ Young adults in states in the South Atlantic, West South Central and Pacific United States have recently experienced the highest rates on record of living with parent(s).
- ▶ With few exceptions, young men across all races and ethnicities have been more likely than young women to live in the home of their parent(s).
- ▶ The changing demographic characteristics of young adults—age, racial and ethnic diversity, rising college enrollment—explain little of the increase in living with parent(s).

Connecticut Builders Speak About the Current Market

T&M Building Company

President, Greg Ugalde says, “It’s a tough market. We have to fight for every sale. People are trying to figure out which ends up due to current news.”

Verna Builders

At HillCrest Village, the 98 lot Southington subdivision Verna Builders & Iannini Development are building, detached single-family homes 1,700 sf - 2,600 sf, are priced from \$369,000. They have sold nine homes in April and May of this

year — half to millennials, half to boomers. Liz Verna says that she is doing all she can to reach these two hottest buyer segments— Baby Boomers and Millennials. Each Sunday, HillCrest Village holds a mini farmer’s market at HillCrest, and they are also participating in a Southington drive to combat Childhood Cancer called *Alex’s Lemonade Stand*.



ORGANIC PRODUCE JUNE THRU SEPTEMBER

HillCrest Village Open House
will take place on Sundays from 12p – 5p



wildroosterfarmct.com or
hillcrestct.com for more info

Sunday Farm Stand

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Since last June, Hillcrest Homes has built nine houses and another two are under construction. At least another seven houses will begin construction this summer. Liz says that in general, development has been slowed by the lengthening of state and local approvals, on top of a shrinking number of tracts that are easily developed.

Landworks Development

Developer Ron Janeczko and Certified Green Builder, Chris Nelson, Nelson Construction’s newest community, Highcroft, encompasses 224 luxury apartments and 48 townhomes set on a ridge of the Powder Forest neighborhood in Simsbury.



“Apartments are still active, but for sale product is slow,” says Chris. “We are moving at a really good pace at Highcroft. We just started scheduling hardhat tours and had a couple signed the first week. The first building will be ready for move-ins on June 15. The Highcroft Lodge and pool will be open by around July 4th. We have had 50 – 80 workers on the job all spring. It is a really beautiful property, from the land to the architecture to the amenities.”

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Landworks Development

- ▶ 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom and 2-bedroom, plus den style floor plans
- ▶ 10 out of 16 homes per building have direct access or attached garages
- ▶ Highcroft Lodge, the onsite resident center, offers a lounge, gathering rooms, business center, game gallery, entertaining kitchen, and fully equipped Fitness Center with cutting-edge weight training, cardio-fit, and stretching equipment.
- ▶ A saltwater pool features lounges and cabanas and a large sunning terrace, as well as a patio with covered porches, an outdoor grilling kitchen, bocce court and fire pit.
- ▶ Playscape, Dog Park, Grilling Areas and Village Green

The Highcroft website focuses on the Simsbury and Highcroft Lifestyle including the fact that Simsbury is the first town in CT to receive a Silver Bicycle Friendly Community designation.

Santini Living

Kevin Santini reports that they continue to concentrate on rentals. However, without higher paying jobs in Connecticut, he is concerned about overheating, even in the rental market.

House of Hanbury

According to Bob Hanbury, the size of their remodeling jobs has quadrupled, but the number of leads are down. (See "Whole House Remodels & Additions Up" in this section.)

Sunwood Development

Bob Wiedenmann reports, "At Royal Oaks on the west side of Wallingford, we now have half of the 16 lots sold with homes starting at \$420,000. There are 7 spacious, age-friendly house designs, one with a convenient first floor owners' suite and the others offer traditional "all bedrooms on the second level".

At Bridgewater Estates, we are building the 1st of 30 architect-designed custom homes set on acre+ home sites in the Northford section of North Branford."

Steiner Inc.

Newly installed Fairfield County HBRA President, Chris Steiner, reports that their company is not building housing. They are just completing a 40,000 sf bounce gym and starting a 45,000 sf medical office building in Danbury.

SIR Development



Rob & Julie Haroun have overcome a flat high end market in Westport -selling 6 luxury spec homes so far this year. They are on target to meet their last year's sales of 10 homes. The SIR Signature Homes team includes SIR President, Rob Haroun, partner Julie, who owns Westport Residential Realty, in house designer Shawna Feeley, as well as Elayne Landau, who focuses on business development & land acquisition, marketing consultant, Gaille Dudley, Sally Rappaport, in house sales and project managers Mike Hanaffee and Marc Ventresca (not pictured). For the last few years, SIR has accounted for 20% of the new homes market in Westport.

Susquehanna Enterprises

Nick Yanacelli reports that there are 350 homes on the market in the town of New Canaan.

Doherty & Deleo

Ken Deleo has two good sized specs, one custom and remodeling jobs. "So far so good, We're busy in Darien."

Boynton Construction

Ken Boynton has a new 2 family project in Vernon, and a small community in Durham with a lot of foot traffic, but hard to get people back. He just bought a single family project in Manchester.

Mystic River Building Company

HBRAC President, Nort Wheeler is the busiest he's been in 4 years. He reports that Electric Boat, Pfizer and Pratt & Whitney are hiring. Nort joined the Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce Board and learned that Electric Boat is building two large facilities, and will be bringing in 5,000 employees over the next 5 years, while Pfizer is hiring 300 this year.

Viking Kitchens



David Trachten is very busy with multiple new projects in Hartford County, including 250 apartment units at Flanagan's Landing in Glastonbury, which is being built by Associated Construction.

In addition, Viking is supplying the
(continued)



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Delamar West Hartford, a boutique hotel coming to Blue Back Square with 99 traditional hotel rooms and 12 extended stay units.

Viking Kitchens is also supplying a new development by Corporation for Independent Living. Located in the heart of one of Hartford's most historically significant neighborhoods, the former Capewell Horse Nail Factory will be repurposed as home to 72 unique residential apartments, as well as 5,400 square feet of commercial office space. Designed to preserve the history and character of the original structure, Capewell Lofts is targeting LEED® Silver certification. The building will feature an industrial chic design with large windows, exposed brick and concrete floors and ceilings, as well as sweeping views of the Hartford skyline and Colt Park. But Capewell's most distinctive feature will be the new life and sense of community it infuses into the already vibrant Sheldon Charter Oak neighborhood.

Key Features:



Capewell Lofts rendering

- Generous square footage
- Large windows
- High ceilings
- Exposed beams and brick walls
- Club room/theater
- Full gym
- Billiard room
- Covered bike storage
- Outdoor patio

Viking is also supplying Mark Lov-

ley, Lovley Development's new *Home of Distinction* at Northridge Court in Southington, a partnership with Fox 61 with tours this fall to benefit the Southington charity Bread for Life.

New CT Law Requires Documentation of Concrete Foundations

The newly passed legislation, introduced by the planning and development committee, mandates that town building officials document the individual or company that supplied the concrete and the name of the individual or company that installed all concrete foundations installed on or after October 1, 2016. Effective date for notifying building official of supplier and installer is 10-1-16 for all foundations poured on or after that date.

It also permits the owners of buildings with crumbling concrete foundations to request a revaluation of their home after getting written confirmation from a licensed structural engineer that their foundation is deteriorating. In addition, the bill requires the Department of Consumer Protection to report the possible causes of failing concrete to the General Assembly no later than Jan. 1, 2017.

Rep. Bill Aman, ranking Planning & Development Committee member said the bill helps prevent the problem of crumbling foundations in the future, but also helps homeowners with the issue now.

"It does help the current people in that they will be able to go into their town hall and get their assessments on their homes reduced because of the problems with their foundations," Aman said "They can bring that to the assessor and they must re-look and assess the value. Some towns are already doing that in some form or another."

Whole House Remodels and Additions Up

Whole house remodels and additions are regaining market share, according to a new survey of remodelers released by NAHB Remodelers in May.

models remain the most common renovations, basements, whole-house remodels and both large- and small-scale additions are returning to levels not seen since prior to the downturn," said 2016 NAHB Remodelers Chair Tim Shigley, CAPS, CGP, GMB, GMR.

Bathrooms topped the list of most common remodeling projects for the fifth time since 2010. Eighty-one percent of remodelers reported that bathrooms were a common remodeling job for their companies, while 79% reported the same for kitchen remodels. Window and door replacements decreased to 36% from 45% in 2014.

CT weighs tougher building codes to combat climate change



HBJ PHOTO | John Stearns

Bob Hanbury, co-owner of House of Hanbury Builders Inc., seen here at a project his company is doing to expand a veterinary clinic in Farmington, says Connecticut builders already have a strong record of compliance with building codes, from design to construction to inspection. He supports stronger building codes that make sense for the area they're applied.

The homebuilding industry is taking a wait-and-see approach to Governor Daniel Malloy's recent executive order directing state agencies to strengthen building codes in response to climate change.

"Builders aren't opposed to stronger codes where necessary, particularly in wind-prone areas along the coast, but

"While bathroom and kitchen re-

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want decisions based on sound research and cost-benefit analyses. Most importantly, they don't want regulations that price customers out of the market," said Bob Hanbury, a longtime builder and co-owner of Newington-based House of Hanbury Builders Inc., which does residential remodeling and additions. Hanbury is a Graduate Master Remodeler and a leader in the industry, including recognition in the NAHB Remodeling Hall of Fame. He is active on state and International Building Codes Committees and serves on the board of the Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut Inc.

"The motives are good; we just want to make sure the outcomes are as good as the motives," said Hanbury.

In April, Malloy issued an executive order instructing the Department of Administrative Services, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Insurance Department to work with the Office of the State Building Inspector to ensure that the next revision to the State Building Code contains standards that increase the resiliency of new and renovated homes and buildings.

Malloy hasn't proposed anything specific, but said measures to consider include sealing seams in roof decks to guard against water infiltration if shingles blow off; stronger tie-downs of roofs to building structures; and impact-resistant glass in high-wind areas.

Many measures to make buildings more resilient are relatively inexpensive, Malloy said. He also cited research that every \$1 spent on resiliency measures can save \$4 in insurance claims. The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) backed Malloy's recommendations. The institute released a report last year on the progress of 18 hurricane-prone coastal states along the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Coast in strengthening their residential building-code systems.

Connecticut scored 88 out of a possible 100, ranking it fifth best among the 18 states, up from a score of 81 in 2012. Top-rated states have strong statewide residential building codes and regulatory

processes for building officials, home-builders and residential construction contractors, IBHS said. It evaluated 47 key data points to assess the effectiveness of states' residential-building-code programs, including code adoption and enforcement; building official training and certification; and licensing requirements for construction trades that implement building code provisions, IBHS added.

Cheap investment

Timothy Reinhold, senior vice president, research and chief engineer at IBHS, cited a study done at the organization's South Carolina research center that tested a duplex in a hurricane simulation. One side of the duplex had its roof deck sealed, at a cost of about \$500, the other didn't. The differences in estimated losses between the two sides were about \$10,000, he said, or 20 times the cost of sealing.

Hanbury would like to see homeowners get a reduction on insurance premiums for building to higher standards that will save insurers in disasters. Reinhold said some insurers offer incentives, but it differs from state to state.

Builders want standards that make sense and don't price customers out of the market. Will people be able to buy an affordable home in Connecticut if we overbuild on a regular basis compared to our neighbors? Is it worth the extra expense? That should be an individual decision, not a mandate, unless a home is in a target zone for severe weather.

— Bob Hanbury

"Some of the governor's ideas

wouldn't necessarily make sense on a statewide basis," he said. "But if we target it to the real high-wind zones ... I'm willing to listen to that — that's smart."

Severe weather threats

Jessie Stratton, director of policy for DEEP, said talks among state agencies would lead to a code that is more appropriate for the changing climate.

"It's not just coastal areas that are prone to trouble; it's also inland riverine areas subject to flooding, she said. DEEP is concerned about rising sea levels and more intense storms, particularly stronger nor'easters," she said.

Hurricane Sandy destroyed homes along the coast in 2012 and left behind \$500 million in private insurance claims in the state, according to the Insurance Information Institute.

"We may or may not get hurricanes, but we clearly are getting more and more nor'easters," Stratton said. "When you have prolonged rain events that often accompany a nor'easter, you're going through multiple tide cycles and so you have whatever impact there is from rising sea level combined with the water and then any kind of wind-driven storm surge."

2nd highest coastal insurer property

"Connecticut has more insured property value along its coast than any other state but Florida, she said. It's a significant issue in terms of maintaining the values of those properties and trying to ensure both the safety of people behind those properties, but also the property has a better chance of being resilient to increased storms," Stratton said.

Report ranks Connecticut dead

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last for fiscal health

Connecticut is ranked dead last among the 50 states when it comes to overall fiscal health, according to a new study released this morning by George Mason University.

The report is blunt in its assessment of Connecticut's fiscal solvency. It said Connecticut's fiscal position is poor across all categories. With between only 0.46 and 1.19 times the cash needed to cover short-term liabilities, the state's revenues matched only 94 percent of expenses, producing a deficit of \$505 per capita, according to report author Eileen Norcross, a senior research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University.

A state's ranking consists of its scores in the following categories:

- ▶ Cash solvency: Does your state have enough cash to cover its short-term bills?
- ▶ Budget solvency: Is your state taking in enough revenue to cover its fiscal year spending?
- ▶ Long-run solvency: Can your state meet its long-term spending commitments? Is it prepared for economic shocks or other risks?
- ▶ Service-level solvency: How much fiscal "slack" does your state have to increase spending if residents demand more services?
- ▶ Trust-fund solvency: How much in debt, unfunded pension liabilities, or health care obligations does your state have?

Bottom Five States

Kentucky, Illinois, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut rank in the bottom five states, largely owing to the low amounts of cash they have on hand and their large debt obligations.

- ▶ Each state has massive debt obligations.

- ▶ Each of the bottom five states exhibits serious signs of fiscal distress, making these states' debt levels look more like Puerto Rico's. Though the states' economies may be stronger than Puerto Rico's, allowing them to better navigate fiscal crises, their large debt levels still raise serious concerns.

Connecticut is heavily reliant on debt to finance its spending. With liabilities exceeding assets by 34 percent, per-capita debt is \$9,077, the report said. Total debt is \$20.88 billion. Unfunded pensions are \$83.31 billion on a guaranteed-to-be-paid basis, and other postemployment benefits (OPEB) are \$19.53 billion. Total liabilities are equal to 53 percent of total state personal income.

Winners of Sixth Annual CT Zero Energy Challenge Announced

In April, Eversource and the United Illuminating Company selected four winners for the sixth annual Energize Connecticut Zero Energy Challenge (ZEC), a statewide design/build competition for single and multi-family homes. This year's competition featured nine homes from across the state built between June 1, 2014 and December 31, 2015.

In this nationally-recognized initiative, participants are challenged to construct high efficiency homes that consume little to no energy.

"The Zero Energy Challenge exemplifies the future of residential new construction, and demonstrates the positive impact zero energy building can have on our community and environment," said Connecticut Department of Energy and Environment Protection Commissioner Rob Klee during the Award Ceremony on Thursday, April 7. "As early adopters of the zero energy movement, Connecticut builders and homeowners are proving that high performance, green homes are sustainable and affordable. This year's participants serve as examples to everyone throughout Connecticut that

being energy efficient and having a zero energy home is attainable."

RESNET Rating Standards are used to determine each home's HERS Index (Home Energy Rating Score), a nationally-standardized scoring system that measures a home's energy performance (the lower the number, the more energy efficient the home; a score of zero represents a net zero energy home).

Competing builders and architects implement energy-saving features into the home's design to increase energy performance and lower its HERS Index. The project's cost effectiveness and the home's total estimated operating costs are also used to determine the winners in each category.

HBRA Member Wins Lowest Overall HERS Index Winner

Project: Ken Stanwicks and Donna Martin Residence, East Haddam, CT

Builder: Skip Kamis, Inc., Glastonbury, CT

The house built by Skip Kamis sits on a 10 acre lot. The 10 acre site is surrounded by forest and conservation land, and it was cleared just enough to allow for shade free solar capacity for the home. As empty nesters, the homeowner designed the house with special attention to being able to remain in the home well into old age thus lengthening the time to benefit from the investment. The all electric ranch with a 1680 sq. ' footprint



Homeowners Ken Stanwicks & Barbara Martin

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and 1560 sq.' of conditioned space features a high level of accessibility for its empty nester owners, including a curbless shower. The hot water tank is located just below the kitchen sink and the laundry and bathroom were placed in the design to allow for the shortest possible runs to boost water conservation. The low flow toilets and shower head also contribute to this as well. The use of ceiling fans helps to cut down on A/C use. The floor plan eliminates all but one short hallway making full use of every square foot of living space.

Orientation and Envelope: (Windows, Insulation, Framing)

- Walls: 10" double wall construction with dense pack cellulose of R-40.



Skip Kamis 10" double wall



Skip Kamis R-60 ceiling R-38 walls R-40 floor



Skip Kamis Air Tight Building

- Roof: Ceilings have R-19 Kraft batts with an R-41 blown cellulose on top for a total of R-60. Two foot roof overhangs shade south facing glass in the summer.
- Basement: Basement ceiling has R-38 Kraft Batts. Basement floor has 2" foam boards under slab.
- Windows: Klearwall triple pane windows manufactured by Munster Joinery in Ireland were used. Window glazing does not exceed 20% of conditioned living space and 53% of all glass is on the south facing wall. Two foot roof overhangs shade south facing glass in the summer. An SHG of .61 provides supplemental solar heating during winter months.
- Sill and top plates heavily sealed with caulk and meticulous caulking around windows inside and out. House wrapped with Zip system.

Heating, Cooling, and Hot Water:

- Mitsubishi Electric Ductless Mini Split Heat Pump System with H2i Technology. A single zone system serves the greatroom and a multi-zone system handles the bedrooms and studio.
- Water heater is a State Hybrid Residential heat pump model SPX50DHPT
- A basement dehumidifier will be used during summer months. Santa Fe Compact 70 pint energy star rated.

Ventilation:

- HRV system is a Greentek by Imperial

Air Technologies Model # PH 7.15. It draws stale air from the bathrooms and kitchen and feeds fresh air to the bedrooms and side entry hall. It has continuous air flow on reduced speed with boost timers in the bathrooms and a dehumidistat in the living space.

Renewables:

- An 8.4 kw system using LG 280 watt panels with solar optimizers is expected to produce 100% of the homes electrical load

Specific project information for all entries can be found by visiting CTZeroEnergyChallenge.com.

The Connecticut Zero Energy Challenge is now seeking participants for its 2016 challenge. The deadline to apply is June 1, 2016. Homes must be completed by December 15, 2016. If interested in applying, please visit CTZeroEnergyChallenge.com for more details.

About Energize Connecticut

Energize Connecticut helps you save money and use clean energy. It is an initiative of the Energy Efficiency Fund, the Connecticut Green Bank, the State, and your local electric and gas utilities, with funding from a charge on customer energy bills. Information on energy-saving programs can be found at EnergizeCT.com or by calling 1.877.WISE.USE. ☐



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Sales & Marketing

Part I – Building a Successful Luxury Spec Home



Bluewater Darren Andreoli & Bob Sprouls



Deirdre & Darren

On May 17th, Bob Sprouls and Darren Andreoli of Bluewater Home Builders, and Deirdre Andreoli of Westport Beach & Country Homes, hosted a Sales & Marketing Council meeting at their newly staged spec home on Mayflower Parkway in Westport.

Bluewater has the unique accomplishment of having won Spec Home of the Year for each of past three years, and their newest spec home, a 6,100 sf 4 level modern farmhouse on a premium site within walking distance to Compo Beach, is listed at \$3.7 million.



SMC Chairman, Joanne Carroll, opened the meeting with some comments on the Westport market.

“Over the past few years, Westport and Greenwich have been the HOT towns for new construction,” Carroll said. “Last year, Westport had an enviable 92 housing permits and Greenwich had 138!”

“Over the last year, the high end market has been flat in Westport and throughout Fairfield County. That’s why a prime location like this one, and knowing your buyer, like Bluewater does, is so important to success,” Carroll said.

Then, she asked Bob and Darren to talk about their approach to building a luxury spec home: how the market has changed over the past years; what has contributed to their



Bluewater Exterior front

success in the Compo Beach area of Westport; and the unique features of 32 Mayflower Parkway.

How the market changed over the past 10-15 years

Bob began by describing their current workload as 40% custom and 60% spec.

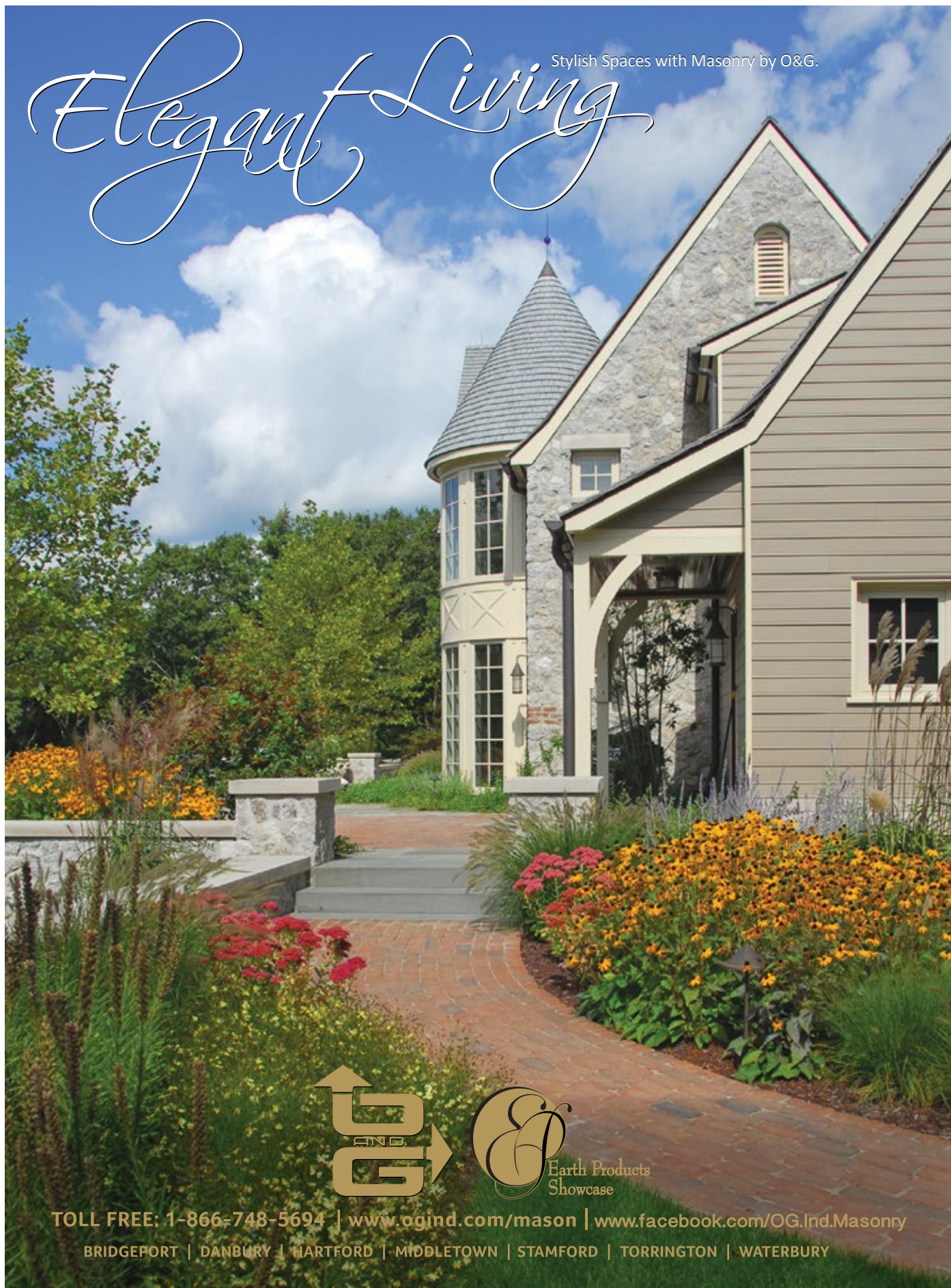
“Darren and I have been partners since 1998, and back then, a lot in Westport cost \$200,000 and the sales price of the home was \$935,000. Today a 1 acre lot is \$1 million and a premium lot \$1.4 million. We’ve gone from using basic moldings and a chair rail to fully paneled walls and ceilings.

The quality has cranked up, and there’s a lot more competition. A core group of successful builders in town has forced each of us to be better . . . We are dealing with more challenging lots, which requires skillful engineering and terracing . . . and since 2007, there’s been an explosion of information, with Trulia, Zillow, realtor.com and social media. It’s made the buyer more knowledgeable, and that’s great, because we want the smartest,

(continued)

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Sales & Marketing

(continued)



Entry hall at 32 Mayflower Parkway



Master bath at 32 Mayflower Parkway

most educated buyer. To market our properties, we must get our brand out there with website marketing and much more.”

What has contributed to your success in the Compo Beach neighborhood?

“We focus on land and location, and being steadily in the beach area, you become expert. However, we’ve been forced to build in tougher zoning areas and on smaller lots.

For example, Westport regulations requires 25 ft from a drainage area to any structure, including a pool, and the topography of most of our lots is challenging and requires skillful engineering and terracing.”

To be successful in this or any market, you have to be true to yourself. We care about our product, and spend a great deal of time marrying the house to the property.”

– Bob Sprouls

What are some of the unique aspects of 32 Mayflower Parkway?

Darren spoke about their design team, as well as some of the home’s special features.

“Westport architect Anthony Tartaglia designed the house in a bungalow style, with an open floorplan and main areas accessing the back yard. Interior designer, Michelle Hogue, Hogue ID, helped choreograph all stages of design, from space planning to molding treatments, keeping in mind the end buyer and functionality.”



Bluetwater Bob Sprouls, Michelle Hogue & Darren Andreoli



Bluetwater terraces and pool

(continued)

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Sales & Marketing

(continued)

It's all about creating VALUE by bringing great design and real quality to the marketplace.

– Darren Andreoli

Darren went on to describe this house and their building process.

“This is a modern farmhouse in a beach area – fresh and new, with custom features and timeless quality . . . For a 2/3 acre lot, which required terracing, a pool house didn’t make sense, so we have an outdoor stair leading from a lower level changing area and gym to the yard . . . Before buying a lot, we envision what we are going to build and the price point. Most of our plans are unique, and we spend 3-4 months in design and permitting, and 9 months in construction.”

The Best Marketing Can Be Free or Worth Every Penny You Spend

Donald Trump’s presidential campaign proves at least one thing: you don’t have to spend the most money on advertising to beat (at least for the moment) the competition. His advantage largely stems from the seemingly non-stop publicity in the press – publicity that costs him nothing, but has significantly more value than traditional paid advertising.

Using standard advertising rates, the media coverage Trump has received – for free – thus far in his campaign was reportedly valued at \$2 billion. Yet the money he’s spent on advertising is a small fraction of that of the other candidates. For those of us not named Trump, it’s slightly more difficult to gain media attention. But it’s still very possible, and definitely worth the effort.

The keys to effective media relations include recognizing the right opportunities and knowing who to contact.

2015 NAHB Remodelers Chair Robert Criner, GMR, GMB, CAPS, knows the tremendous value of working with the media, which has long been a big portion of his marketing strategy. Criner, owner of Criner Remodeling in Newport News, Va., was recently interviewed via Skype.

“It’s a significantly better validation of the quality of your work and enhances the overall reputation of your company,” said Criner. “It requires very little effort, and you’ll get a lot more bang for buck compared to paid advertising.”

Criner admits that being in the news won’t beef up business overnight and it can’t be your only marketing strategy. But he says it will certainly help to better position yourself as an authority on a given subject, setting you apart as the go-to professional in your area.

PR and housing specialist, Joanne Carroll, owner of JMC Resources, agrees, but her experience has been that most builders either don’t have the time, the staff or the expertise to handle PR and media on their own. But whether you do it in house, or hire a pro, here are a few pieces of advice:

- ▶ Look to the local media. Local media outlets will reach a much higher percentage of your potential clients. You are also much more likely to get a response from a local reporter, and you can more easily build a rapport with them over time. Determine which news programs and publications are the most relevant to your potential clients, and then identify specific people to contact. Many reporters and editors include their email addresses on their company websites and at the end of the articles they write.
- ▶ Lean on your local HBA. Leaders at your HBA can help you get started. And being affiliated with your HBA also connects you to NAHB and its staff, who can create a customized media list of reporters you might want to contact. NAHB can also supply supporting data or information to help further emphasize the significance of the story topic.
- ▶ Proactively pitch story ideas. Not everything is considered newsworthy, no matter how important something might be to you. Focus on recognizing unique connections between your expertise and topics of broad public interest or timeliness (i.e., the weather, local economy, holidays, seasons, community events, etc.). When reaching out to reporters, be as brief and concise as possible. Boil down your story idea to just a few sentences explaining its significance. If you can readily provide a visual, such as high-quality photos or video, be sure to mention it. But do not send email attachments until after the reporter responds.
- ▶ Show some social media savvy. Being featured in a news story is just the beginning. Social media gives you the power to get some extra marketing mileage out of that story. Posting video, photos or links to the story on your company’s social media accounts could open up opportunities for follow-up interviews and lead to additional coverage.
- ▶ Hire a Pro - If you don’t have the staff, the time or the natural ease talking with the media, a PR pro who really knows the housing business, can do all of the above, and the payback in getting you noticed will be worth every penny!.

NAHB offers its members free access to several toolkits with resources to help develop media strategies. The list includes a comprehensive toolkit for New Homes Month in April specifically created to highlight the benefits of purchasing a new home.

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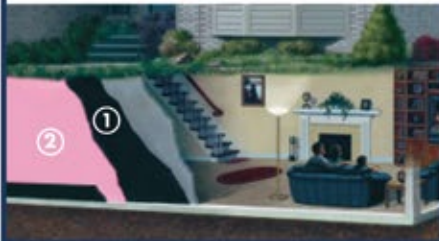
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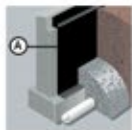
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- [1] The black, flexible membrane of TUFF-N-DRI H8 seamlessly seals out water leaks and seepage.
- [2] Pink WARM-N-DRI® foundation board insulates basement walls on the outside to reduce condensation inside.

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Sales & Marketing

(continued)

5 Ways Google Analytics Can Boost Your Sales

Google analytics makes intelligent marketing and business decisions remarkably easier. First off, Google analytics will help you spend your marketing dollars more effectively, thus saving your money over the long run.

Whether you spend your budget on search engine optimization, a new website, public relations, social media or a combination of promotional activities, you can see your marketing dollars at work within your Google analytics account reports, and track each of your tactics or campaigns' return on investment. This will help determine what you should do and what you should stop doing. You can quickly transition underperforming tactics and use your budget more effectively.

Second, the Google analytics software is free to use. Unlike other software, you can improve performance across all of your sites, apps and offline marketing with just a click of a button and at no cost. It's also easy to use. Just copy and paste the code or script from your Google analytics account to the website pages you want to track. Then, let Google analytics do the rest.

You'll be able to set up goals, create reports and start making better decisions from there. Here's how:

1. Understand Your Target Market. Google analytics gives you a lot of visitor demographic data. Most consumers use their mobile devices to surf the Internet for new products and services. When customers search for your brand on their phone and are logged into one of the social networking sites, Google analytics can pinpoint their demographic data, and combine it with their user behavior, instead of just logging the Web pages they are visiting. With this information, you can figure out whether you're actually reaching your target market. A marketing program should produce qualified traffic to your website (of the age and gender of your target market). So if it's not bringing in the folks you need it to, you'll know that you need to modify your content and messaging.

2. Overview of Traffic Sources. Computerized geographic data (or geodata) allows you to see if the locations you serve are the locations that drive your website traffic. Additionally, it is helpful to know the source of your website traffic (organic, direct, paid, referral, social, etc.). You can also compare the level of engagement of the different sources of your traffic.

3. Track Your Conversions. We all want our websites to be engaging and user friendly enough that our visitors take action. Whether clicking your phone number on their mobile phone to completing a "Contact Us" form, Google analytics allows us to separate our goals and conversions, to better understand them. Reports show conversion rates: the percentage of visitors who called the sales center, or filled out the online form, or clicked on the directions to the community and (hopefully) drove in for a visit. An increase from 1-3% per month is great news.

4. Measure Behavior Flow. What path do your visitors take when on your site? Google analytics will show you which products and services people find important, based on the pages they visited, in the order they visited them. You can see what visitors research before making a purchase or submitting a form. This information will show you the areas of your website that need improvement. For example, when you see that visitors who make it to a particular page or section of your site tend to leave directly from there, as yourself why. What is it about that page or that product that could be improved? The solution may be as easy as adding a more effective call to action – ask them to do something, such as fill out a form.

5. View Page Data. In addition to seeing the users path, Google analytics will highlight the most popular pages on your site. From the landing page, to the blog, to the contact page, you can analyze overall page engagement and see which pages need work.

These are just a few ways Google analytics has improved the ability to track your marketing tactics. Of course, there is much more to the software, and it continues to change and improve as technology advances. So make sure to take advantage of this free resource that can help you stay on the cutting edge with your next home buyers.

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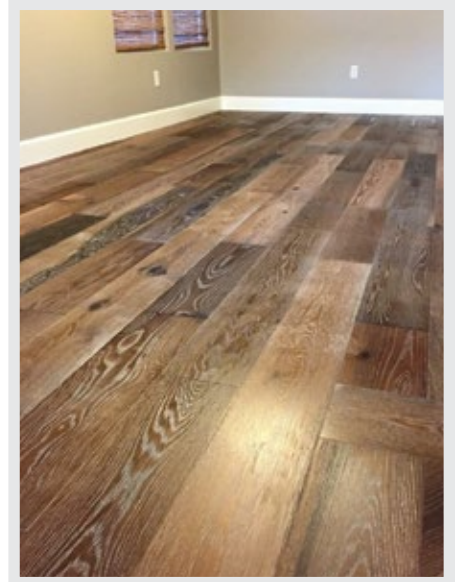
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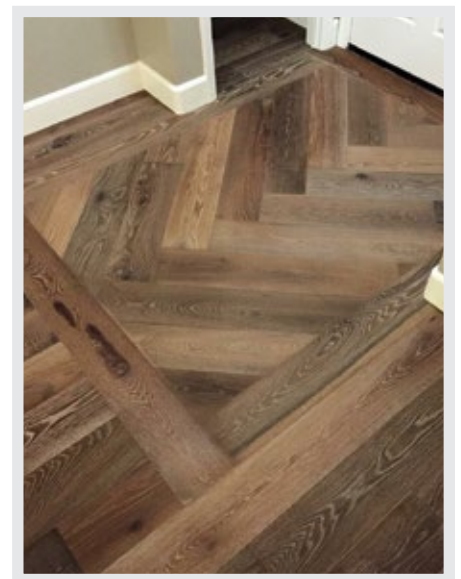
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Developers Council Connecticut Market Overview

Presented by Kathryn Redican, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services New England Properties

At the end of the First Quarter, unit sales and sales volume were up significantly for both single family homes and condominiums in Connecticut. Sales for single family homes jumped 17.28% and sales volume rose 10.59% year over year (YOY) while average price decreased 5.70% to \$352,000. Every county experienced increases in the number of sales this quarter when compared to last year.

Windham County saw the largest increase in closings with a 50% increase year over year, while Hartford County sold the most units in the first quarter with 1,425 homes. Condominium sales increased by 6.87% and sales volume rose 5.09% while average price decreased by 1.66%. Across the state, lower prices spurred sales and kept the average days on market for a home consistent year over year.

Trends seen in the first quarter remained consistent with 2015 in regards to buyer makeup. According to the 2015 Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers in Connecticut report by the Connecticut Association of Realtors®:

- ▶ 44% of buyers in Connecticut were first-time buyers and typically searched for 12 weeks and looked at 10 homes.
- ▶ 92% of all buyers purchased through a real estate agent.
- ▶ To reach the first time homebuyers, mobile is a must. Websites that are mobile-friendly are imperative to share information and to further capture a buyer's attention, listings must have beautiful, professional photography.



L-R HBRA CEO Bill Ethier, Berkshire Hathaway V.P. Brenda Maher, Developers Council Chairman Bill Ferrigno and Berkshire Hathaway Director of Marketing Kathryn Redican

- ▶ In addition to mobile-friendly sites, buyers found information on social media and online customer reviews most important when searching for a new development or agent.

Buyers not purchasing at this time are gravitating towards luxury rentals close to shopping, restaurants and outdoor entertainment. As reported by the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University:

- ▶ 37% of all households nationwide rent, the highest level since the mid-1960s.

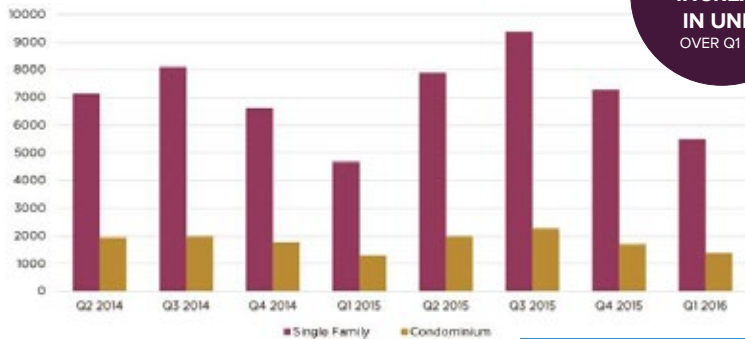
- ▶ While millennial households make up the largest share, households aged 40 and over now account for the majority of all renters.
- ▶ In order to meet these demands in Connecticut, there have been an influx of luxury rentals across the state ready for 2016 occupancy.
- ▶ Developers in Connecticut are also looking to build additional multifamily housing in 2016 evidenced by 60% of all approved permits in the first quarter which were for five or more residences.

The largest buyer pools, millennials and baby boomers, are looking for the same home types. Luxury rentals are a viable option for development as are smaller, luxurious single family homes with less maintenance. However price ranges need to be considered with the average price across the state declining and buyers expecting more at a lower price point. Attracting buyers and maintaining contact is also key with online advertising, social media and consistent construction updates.

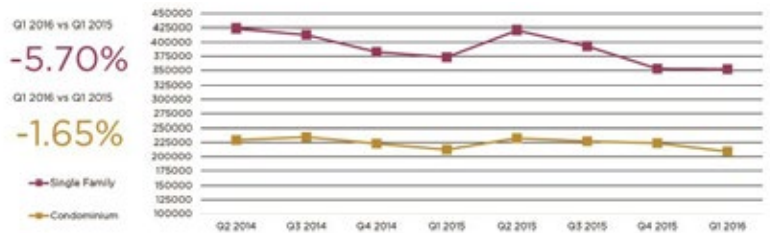
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Find a New Level of Extraordinary at Clarke's Showroom in South Norwalk



In April of 2001, Clarke opened its South Norwalk (SoNo), Connecticut showroom, the second in New England to inspire jaw-dropping visits from designers and homeowners alike. Fans visited from all over Fairfield County and beyond, and the area that garnered the most comments inside the 10,000-square-foot showroom was the English Country kitchen right inside the entrance. With its extraordinary cabinetry, hand-painted tile, massive granite-topped island, three cooktop options and revolutionary cabinet-clad Sub-Zero refrigeration, homeowners came from far and wide to study the elements they wanted to incorporate into their own homes.

The classic design elements and quality materials stood the test of time, as Clarke remodeled areas throughout the showroom over the past 15 years, but left the English Country kitchen in tact for all to see...until now.

In 2016, Clarke SoNo has unveiled a stunning replacement for that iconic kitchen. Vincent Cappello of Putnam Design worked with Clarke Showroom Manager Marco Barallon to create a new magnet for all who want to explore the latest in kitchen



design and technology. The result is a stunning transitional expression of Dutch Made cabinetry, Sub-Zero food preservation, the latest in cooking technology from Wolf, Wenge wood accents and so much more.

A steady stream of designers have already escorted clients in to demonstrate elements they plan to incorporate into designs.

"I wanted the custom cabinetry to reflect the newest thinking in design and engineering," said Cappello. "It needed to complement the new technology being employed by Sub-Zero and Wolf in their iconic appliances. Together they needed to make a bold new statement."

In a style Clarke customers have already dubbed as "Understated Elegance," Cappello selected luxurious finishes that are subtle at the same time.

"We worked with Dutch Made to design a custom door and drawer just for Clarke," said Cappello. "If you look closely, the drawer head is part of the door design. They are not designed to look as if they are two different design elements."

(continued)

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Find a New Level of Extraordinary at Clarke's Showroom in South Norwalk

(continued)



Clarke Wenge wood prep center

The cabinet facades are painted a soft custom grey and each offers surprises when opened. Special lighting illuminates the fine walnut interiors, a detail that adds a level of elegance and sophistication that is unexpected, yet perfect in this kitchen. All drawers employ a special mechanism, which allows the homeowner to simply touch any drawer, as well as the hidden pantry columns, to open them automatically. For those who do not want to utilize handles or knobs in their design, this is a perfect solution.

When replacing the stone of the original massive English Country kitchen island, Clarke knew they needed a new level of extraordinary to greet visitors. The new stone island and countertops, by Infinity Stone Inc., have provided the requisite “wow factor.” Stone artisans have mitered every exposed edge. The stone was meticulously seamed in a book match pattern on the island and the full-height backsplash. This means the pattern and grain on the left side mirror the image on the right. In addition, in a Herculean effort of fabrication, a niche was carved out of the thick quartzite backsplash over the range to create a focal point.

“We also added drama by framing the elevations with high-gloss Wenge veneer,” explained Cappello. “These are complemented by the radius ends of the island, which are also finished is solid Wenge wood fabricated by Raging River Counterworks.”

One end of the island was designed for seating, with an overhang that is also lit beneath to show the detailed under panels. On the other end, wood top artisans at Raging River Counter Works crafted a solid Wenge wood prep center with a solid wood sink and chopping space with built-in knife slots. Their proprietary

“Watershed Finish” is designed to provide years of use, and the gleaming Waterstone faucet sits like a jewel atop this part of the island.

The appliances are both luxurious and subtle as well, with Sub-Zero’s 30" integrated column refrigerator and matching 30" integrated column freezer appearing to be more like mirror-clad armoires than appliances, accurately reflecting Cappello's need to be both elegant and understated. The integrated refrigerator drawers are more undetectable than ever, with the cabinet door design deceiving the eye.

To keep the subtle grey, white and stainless pallet in tact, Cappello opted for the stainless knobs (as opposed to the iconic red) on the Wolf Range. The island offers plenty of space to showcase both Wolf's Gas and Induction Cooktops, which allow for quick Test Drive comparisons of the technology (a frequent question of Clarke visitors.) Wolf's M Series Transitional Wall Ovens blend beautifully on the far wall with the 24" Stainless Coffee System. This feature allows Clarke to greet visitors with a custom cup of coffee, espresso, latte or cappuccino.

By all indications, Clarke's new “Understated Elegance” kitchen will be a favorite for many years to come, as was its predecessor, offering little nuances to appreciate in every corner and a larger-than-life presence that reminds visitors why they visit New England's Official Sub-Zero & Wolf Showroom and Test Kitchen for inspiration again and again. For more information, visit clarkeliving.com.

(continued)



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Mayson Linn Designer/ Sales Manager and Joyce Sardo Owner and Designer

Fordham Marble's focus on craftsmanship and relationships, coupled with investments in the latest technologies has resulted in a superior product worthy of your next project.

The industry has changed dramatically over the years, and Fordham Marble has not only evolved with the changes, but has helped shape the face of the modern stone fabricating business. As new materials were introduced, such as Quartzite, Caesarstone, Silestone, Chroma, Cambria, Nano Glass, and many other natural and man-made materials, Fordham marble has added them to their product line, along with a huge variety of tile.



Their 16,000 square foot building on West Farms Road in the Bronx, has an additional 10,000 square feet of slab yard.

In 1990, Fordham Marble opened a Stamford Showroom, which has grown to 10,000 square feet. Mayson Linn is Stamford Showroom Manager, and he and his expert staff know the latest trends and materials. Their knowledge is at your disposal to save you time and money.

"I've worked with Fordham Marble for over twelve years, and they have my back. They have a combination of great fabrication expertise and a great showroom, whereas most companies like them only have one of those things. I know I can trust them with my clients, and in the unlikely event that anything goes wrong, they'll put a rush on my job to fix the problem.

They're always the first company I turn to.

- Jerry W. Stamford, CT



VAS Construction, Darien
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Tile design by Mayson Linn, Fordham Marble

(continued)

Fordham Marble

(continued)

Some places for tile and marble are messy and overwhelming, but not Fordham. Their showroom is beautiful, nicely laid out, and I love taking my clients there. They have a wide selection of both slabs and tile, and their fabrication is also good, with very accurate templating. Fordham's costs are also very reasonable, not the cheapest, but competitively priced for the high level of quality they deliver.

- David M. Wilton, CT

Fordham Marble has been fortunate to grace the cover of Architectural Digest, has been featured on the Martha Stewart Show and their work has been honored by the Marble Institute of America with an award. As our story continues, we hope you will become a part of it.

Contact Joyce Sardo at 203.348.5088 or Joyce@fordham-marble.com

Contact Mayson Linn at 203.348.5088 or Mayson@Fordhammarble.com or visit www.FordhamMarble.com



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A common face around the HBRA events is "Propane Pete" Battaglio. Propane Pete is the Sr. Regional Sales Manager for Hocon Gas Inc. and has served industry for 33 years. Pete was recognized as Fairfield County Member of the Year in 2014; and last year, he won both the HBRA Of Central CT President's Award and

BAEC Associate of the Year. He was New Haven County HBRA Associate of the Year in 2010 & 2013.

According to "Propane Pete", when natural gas is not available, propane offers three irrefutable advantages. It's clean burning, environmentally safe, and it's the favored way to cook by home and restaurant chefs.

"My propane gas is no different, but no one can touch my service and years in the business, and that goes a long way."

- Propane Pete

Hocon Gas was founded in 1952, by Mike Gable with the simple philosophy of providing the public with exceptional energy products and a commitment to outstanding customer service. Today, under the direction of Mike's son, David, the company has grown into one of the leading independently owned energy providers in the Northeast and a leader in providing high quality service to builders and developers throughout Connecticut.

Hocon is a full service propane company and can provide gas for all types of construction – new or remodeled homes. The company has 30 delivery trucks and 350,000 gallons of propane storage in Connecticut – ensuring their customers will not have a break in service. The company supplies and installs above ground and underground propane tanks, in home propane furnaces, generators, water heaters as well as pool and patio heaters, outdoor grills, stoves and fireplaces. They even carry a propane motor boat engine.



Hocon Gas installed a 1,000 gallon underground propane tank at DeRosa Builders HOBI Winning custom home at 64 Cedar Gate Road in Darien.



Olson Development new waterfront home in Riverside



New home by Doherty & Deleo in Darien

“Propane Pete” provides gas and excellent service to some of the leading builders in the state. In Fairfield County, he works with HBRA President Peter Gaboriault, Bear Paw Builders, HBRA Vice President and Greenwich builder, Anthony DeRosa, DeRosa Builders, Darien builder, Ken DeLeo, Doherty & DeLeo, Mark Olson, Olson Development, Bob Davis, R.E. Davis Builders, and top HOBI Award winners Doron Sabog & Jim Hoffman of Sound Beach Partners. In Central Connecticut, “Propane Pete” supplies Bill Ferrigno, Sunlight Construction, Liz Koiva, Nordic Builders, Bob Wiedenmann, Sunwood Development, and Johnny Carrier, By Carrier Home Builders. All have the same high regard for “Propane Pete” and Hocon Gas.

“If you want to have something done quickly and right,
you’ve got to call Propane Pete.”

To learn more about Hocon, please contact Pete “Propane Pete” Battaglio at (203) 343-2199. www.hocongas.com



Miners Inc. Named a Top Dealer for Marvin Windows and Doors

Outstanding Achievement Recognized with
“Gold Club” Award



Marvin® Windows and Doors has announced the winners of its 2015 Marvin Makes A Difference annual rewards program. Given to Marvin dealers for outstanding achievement in sales and business development, Marvin Makes A Difference allows dealers to receive recognition and valuable business tools to help grow their business.

For 2015, Miner's, Inc. of Canton was one of two Marvin dealers in Connecticut that achieved the Gold Club level of award. These elite dealers are longtime Marvin partners who have met or exceeded their sales goals, continued to grow in volume of Marvin and Integrity business, and participated in various development efforts to support their local customers.

As a Gold Club winner, Miners will receive a complete awards package from Marvin. The comprehensive awards include customized marketing materials and sales tools to enhance their showrooms and drive sales.

“Our dealers are a big part of what makes Marvin great,” said Paul Marvin, President of Marvin Windows and Doors. “Their deep knowledge of Marvin products and local expertise are a customer’s biggest resources when it comes to purchasing windows

and doors. As one of our most valued dealer partners, it’s not surprising that Miner’s Inc. is one of 2015’s top performers. Their hard work and care for their customers exemplifies what it means to be a Gold Club winner in Marvin Makes A Difference.”

“Miners is dedicated to excellent customer service and providing high quality products for every project – and Marvin helps meet both goals,” said Eric Miner. “Being recognized as a Gold Club Dealer for Marvin is a meaningful achievement for our entire team, and we are pleased to be recognized for our efforts.”

Opened in 1994 in Canton, CT, Miner's Inc. is a family-run building supply company backed by three generations of lumberyard experience and heritage. Miner's Inc. provides an extensive selection of lumber, building materials and window and door solutions for Hartford and Litchfield Counties. The Miner's business is built on providing quality products sold by a knowledgeable and courteous sales staff while offering exceptional service.

Stylish Spaces 2nd Edition Is Creative & Exquisite

Congratulations on an exquisite and creative second edition of Stylish Spaces in Masonry. The graceful script font story titles are a beautiful touch, and I recognized the cover photo right away as the Barn House Estate. I love the eclectic mix of articles you chose to include, from “The Great Horse Country Club” to “From Quarry to Kitchen” to Rainer Muhlbauer’s “Whole Foods Market” success story. Pictured is a spread on stone fabrication and restoration.



15th Annual Design and Trades Conference



On May 19th, Elevator Service Co, Inc. took part in the 15th Annual Design and Trades Conference. The conference is a free, one-day event, with code-related training and updates to the Connecticut Building Code for CT Design and Allied Trades professionals. Instructors are code and industry experts. Elevator Service was on hand to inform and educate area professionals about code, compliance, and job specific equipment, and they conducted two AIA accredited courses. One focused on the design standards and applications for: Vertical Platform Lifts, LULA Elevators, and Residential Elevators. The other course was an introduction to Pneumatic Vacuum Elevators.

(continued)

The Brothers Who Just Do Gutters

"We do a ton of work in Connecticut," said Ryan Parsons, and he mentioned a number of builders he and his brother, Ken, work with in Fairfield and Litchfield Counties. Ryan became co-owner of The Brothers Who Just Do Gutters in 2004, and the two brothers have combined their unique skill set to grow the business to what it is today. Ryan is the company's Chief Solutionist®.

What is a Solutionist you say!

"We don't have estimators or salesman at The Brothers Who Just Do Gutters," says Ryan. "We just have Solutionists® who provide a solution that best fits the client's needs with a price. For example, we may use an oversized 6" gutter in an area that attracts the most water, while installing standard 5" gutters on the remaining portions of the home."

According to Ryan and Ken Parsons, gutters are typically undersized, and the 6" gutter is becoming the new standard, especially with the complex, changing rooflines and valleys in Fairfield County's new homes.

The right solution for each job

"Some houses call for a half round gutter vs. the traditional case style," says Ryan.

"Architects don't always come up with the best solution for drainage. We might suggest bigger, longer runs, so that the downspout can be hidden on the side of the house instead of several downspouts distracting the eye on the front of a beautiful home."

— Ryan Parsons



Brothers curved gutter

Ryan went on to say, "If we are called in early, we can advise when and how to put in underground drains. We take into consideration wind, pitch of roof, valleys and even species of trees on the site, because there are different gutter guards for different species. . .

The cost of copper has come down significantly, so that's a great option. However, Galvalume is another great product that has the strength of steel and the longevity of copper. Galvalume is more corrosion resistant than galvanized. Galvanized gutters start to rust in about ten years."

Average industry cost by material:

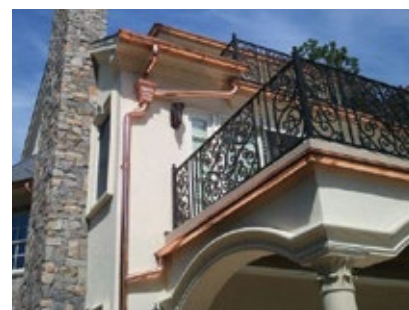
- ▶ Aluminum: \$6/ft – \$15/ft
- ▶ Galvanized: \$8/ft – \$20/ft
- ▶ Galvalume: \$12/ft – \$30/ft
- ▶ Copper: \$20/ft – \$40/ft

Why We Just do Gutters

"We would rather perfect one craft and work to be the best in the business in this specific area, than have our hands in too many different jars, and just be 'okay' at each service," Ken explains. "Strictly providing gutter services has allowed us the opportunity to focus 100% of our attention on mastering our skills in not only guttering, but customer service. Organized scheduling and communication with our clients is essential to our business. We invest in our clients, employees and business, which has made us the most trusted and respected gutter contractor in Pennsylvania, Virginia, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut."



Galvalume gutter



Copper gutters



protecting your client's
experience

866-550-3569
request@brothersgutters.com
brothersgutters.com

AWARD-WINNING COMPANY WITH CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS



KLAFF'S

The Luxury Home Design Store



With 95 years of industry experience, Klaffs has firmly established itself as the ultimate resource for home design products, as well as unmatched product knowledge and guidance. Their unique "showroom" stores were created with a simple vision in mind; to help their customers visualize and explore new possibilities.

Klaffs offers the largest selection of world-renowned bath, lighting and other home design products... all under one roof. Their family business has always been a fountain of inspiration with a vast selection and expertise that cannot be found anywhere else.

Contact Joe Passaro at 203-866-1603 or jpassero@klaffs.com. Check out www.klaffs.com

Ed Rekos named Vice President of Sales at Ridgefield Supply Company



Ridgefield Supply Company, a Connecticut-based lumberyard and retail store, has announced the appointment of Ed Rekos as the company's Vice President of Sales.

Ed is a building industry veteran with more than a decade of sales experience. "I'm very excited to be part of Ridgefield Supply Leadership team; to help our sales team achieve new levels of success, as

well as enhance customer relationships," Rekos said.

"All of us at here at Ridgefield Supply are excited to have Ed lead the Sales Organization. He is truly a leader within the industry," said Ridgefield Supply Company CEO and owner, Margaret Price. "Ed's appointment will help us build on our forward momentum and enable Ridgefield Supply to sustain this rapid growth."

The Ridgefield Supply Company is a third generation lumber company owned and operated by the Price family. They are currently undergoing the largest transformation in the history of the company, with a complete redevelopment of their lumberyard & retail store. When complete in the fall of 2016, 100% of their stock lumber & building materials, will be under cover, dry and clean.

For more information about Ridgefield Supply, call 203.438.2626, or visit www.ridgefieldsupply.com or email us at ridgefieldsupply@rsupply.net.

She Sheds'

The Outdoor Room's Answer to the Man Cave

The concept behind the man cave is that men have a personal room that functions as a sanctuary from the rest of the house and family. It can be decorated and maintained as they see fit, and used as a retreat in times of need. Sounds like something women would appreciate too, right? Welcome to the "she shed" – a feature that should be on every builder's to do list.





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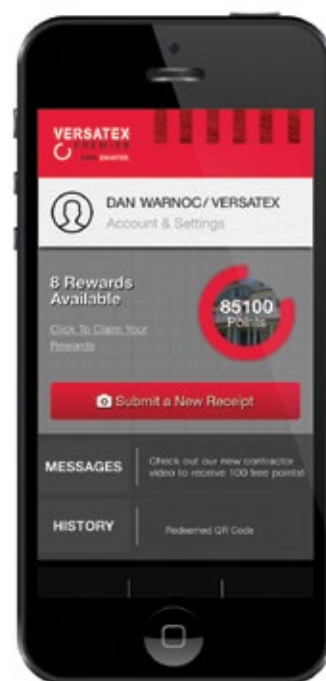
Available through Interstate + Lakeland Lumber, VERSATEX high-quality cellular PVC trim solutions deliver superior aesthetics and longevity. Backed by a Lifetime Warranty, VERSATEX is moisture and insect resistant, and won't rot, cup, or split.

VERSATEX continually innovates to deliver not only the standard options, but also solutions that make builders' lives easier. Offerings available at Interstate locations include: trimboard, sheet, one-piece corners, stealth trim, vented and solid soffit systems, one-piece column wraps, mouldings, and more.

Additionally, VERSATEX also rewards you for your loyalty! Through the **Premier Builder App**, users earn points

for every VERSATEX purchase that can be redeemed for a variety of prizes such as tools, sports equipment, and electronics. Status tiers also come with marketing support perks to help you grow your business.

Interstate and VERSATEX are dedicated to helping you Trim Smarter. 



Step Outside With Stone

By Tyra Dellacroce, V.P. Connecticut Stone



Exterior landscapes have grown-up, and today's homeowner is looking to expand their living space to include their outdoors. The trend is towards creating more gathering points such as open-air dining, living "rooms," and summer kitchens decked out with state-of-the-art technology and appliances. Pool and spa areas are equally important, incorporating designated zones for relaxing and entertaining.

In addition, homeowners are requesting stone fireplaces that rival their indoor version, and fire pits to extend their season for as long as possible. At Connecticut Stone, we have the resources, sourcing and a vast selection of stone to make the dream of a backyard escape a reality.

As New Englanders, we know the summer season is short and we are understandably eager to make the most of it, but it can be a challenge to find the appropriate hardscape materials for our fickle climate. Fluctuating temperatures of late winter/early spring produce a freeze/thaw effect, causing some pavers to flake or crack. Then comes the extreme heat that will render some stonework too hot to handle, often making it almost

impossible to enjoy comfortably or go barefoot. Fortunately, we have done the work for you – and after years of experience working with stone, here are my suggestions for finding reliable products to address the harsh weather of our region without sacrificing on style.

Bluestone – a cost effective solution for large surface areas

The perennial favorite in Connecticut has been Bluestone. It is the gold standard of stone for many reasons. Like a classic blue blazer, Bluestone never goes out of style, equally at home complementing modern, transitional or traditional architecture. Readily available, Bluestone is quarried in nearby New York and

Pennsylvania. This venerable product is economical, ranging in price from about \$6.00 to \$10.00 per square foot, a cost effective solution for large surface areas such as patios, pool surrounds and walkways.

As beautiful and timeless as Bluestone is, it is not without its drawbacks. Two common complaints that we hear are that the stone gets very hot; families find it difficult to go barefoot, and the uneven surface often causes stubbed toes. The inherent cleft, or texture of the stone, is naturally slip resistant, can also be uneven and rough on the feet. One solution is to specify a flamed finish in lieu of natural cleft. A flamed finish is a consistently uneven texture that will remove the stubbed toe factor.

Fortunately, we have sourced additional options for builders, landscape architects, designers and home owners to help find the best options. Given choices, the designer and homeowner can weigh the pros and cons and ultimately choose the material that best fits their needs, budget and lifestyle. Here are a few of my favorites:

An exciting up-and-coming trend we are seeing is the porcelain paver.

Man-made, the $\frac{3}{4}$ " pavers closely resemble natural stone, so much so that even professionals can't always tell the difference. The consistently textured surface alleviates some of the tripping hazards of natural cleft Bluestone and is available in a variety of sizes, shades and patterns. Ranging in price from \$7.00 to \$15.00, this surface is slightly more expensive than Bluestone, but delivers an added benefit because porcelain pavers are easy to clean. Unlike other popular stones, porcelain is impervious to discoloration from pollen, leaves, bird droppings, grease, food and drink stains.

The porcelain paver can be laid on a concrete pad or, alternatively installed on a pedestal. The pedestal installation is unique to pavers and is ideal for rooftops

or flat decking on balconies, porches or patios where the weight of stone is prohibitive and/or drainage is an issue. There is no grouting involved so water can seep through the joints. The pavers are laid and locked into place, and the pedestal system is hidden under the tiles for a clean look.

Dekton – a revolutionary blend of glass, porcelain and quartz

Another man-made product recently introduced to the outdoor scene, Dekton, is pressurized to recreate the metamorphic state of natural stone. Best known as a surface for kitchen counters, this product is now making its way outside. Basically indestructible, Dekton is thermal shock proof to withstand extreme cold and heat. More resistant to abrasion than granite and highly immune to UV light, it will not fade or degrade. Dekton's non-porous nature resists all kinds of stains making it a smart choice for installation around barbecues and outdoor kitchens.

Limestone continues to be a popular choice for poolscapes

Its light color deflects heat and stays cool on bare feet. Connecticut Stone has sourced a beautiful natural stone, Jerusalem Grey, which offers two finishes in one product. One side of the stone is sandblasted, the other features a brushed finish. This dual finish can be used to create tone-on-tone designs, such as accent bands or checkerboard patterns. It also



Dekton grill



AKDO Atlas Concorde Seastone in Lastra finish

allows the designer to designate activity zones by keeping the material consistent but varying the finish. Limestone does require more maintenance than some other stones since it is susceptible to acid etching. We don't recommend sealing the limestone, as you do indoors, because it is preferable that moisture in the stone

has the ability to evaporate. Jerusalem Grey is a quality limestone, pricing out around \$16.00 to \$24.00 per square foot.

For durability, granite is an excellent choice. This handsome and

hardworking stone maintains a uniform texture and cool temperature beneath one's feet. Composed of quartz, mica and feldspar, this surface requires virtually no maintenance. Quarried overseas, we have a variety of granite selections in stock in our Connecticut stoneyard, ready to install, at approximately \$8.00 to \$15.00 a square foot.

Working with a stone specialist who can show you all your options to get the look and style you want based on your vision, environment, application, budget and lifestyle. We'll share our trade secrets, like using cost-effective products for large expanses and specifying more expensive, dramatic stone in high-visibility areas. It's worth the trip to take a look around our Milford stone yard for inspiration, and come talk to our knowledgeable staff for design advice. We can help you discover the perfect stone for your home. □



CT Stone Jerusalem Grey

One Lender's Point of View

A market update

By Savings Bank of Danbury Vice President Stephani Hayes

Savings Bank of Danbury continues to lend throughout CT, and each town has its own characteristics in terms of sales activity, consumer perception/desirability, and what a newly constructed home should contain.

The construction financing opportunities that we experience continue to vary. They include commercial retail/office space, high-density housing, speculative homes in lower Fairfield County, custom homes peppered throughout the State, or the development of residential subdivisions.

Updates to previously mentioned projects financed by Savings Bank of Danbury and my current market observations are as follows:

- ▶ **Water's Edge of Shelton** – a 15-unit waterfront community along the Housatonic River has sold/delivered some of its pre-sold units and is experiencing a good level of sales activity. The list prices vary depending on the unit being “water front” or having “water views”.
- ▶ **Laurel Hill Village** – 13-unit townhouse-style condominium complex in Brookfield with 3 units

deemed “affordable” has also sold/delivered units and is experiencing a good level of sales activity. On average, the Developer is providing new construction under \$300,000.

- ▶ **Sturbridge Estates** – a 15-lot residential subdivision in Bristol has sold/delivered 5 homes and has a high level of sales activity. On average, the Developer/Builder is providing new construction under \$300,000.

In addition to the above projects and depending on the marketplace and price range, different end-products seem to be in demand right now; such as:

- ▶ **Fairfield** – new construction residential condominium priced \$600,000±
- ▶ **Westport** – new construction/renovated home priced \$1,600,000±
- ▶ **Old Greenwich** – new construction home priced \$2,800,000±
- ▶ **Norwalk** – new construction residential condominium priced \$425,000±

Conversely, some marketplaces and price ranges have seemed to become over-

supplied thereby resulting in a slowdown of activity. Examples include:

- ▶ **Westport** – homes priced \$2,800,000+
- ▶ **Newtown** – residential condominiums priced \$300,000+
- ▶ **New Canaan** – residential condominiums priced \$1,800,000+
- ▶ **New Canaan** – residential homes priced \$2,500,000+

To end, it does seem that the “land” for new construction, which usually means a tear-down location, has been difficult to find for a reasonable price. And so, I’m not experiencing an increase in new construction projects; however, I am experiencing more renovation projects than I have in the past – and in high-end markets. For those market sectors that have become, or are becoming oversupplied, it will now become a thoughtful marketing strategy for the Developer/Builder/Realtor to determine when to reduce and by how much. Because as we have already seen, price-reductions will be a key component to absorbing the oversupplied market sectors.

Lumber Market Update

by Frank Sanford, Sanford & Hawley, Inc.
Quality Building Materials Since 1884



Lumber and panel prices have been rising through the winter and spring. While there have been the usual ups and downs the trend has been up in spite of new mills being built and increased imports.

Douglas Fir has increased 6.3% since mid-October and is now at an unusually high 18% premium to SPF. SPF, itself, has climbed 9%. Plywood has been relatively flat with an increase of only 0.5%. OSB on the other hand has soared over 20%.

What are the reasons behind this? As usual there are many factors influencing supply and demand. The export tax on Canadian

lumber expired last fall leading to a significant increase in Canadian exports to the US. This perhaps explains the unusually large discount of SPF to Doug Fir. Negotiations are ongoing between the US and Canada regarding lumber quotas, tariffs and or taxes.

Exports from the US have also increased this year, but so have imports from other countries.

The improving housing and remodeling markets are certainly increasing demand. While lumber and panel production are increasing as well, the balance appears to have shifted to demand slightly exceeding supply leading to price increases.

This could be the year where we continue to see steady increases in price. □

Outlook for 2016 Positive as Unit Sales Continue to Climb

The re-entry of boomerang buyers and potential for millennial homeownership point to a strengthening market

By John Tarducci, MIRM, Senior Vice President, New Homes Division – William Raveis Real Estate, Mortgage & Insurance



During the first quarter of 2016, the overall impression for both the single-family and condominium marketplaces is a shifting market. In both single-family homes and condominiums, Unit Sales have risen and Average Sales Price has fallen from January through March 2016, as compared to the same period in 2015. For single-family homes, Unit Sales increased 18.3 percent, and for condominiums, Unit Sales increased 9.9 percent during the first three months of 2016. During the same time-frame, Average Sales Price decreased 4.7 percent for single-family homes and 2.8 percent for condominiums.

We've also seen an interesting trend in housing permits—rising rents and demand for multifamily units have caused a significant increase in 5+ unit permits, rising 51.1 percent in 2015, and continuing that upward movement in Q1 2016, rising 59.9 percent. However, the question remains: will these housing starts be completed in time to meet the increasing demand? Speculation points to more and more renters entering homeownership to escape the rental market's unsustainable price increases. Will the completion of multifamily units help to alleviate the burden?

New Housing Permits Continue Upward Trend Across Connecticut

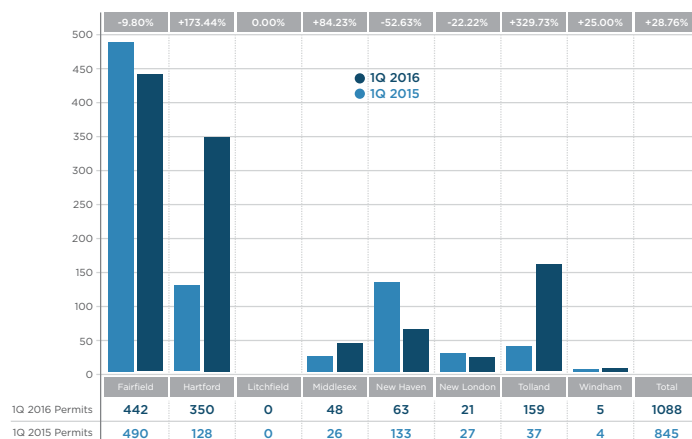
In Q1 2016, as compared to Q1 2015, the total number of housing permits showed continued growth, up 28.8 percent overall. The continued move toward multi-family units impacted the overall numbers again this quarter, with 5+ unit buildings showing the largest gains. Permits for these unit types jumped 44.25% and represented 59.9 percent of all housing permits issued in Q1 2016. However, single-family permits are not to be ignored this quarter: up 17.8% over the same period last year, representing 38.9 percent of all housing permits issued. This is particularly significant as single-family declined 13.9 percent in 2015. There were also decreases during this period in 2-unit and 3-4 unit permits, with both experiencing almost a 65 percent decrease this quarter as compared to the same time period last year.

On a county-by-county basis, several counties experienced substantial growth in total permits, with Tolland County at 329.7 percent, Hartford County at 173.4 percent, Middlesex County at 84.2 percent and Windham County at 25 percent. On the opposite side, Litchfield County remained neutral this quarter, and total permits fell 52.6 percent in New Haven County, 22.2 percent in New London County and 9.8 percent in Fairfield County.

Single-Family Home Sales

In the state of Connecticut, the close of Q1 2016 saw an increase in home sales, with totals rising 18.3 percent, from 5,012 in Q1 2015 to 5,927 in Q1 2016. On a county-by-county level, all counties experienced year-over-year increases, including: Windham County at 48.6 percent, New London County at 32.5 percent, New Haven County at 22.7 percent, Middlesex County at 20.9 percent, Tolland County at 20 percent, Hartford County at 19.5 percent, Litchfield County at 10.2 percent and Fairfield County at 6.2 percent.

Average Sales Price for the state of Connecticut finished Q1 2016 4.7 percent below Q1 2015 levels, decreasing from \$373,597 to \$355,931. Most counties experienced a decrease in Average Sales Price, including: 14.9 percent in Litchfield County, 8.5 percent in Windham County, 6.1 percent in New London



State of Connecticut
Housing Permits Issued by County
First Quarter 2015 vs. 2016
(104 Municipalities Reporting)

(continued)

Outlook for 2016 Positive as Unit Sales Continue to Climb

(continued)



County, 5.5 percent in Tolland County, 0.1 percent in Fairfield County and 0.1 percent in Middlesex County. However, Average Sales Price increased 2.6 percent in New Haven County and 1.8 percent in Hartford County.

Average List Price increased 7.3 percent in Q1 2016, Months of Supply fell 8 percent over Q1 2015 levels and Price Per Square Foot decreased 1.9 percent.

Connecticut Condominium Sales on the Rise

In Q1 2016, as compared to Q1 2015, condominium sales saw a 9.9 percent increase, year-over-year. Most counties saw an increase in Units Sold, including: Windham County at 29.4 percent, New Haven County at 21.7 percent, Middlesex County at 11.9 percent, Tolland County at 11.1 percent, Hartford County

at 9.9 percent and Fairfield County at 5.3 percent. Two counties experienced losses, with Litchfield County decreasing 9.7 percent and New London County decreasing 2.7 percent.

Additionally, Average Sales Price of condominiums decreased slightly overall, falling 2.8 percent from \$208,952 in Q1 2015 to \$203,103 in Q1 2016. Declining prices were seen in Windham County at 12.2 percent, New London County at 12 percent, New Haven County at 8.3 percent and Hartford County at 4.3 percent. However, losses weren't had everywhere, increases were seen in Tolland County at 15.6 percent, Middlesex County at 11.3 percent, Litchfield County at 2.3 percent and Fairfield County at 0.9 percent.

Average List Price for condominiums in the state of Connecticut increased 5.4 percent in Q1 2016, Months of Supply decreased 0.7 percent and Price per Square Foot decreased 0.2 percent.

The Rental Market Boom, The Starter Home Bust

According to the Housing Vacancy Survey, renter household growth has averaged 770,000 annually since 2004. This makes 2004–14 the best 10-year period for renter growth since the late 1980s. Builders have responded to this massive growth with the steady increase of both single-family detached homes and multifamily housing. However, despite the expansion, rental markets have only continued to tighten since 2014. As a result, vacancy rates dipped to their lowest point in 20 years, causing rents to spike at twice the rate of overall inflation.

Considering that at the end of 2015, it was more affordable to buy than rent in 58 percent of the nation's markets, it would seem intuitive that overburdened renters would buy. However it may not be that simple. While rents are rising faster

Condominium Sales on the Rise



Condominium Marketplace

Home Sales First Quarter 2015 vs. 2016

COUNTY	NUMBER OF UNITS SOLD			AVERAGE SALES PRICE		
	1Q 2015	1Q 2016	% DIFF.	1Q 2015	1Q 2016	% DIFF.
Fairfield	470	495	+5.3%	\$311,424	\$314,168	+0.9%
Hartford	344	378	+9.9%	\$163,604	\$156,598	-4.3%
Litchfield	62	56	-9.7%	\$121,230	\$123,965	+2.3%
Middlesex	67	75	+11.9%	\$157,709	\$175,459	+11.3%
New Haven	323	393	+21.7%	\$154,042	\$141,330	-8.3%
New London	74	72	-2.7%	\$170,885	\$150,367	-12.0%
Tolland	36	40	+11.1%	\$150,671	\$174,216	+15.6%
Windham	17	22	+29.4%	\$145,179	\$127,461	-12.2%
STATEWIDE	1,393	1,531	+9.9%	\$208,952	\$203,103	-2.8%

Condominium Marketplace

Months of Supply First Quarter 2015 vs. 2016

COUNTY	1Q 2015	1Q 2016	% DIFF.
Fairfield	6.2	6.2	+0.9%
Hartford	5.9	6.2	+4.3%
Litchfield	11.4	10.0	-12.0%
Middlesex	8.0	6.8	-14.6%
New Haven	7.1	7.1	-1.1%
New London	9.0	9.1	+0.7%
Tolland	9.2	8.2	-10.7%
Windham	9.0	8.8	-2.4%
TOTAL	6.9	6.8	-0.7%

than wage growth, housing prices are too. Coupled with the near-extinction of low-cost, entry-level homes, and renters simply do not have the capital to put a down payment on a more expensive home.

Kicking off 2016, the median new-home price nationally was well over \$280,000—a cost that is well above reasonable for many entry-level buyers

looking to make the leap from renting. Now, there are major forces that have kept new starter homes from being built, among them are: high land and development costs for starter-home lots, local fees that significantly increase prices, and buyer preferences toward more unique homes. Builder Online believes that “millennials” [who] wait for homeownership may fundamentally change what the

Considering that at the end of 2015, it was more affordable to buy than rent in 58 percent of the nation’s markets, it would seem intuitive that overburdened renters would buy.

first-time buy is all about.” But, if rents continue their current trajectory, will millennials be able to afford the “non-starter” home of their dreams?

Could 2016 Be Housing’s Best Year?

There are a host of predictive factors that point to one, bold statement: 2016 could be the housing market’s best year in over a decade. FreddieMac recently reported that home sales, construction housing starts and house prices are set to reach decade-level highs.

Additionally, a host of new (old) buyers will be eligible and poised to reenter the market. According to a recent study by TransUnion, 1.5 million homeowners that were negatively impacted by the housing crisis could re-enter the housing market in the next three years, with 2.2 million total re-entering in the next five years. For these buyers, as well as first-time home buyers, the first half of the 2016 will offer favorable mortgage rates, on top of other benefits. At the start of Q1 2016, mortgage rates dipped below 4 percent, and have remained there since. FreddieMac predicts that rates will stay below 4 percent for the first half of 2016, a boon in support of homebuyer affordability.

Combine all of the above components with steady job growth and a resilient labor market, and 2016 has the potential to be one of the best markets we’ve seen in a long time. □



Home Building Industry Day at the Capitol



HBID Legislative Issues briefing



L-R T.J. Casey, Greg Ugalde, Senate Minority Leader Len Fasano, Bill Ethier, Nort Wheeler, Bob Wiedenmann & Ken Boynton



Members of HBRA of Fairfield County at the Capitol



HBRA members in Senate Chamber



L-R Ken Boynton, Senate Pres. Pro Tem Martin Looney's top aide Joe Quinn, lobbyist T.J. Casey, Bill Ethier, Greg Ugalde, Bob Wiedenmann, Pete Fusaro & Nort Wheeler.



HBID members at the Capitol



Joanne Hoerrner, Henry Rozewski & Pete Fusaro



Larry Fiano, Ken Boynton & Bob Wiedenmann



NAHB Vice-Chairman Greg Ugalde with HBRAC President Nort Wheeler



Builders Steve Temkin & Mark Nuzzolo with Rep. Whit Betts & Rep. John Piscopo



Greg Ugalde with Kathy Zabel, Burlington First Selectman and Capitol Staffer



Debra Wolfenson, Mark Nuzzolo, Bob Wiedenmann, Bill Ethier & Mario DeGioia



Members of HBRA of Central CT at the Capitol

(continued)

Housing Defense Fundraiser at Shipman & Goodwin

On May 25th, the HBRA of CT held a Housing Defense Fund cocktail party at the offices of Shipman & Goodwin in New Haven to raise money for advocacy efforts in defense of the housing industry in Connecticut. Joanne Carroll is grateful to have been the evening's honoree, and Housing Defense Fund Chairman, Bill Ferrigno, thanked Joanne for her years of work promoting the industry and its members. In a personal effort to increase the financial resources of the Housing Defense Fund, Bill Ferrigno is generously building an HBRAC *House of the Year* in his Avon subdivision.



Housing Defense Fund Chairman Bill Ferrigno speaking to attendees



Nina Bender, who considers Joanne a mentor, gave a beautiful tribute to her. Bender Plumbing and Shipman & Goodwin were the gracious sponsors of the cocktail party.



T.J. Casey & Larry Fiano



Larry Fiano & Joanne Carroll



L-R Chris Steiner, Bob Fusari, Bill Ferrigno & Eric Santini Sr.



Joanne Carroll & Joanne Hoerrner



The HBRA of CT's Housing Defense Fund (HDF) pays for extraordinary outside regulatory, legislative & legal advocacy efforts. HDF depends on contributions from HBRA members and others who want to support a strong issues advocacy program to protect our industry.

REGULATORY ADVOCACY ...

includes working with state agencies for positive change, such as; working with agency staff to improve permitting processes, ensuring effective and rational administration of licensing & registration laws, and promoting a uniform and reasonable State Building Code.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY ...

includes working with state legislators and their staff to change, defeat or adopt state laws. HBRAC's "lobbying" efforts engage people who have been elected to public office and who ultimately cast votes to write or rewrite the law. Through testimony, one-on-one conversations and writing position statements, examples include defeating new, unjustified restrictions on real estate development, the construction or remodeling of homes and on the building business. Proactively, it includes getting adopted into law streamlined permit programs and pro-housing programs, or repealing unnecessary business regulations, taxes and fees.

LEGAL ADVOCACY ...

is utilized when an unfavorable or abusive law or enforcement method must be challenged in court via a lawsuit. Association legal advocacy is the last line of defense for the industry. In rare instances, when all other forms of advocacy fail, laws or regulations that severely harm the industry and are adopted over HBRA objections, may be illegal or unconstitutional, necessitating a lawsuit. Legal advocacy is very expensive, which is why the HBRA engages so actively in regulatory, legislative and political advocacy. Still there are times when the only remedy that remains is legal action.

THE HOUSING DEFENSE FUND CANNOT BE USED FOR POLITICAL ADVOCACY – i.e. advocating in the election process to get individuals who are friendly to HBRA's policies elected to public office. However, Political Advocacy is critical to the success of all other forms of advocacy. * HDF funds cannot and will not be used for political advocacy, per CT law.

*The first, last and best defense for our Industry
is Strong Advocacy!*

Please Support HDF with your contribution today: Business or personal checks can be used without limit. Please send your contribution to:

Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut, Inc.
3 Regency Drive, Suite 204
Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002

2016 State Legislative Session

Bill Ethier, CAE, Chief Executive Officer, HBRA of CT
May 19, 2016 (with updates as of May 31)



The state legislature concluded most of its 2016 business by the constitutionally-mandated adjournment time of midnight on May 4. A special session then followed on May 12 and 13 to adopt a revised state budget for its fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016. This report summarizes the state budget, which monopolized most of the discussion this session, and the non-budget bills that affect our industry.

State Budget Summary: The revised \$19.76 billion budget passed the Senate along party lines, 21 Democrats for and 15 Republicans against. A day later it passed the House by the slimmest of margins, with 74 Democrats in favor and 70 opposed (62 Republicans joined by 8 Democrats). While the new budget does not contain any new taxes, those voting against it argue that it does not contain the structural changes required for long-term fiscal stability, which is needed to foster predictability and certainty for businesses and residents. The new budget led to a downgrade in the state's bond rating by two wall street rating agencies the following week, which could lead to future higher borrowing costs.

In the 2017 legislative session, the legislature will have to adopt a new two-year budget with even larger projected deficits. So, the budget fights will only become more difficult. Numerous legislators have already announced they are not seeking reelection (21 Reps and 2 Senators as of this writing). Thus, the November 2016 elections, while certainly huge on the national stage with Trump vs Clinton, will also determine much for CT's future direction since all 187 state legislative seats are up for election.

Regular Session Summary: The 2016 regular session began in early February and immediately it was difficult to break through the budget "noise" to discuss other issues. Nonetheless, the HBRA of CT read every introduced bill (1,000+) and countless amendments. We testified on many bills impacting our industry, wrote talking points and our own amendments to fix legislation, talked with legislators and their staff and advocated for and against many proposed new laws.

One of the significant pieces of our advocacy effort is an organized "Home Building Industry Day at the Capitol" or HBID. Held mid-session when we know the more important bills that survived the initial process, HBID in 2016 brought to the State Capitol 72 members and guests who met with over 35 legislators to discuss over a dozen important bills. Half of the bills on our HBID list were pro-business bills we supported, while the other half we either opposed or worked on to amend to our favor.

(continued)

2016 State Legislative Session

(continued)

I am pleased to report that we won several of the pro-business bills and defeated all but one of the anti-business bills. We also successfully amended two major bills of concern to our industry. The anti-business bill on our HBID list that passed is the retirement plan mandate (see HB 5591 below).

Priority bills that passed:

(HB means House Bill; SB means Senate Bill; PA means Public Act, i.e., a bill that passes both the House and Senate receives a PA number; AAC means An Act Concerning; Effective upon passage means effective on the date the Governor signs the bill – otherwise a specific effective date is noted in the bill.)

- ▶ HB 5180, PA 16-45, AAC the Documentation of Concrete Foundation Applications. The primary vehicle to address the crumbling concrete foundation issue that has plagued hundreds (and potentially several thousand) home owners in the northeast quadrant of CT. The concrete company known to be involved, JJ Mottes, blamed builders and foundation installers for the failing foundations. There were also outrageous proposals, such as Rep. Kelly Luxenbergs's (D) demand to have home builders post a 30-year performance bond to guarantee foundations. The affected homes were built in the 1980s and 1990s. The HBRA opposed the original bill and successfully argued that foundation pours are done the same way everywhere yet the problems have occurred only, to the best of anyone's knowledge, in pours using Mottes' concrete. Also, the underlying problem has been traced to the mineral pyrrhotite found in the aggregate used by the company. An ongoing Dept. of Consumer Protection (DCP) investigation is expected to report by the end of 2016.

The real estate market in the impacted area has been in turmoil. Buyers of homes and their banks are balking at closing or lending on homes unless the seller can identify the supplier of their concrete and who installed their foundations. Given the damages suffered by affected home owners (each fix is \$100,000 to \$250,000), there was much political pressure to do something. So, under the new law, home builders must report to local building officials as a condition for getting a C.O. the name of the supplier and installer of concrete foundations poured on or after 10-1-16. This may help set new homes apart from existing sales, promoting new home sales. The bill also provides some property tax assessment relief to affected home owners and has other provisions to encourage home owners to come forward and report foundation problems to state officials. Once the DCP investigation report is complete, we expect further legislation next year that may require concrete companies to meet certain ASTM aggregate standards to avoid the pyrrhotite problem.

- ▶ SB 388, PA 16-215, AAC the Adoption of the State Building Code and State Fire Codes. The state agency that adopts these statewide codes, Dept. of Administrative Services (DAS), proposed to allow the codes to be adopted without the normal rulemaking process applicable to all state agency regulations, and bypass approval by the legislature's Regulation Review Committee. The bill was in response to complaints by certain stakeholders that it takes too long to adopt codes in CT, which is not really true. Those complaining either do not understand the code process or have a strong financial interest in adopting new codes as frequently as possible. The HBRA was the only interest group to object to the proposal and key legislators agreed with our concerns. DAS was told to negotiate with us or the bill would not survive. The final bill addresses all the HBRA's concerns by creating a new, more streamlined process with opportunities to comment and testify on code proposals before the Codes & Standards Committee within DAS. And, the final step of approval by Regulation Review Committee (i.e., legislative oversight) is also preserved. Effective upon passage.
- ▶ SB 302, PA 16-32, AAC the Fiscal Impact of Proposed Legislation and Regulations on Businesses. A pro-business bill we supported, the final bill addresses the impact analysis state agencies must conduct when proposing new regulations. Effective 10-1-16, the bill requires agencies to assess a proposed regulation's impact on small businesses (less than 250 employees) including whether such businesses must 1) create, file or issue additional reports, 2) implement additional record-keeping procedures, 3) provide additional administrative oversight, 4) hire additional employees, 5) hire or contract with additional professionals, such as lawyers, accountants, engineers or inspectors, 6) purchase any product or make any additional capital investment, 7) conduct additional training, audits or inspections, or 8) pay additional taxes and fees. In addition, agencies must also identify whether and to what extent the agency communicated with small businesses or their organizations in developing proposed regulations, and whether and to what extent the regulations provide alternative compliance methods for small businesses. Unfortunately, VETOED by Governor Malloy on May 31, as "overly broad and will place an undue burden on our agencies."
- ▶ HB 5498, PA 16-58, AAC Review of Existing Agency Regulations. The HBRA also supported this companion bill to SB 302 (above). It establishes a new process for all state agencies to review existing regulations and provides oversight to the legislature's standing committees to hold agencies, within the committee's jurisdiction, accountable for conducting their regulatory reviews.

- ▶ SB 303, PA 16-1, An Act Establishing an Entrepreneur Learner's Permit Program. Another pro-business bill the HBRA supported, this one provides assistance to first-time business owners by reimbursing (from Connecticut Innovation, Inc.; not the state budget) state fees to set up a business. The original bill applied to all first-time businesses. The bill that passed applies to first-time businesses only in information services, bio-technology and green technology, and women and minority owned businesses are given priority. While more limited than the original bill, it's a start to promote entrepreneurship. And, more new businesses means more new jobs, which means more households and potentially more home buyers.
- ▶ SB 220, PA 16-169, AAC Unemployment Comp Appeals and Hearings, Employee Pay Periods and Minor, Technical Changes to Labor Statutes. This bill primarily served as a vehicle for the business community to include a provision that allows employers to pay employees on a bi-weekly basis without requesting a waiver of the weekly pay requirement from DOL. Effective upon passage.
- ▶ HB 5591, PA 16-29, An Act Expanding Retirement Security. While a large business coalition, including the HBRA, opposed the bill, this bill was a top priority for House Majority Leader, Rep. Joe Aresimowicz (D), and Senate President Marty Looney (D). Thus, there was too much leadership support for it to fail. It requires not later than Jan 1, 2018, businesses with 5 or more employees that do not have a retirement savings plan in place to enroll all employees into a new state-run retirement plan. A new CT Retirement Security Authority is created, which is to develop the program, including accepting bids from vendors who offer approved Roth IRAs to be included in the program's investment vehicles. Employers do not have to contribute to an employee's plan but must set up payroll deduction systems for their employees' contributions. All covered employees are to be automatically enrolled, but employees can opt out of the program. It passed the House with 76 Democrats in favor and 63 against (57 Republicans joined by 6 Democrats). In the Senate, 3 Democrats (Paul Doyle, Joan Hartley and Gayle Slossberg) joined all 15 Republicans to vote against, while 18 other Democrats voted for, creating an 18-18 tie. Under the rules, the Lt. Governor breaks tie votes in the Senate and Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman (D) then voted for the bill. After changes were made in the special session to the makeup of the new Authority's board, the Governor is expected to sign it.

Priority bills that did not pass:

- ▶ HB 5278 and SB 238, companion bills we strongly opposed would require fire sprinklers systems be installed in all two-family homes (HB 5278) or allow municipalities to vary the statewide building code to require fire sprinkler systems in all new 1&2 family homes (SB 238). The fire sprinkler coalition, made up of fire marshals and fire fighters, sprinkler manufacturers and both union and nonunion sprinkler installers mounted another all-out effort to pass this mandate in CT (the 7th time in about a dozen years they have tried). However, despite the support for the mandate by Public Safety Committee co-chairs, Sen. Tim Larson (D) and Rep. Steve Dargan (D), SB 238 was defeated in committee on a strong 7-18 vote. HB 5278 was not brought to a vote.
- ▶ HB 5549, AAC the Codes & Standards Committee. Another bill strongly supported by fire marshals and opposed by us, this would add 2 more fire marshals to the 21-member state Codes & Standards Committee, the well-balanced statutory body of volunteers that writes the State Building Code and State Fire Safety Code. Upset that they keep losing votes for certain code changes before Codes & Standards, including the fire sprinkler mandate for 1&2 family homes, we argued that fire marshals should be more reasonable in their code proposals rather than seek to change the makeup of the Codes & Standards Committee.
- ▶ SB 124, An Act Requiring Smoke Detectors in Residential Buildings, this bill was not as simple as the title sounds. Another proposal from fire marshals, this repealed the existing exemption for 1&2 family homes in the State Fire Safety Code, reaching much further than merely requiring smoke detectors in all homes. There's been a requirement to install hard-wired, battery backup smoke detectors in all new homes since 1984. So, the intent of the bill was to require detectors in all existing homes. We agreed with its intent but opposed the bill's language. Unanswered questions about how fire marshals would enforce this new requirement on existing home owners is what defeated the proposal.
- ▶ HB 5561, a bad business bill promoted by Banking Committee co-chair, Rep. Matt Lesser (D), would automatically make a number of provisions in business' consumer contracts unconscionable and void. It could have impacted contract provisions such as arbitration or mediation clauses, or liquidated damages clauses. The bill also created a "private attorney general" provision that would allow consumers who have a claim for damages against a business to also assert claims against the business for

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2016 State Legislative Session

(continued)

all similarly situated consumers. It passed the Banking Committee on a 10-8 vote, and a large business coalition, in which the HBRA took a leading role, worked the legislative leadership to oppose the bill. It was referred to Appropriations where it also passed on a 30-25 vote, but the bill was not called in the House.

- ▶ **SB 221, AAC Paid Family and Medical Leave.** This bill, passed by the Labor Committee, would have required businesses with 2 or more employees to allow employees to take up to 12 weeks of family or medical leave per year, at 100% of their pay, to deal with their own or family member's illness. Employees would self-fund the leave by paying a new payroll tax into a new state fund managed by DOL. While employers would not have to fund wages for an employee out on leave, they would have to keep paying for nonwage benefits, like health insurance, in addition to paying for replacement workers while the employee was out. DOL would have to hire 120 new state employees at a cost of \$18 million to support the program, which ultimately killed the bill.
- ▶ **SB 223, a bill originally allowing businesses to pay employees on a biweekly basis without seeking a DOL waiver (see SB 220 above),** substitute language that never had a public hearing was adopted by the Labor Committee that would allow employees who have a claim for wages against a business to file a lien on the real and personal property of the business to satisfy the wage claim. A business coalition, in which the HBRA took a lead with CBIA, later killed the bill in Judiciary on a 2-28 vote (with Sen. Gary Winfield (D) and Rep. Roland Lemar (D) voting for it).
- ▶ **HB 5363, AAC the Affordable Housing Appeals Act.** One of many 8-30g bills filed this year, 5363 became the vehicle for amendments to the act that was passed by the Housing Committee. The HBRA was OK with the minor changes to the Act in this bill while opposing any further amendments to the Act. The Dept. of Housing opposed the bill and it was not called in the House.
- ▶ **HB 5367, AAC Changes to the Unemployment Comp System.** A CBIA proposed bill, this would have adopted several positive changes to CT's UC system, including changing the calculation of benefits, and placing a three-year cap on the maximum UC benefit. While it passed the Labor Committee, the bill was never called in the House.
- ▶ **HB 5377, AAC the Prevailing Wage.** Would have required all construction contractors and subcontractors working on a project that receives any financial assistance from the state in the form of a grant or loan guarantee to pay prevailing wages, artificially high wages set by DOL. Prevailing wage laws also require contractors and subs to submit certified payrolls to prove they are paying prevailing wages. Since a number of housing assistance programs do not currently require the payment of prevailing wages, this bill would have made affordable housing immediately unaffordable and likely remove private for-profit home builders from participating in all state housing programs.
- ▶ **HB 5500, An Act Requiring Suspension of Administrative Penalties.** Would have suspended financial penalties on first-time violators of state agency regulations, provided the violation was remediated and it did not cause death or bodily injury or a penalty was not required by federal law. Strongly opposed by environmental groups and the Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), while supported by CBIA, the HRBA and other business interests, the bill passed the House 132-8 but was not called in the Senate.

Some other bills that the HBRA monitored that passed:

- ▶ **SB 152, PA 16-16,** requires the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) to post a notice on its web site regarding housing discrimination laws, and 60 days after such posting requires landlords or sellers of 2-family or more housing units to attach a copy of such notice to lease or sales agreements.
- ▶ **SB 191, PA 16-3,** establishes a residential stair lift technician's license.
- ▶ **SB 211, PA 16-125,** allows employers to pay employees using payroll cards.
- ▶ **SB 301, PA 16-199,** requires DEEP to adopt regulations specifying numerical thresholds for reporting to DEEP discharges, spills or other releases of specified substances, materials or waste. Current law is vague as it requires reporting when human health or the environment is "threatened" regardless of the amount.
- ▶ **SB 330, PA 16-9,** prevents demolition work from proceeding during the statutory waiting period when municipalities require a wait period when issuing demolition permits. Under current law, municipalities may already condition demolition permits with a waiting period.

- ▶ HB 5237, PA 16-83, AAC Fair Chance Employment. This bill prevents employers from requiring prospective employees to check a box or otherwise answer on an employment application whether they have a criminal background. Employers may ask legitimate criminal background questions during the interview process.
- ▶ HB 5327, PA 16-35, requires restoration service providers, i.e., companies that clean up and restore homes after fire, flood or other damage, to register as home improvement contractors.
- ▶ HB 5435, PA 16-69, makes several changes to heating fuel dealer contract requirements for selling, leasing or renting a propane tank.
- ▶ HB 5425, PA 16-115, adopts more major changes to CT's brownfields program.

The complete list of almost 200 bills we tracked is not noted above. So, HBRA members should let me know if you have any questions about an issue you may have heard about but does not appear above. For copies of any bills or new laws, our testimony or talking points on any legislation, or for any questions or comments about the HBRA's advocacy efforts, please do not hesitate to contact me at 860-216-5858, or bethier@hbact.org, or visit www.hbact.org/2016Session.

Many thanks go out to members who serve on the HBRA of CT Government Affairs Committee, led by its chairman, Bob Wiedenmann, Jr., and which helps set our advocacy agenda. Thanks also to Nort Wheeler, the HBRA of CT's 2015-2016 Board Chair & President, who leads our Board of Directors and is another champion of our advocacy work. Both Bob and Nort came to the capitol at key public hearings to testify with me on critically important bills. And, thanks go out also to T.J. Casey and the team at Gaffney Bennett & Associates, the HBRA's outside contract lobbyists who help me keep track of the hundreds of bills that would have some impact on our industry each year, and last but not least to Joanne Hoerrner, the HBRAC's Director of Administration & Events, who provides great office assistance as well as organization for our Day at the Capitol.

To all our members across the state, thank you very much for your membership. Keep building CT's economy, communities and better lives for all. With your support, we'll keep using effective advocacy and new knowledge to solve our member's problems.

NAHB News

Bringing Housing Home with NAHB Vice Chairman & CT developer Greg Ugalde

Connecticut



HBRA of CT with Rep. Courtney (L-R) Outgoing HBRA of Central CT President Johnny Carrier, NAHB Build Pac Trustee George LaCava, Rep. Courtney, Larry Fiano, NAHB Vice Chairman Greg Ugalde & NAHB Build Pac Alternate Trustee Ken Boynton.

Massachusetts



Larry Kady (HBA MA), Billie Kaumaya (NAHB), Rep. Tsongas, Gary Campbell (HBA MA) and Greg Ugalde.

Western Massachusetts



Hunter Marositas (HBA MA), Greg Ugalde, Rep. Neal & Gary Campbell

Tulsa Oklahoma



HBA of Tulsa at the Home and Garden Show with two Congressmen at the opening night Board meeting (L-R) Peter Grant VP, Greg Ugalde and Jeff Smith EO of Tulsa HBA



Fairfield County HBRA Celebrates 70 Years

Chis Steiner Installed as 4th generation builder and Steiner family 3rd generation President of the Fairfield County Association

This year marked the 70th anniversary of the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Fairfield County (HBRA). At our annual meeting held on June 1st at the Trumbull Marriott, new officers and board members were installed, two scholarships were awarded to local students and two of the association's members were honored for their support of the organization.



Peter & Maureen

Peter Gaboriault steps down from his role as HBRA President

Board member and Past Fairfield County HBRA President, Maureen Hanley presented outgoing President, Peter Gaboriault with a gift of appreciation for his efforts over the past two years as leader of the Association.

Chris Steiner Installed as 4th Steiner Inc. President of the HBRA of Fairfield County

Chris Steiner, Vice-President of Steiner, Inc. was installed as President of the HBRA of Fairfield County. His wife Kate and children, Heidi (4) and Peter (2) attended the dinner, and Heidi and Peter cheered for their Dad throughout his installation.

Chris's father, Roy Steiner, a Past President of the HBRA in 1986 and 1991, took part in the ceremony, as did Richard Steiner, Chris' great uncle, who was President in 1975, as well as President of the state HBRA and a leader in NAHB. Chris' late grandfather, Ernest was also President of the association in 1955, making Chris a fourth generation builder and third generation President of the organization.



New President Chis Steiner & family

Steiner, Inc. was founded as a home building company in 1939 by Ernest Steiner, an immigrant from Switzerland. He discovered that he had a talent for designing and building affordable, well built homes that families desired. Today, in its fourth generation, the Steiner family continues to set the standard for quality construction and personal service in the residential construction industry.

Over the past 70 years Steiner, Inc. has built over 2,000 homes throughout Fairfield County. They have developed neighborhoods such as *Glenridge*, *Galloping Hill*, and *Duck Farm Estates*, in Fairfield; *Columbine* in Trumbull; *Lakewood Estates* and *Far Horizons* in Monroe; *Chimney Heights* and *Galloping Hill* in Bethel; and *Parkwood Estates* in Brookfield. Hailing back to the land-conscious ideals of Switzerland, Steiner, Inc. prides itself on well-planned developments with an emphasis on land preservation and sustainability.

Last year Steiner Inc. purchased a 160,000 s.f. warehouse building on the west side of Danbury and converted it to mix use with a 70,000 s.f. mailing tenant, 30,000 s.f. warehouse tenant, and a 40,000 s.f. trampoline gym. "We were able to completely renovate, lease and have tenants fully operational in under a year and a half," said Chris. He went on to describe the company's most recent activities. "In our park (Berkshire Corporate Park) we sold a piece of land in Danbury to a medical office user and are currently performing site work for that 42,000 s.f. building. The Corporate Park has over 1,000,000 s.f. built to date. The buildings we own, are almost at a 100% occupancy, and over the past 4 years we have built 55,000 s.f. of new buildings for existing or new users in the park."

Installation of officers and new board members

HBRA Senior Officers:

Anthony DeRosa, DeRosa Builders: HBRA Senior Vice President
 Kim DiMatteo, DiMatteo Insurance: HBRA Vice President,
 Michael Church, William Pitt Sotheby's International: HBRA
 Secretary/Treasurer
 Peter Gaboriault, Bear Paw Builders: Immediate Past President

Directors:

Max Bender, Bender, Norwalk
 Steve Berko, Four Square Building & Design, Newtown
 Ken DeLeo, Doherty & DeLeo Development, Darien
 John Hertz, Hertz Construction, Darien
 Brian Kurtz, Interstate Lakeland Lumber, Greenwich
 Rob Michaud, The Michaud Group, Shelton
 Steven Roth, Elevator Service Company, Torrington



Past Presidents

Past Presidents recognized

Ten of the 43 past Presidents of the Fairfield County HBRA attended the dinner, and were recognized: Richard Steiner (1975), Roy Steiner (1986 & 1991), Jerry Effren (1989), Joanne Carroll (2000), Andrew LaSala (2006), Mary Boudreau (2008), Mike Palumbo (2010) Pete Fusaro (2012) and Maureen Hanley (2013) and Peter Gaboriault (2014).

Building Hope Scholarships awarded

Building Hope President, Andrew LaSala and Mary Boudreau presented this year's Building Hope Scholarships to Francesca Rallo and Robin Rockwell. Both, Francesca and Robin will receive \$4,000, to be spread out during the course of their four-year academic studies.



Building Hope

Francesca Rallo recently graduated from Sacred Heart Academy and will be attending Fairfield University where she will be pursuing a degree in nursing. While attending Sacred Heart Academy, she was a member of the National Honor Society, the National Science Honor Society, the National Spanish Honor Society and was also the recipient of the Regis College Book Award. Her father, Christopher Rallo is a member of the HBRA and is employed by TD Bank.

Robin Rockwell will be graduating from Newtown High School and will be attending Western Connecticut State University where she will be pursuing a degree in Music Education. Robin's passion for music has been evident in her activity in the Newtown Marching Band, the NHS Symphonic Band, Wind Ensemble, Concert Choir and Gold Jazz Band. She also volunteered with the Newtown High School Elementary Music Mentoring Association teaching clarinet and basic music theory. Her step father, Tim Maxwell is employed by Rings End, a long-time member of the HBRA.

Scott Hobbs and Joanne Carroll honored

The Associate's Council, a committee of the HBRA, presented the 2016-17 Associate Council awards to Scott Hobbs, co-owner of Hobbs Inc, a nationally award winning builder based in New Canaan, and Joanne Carroll, President of JMC Resources, the publisher of Connecticut Builder Magazine and producer of the HBRA of CT Home Building Industry (HOBBI) awards. Joanne and Scott were honored for their support of the membership and building industry.



L-R Pete Battaglio, Scott Hobbs, Joanne Carroll & Steven Roth

"Scott provides predictable excellence to all of the projects that Hobbs, Inc. is involved," said Steven Roth, President of the Elevator Service Company and co-chairman of the Associates Council. "Scott as a builder member, values his relationships with associate member suppliers, and consistently engages them in his construction business." In addition to building and remodeling multi-million custom homes in lower Fairfield County, Scott currently serves as Chairman of the New Canaan Housing Authority, where he has been responsible for building two affordable housing developments.

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Fairfield County HBRA Celebrates 70 Years

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“Joanne Carroll has touched many, if not all, of our lives,” said Propane Pete Battaglio of Hocon Gas and co-chairman of the Associates Council “Through Joanne’s publicized articles and promotional expertise, she has connected many associate members and builder members; thus, increasing their effectiveness. Her professionalism and dedication to the HBRA are remarkable.”

Members of the Associates Council include: Co-Chairs Steven Roth Elevator Service Co. and Pete Battaglio, Hocon Gas, Birgit Anich, BA Staging & Interiors, Phil DeTerlizzi, County TV & Appliance, Read Smith, First Niagra Risk Management, architect Leigh Overland, Sheri Sorrentino-Snellman, Tile America and Sharon McCormick, Sharon McCormick Design.



Michael Murphy Joanne & Gina

Builder Michael Murphy, Murphy Brothers Contracting, traveled from Mamaroneck to Trumbull for the dinner to show his support for Joanne Carroll.

Gina Calabro recognized for her outstanding leadership as Executive Officer

During the dinner, Fairfield County HBRA Vice-President, Kim DiMatteo, presented Gina Calabro with a gift from the association in great appreciation for her outstanding, creative organizational skills and leadership during her first year as Executive Officer, in growing membership and “bringing us to the next level and way beyond.”



Kim and Gina

Membership video unveiled

A six minute membership video by MediaCom Inc. was unveiled, starring Fairfield County members talking about the value they have received from membership. The video will be posted on You Tube and on the www.BuildFairfieldCounty.com website.

The milestone evening ended on a light note with Carmen Ciricillo, “*The Construction Comic*”.

County TV Hosts Membership Meeting at their Stamford Showroom

For over 60 years County TV & Appliance has been providing Fairfield and Westchester County builders and their clients with the value pricing, knowledgeable sales people and outstanding service. Their goal is to provide valued customers with an unmatched shopping experience.

County carries all the best reputable brands with an outstanding selection of home technology products to see and touch in their Smart Home Store Showroom.



County TV Smart Home Showroom

County is not just an appliance store! It is a Smart Home Store. You and your custom and remodeling clients can see all the latest technology in Smart Home Automation Control, music for every room, ultra HDTV & video, lighting control, security, climate system solutions to motorized window shades & much more to meet all your home needs. County’s Smart Home Store was recognized with a 2014 HOBI Award for Best Technology Showroom.

They love what they do and it shows! County was honored last year as Fairfield County HBRA Supplier of the Year. County TV marketing director, Phil DeTerlizi serves on the Fairfield County HBRA Associates Council and County is an Annual Meeting Sponsor. They have hosted HBRA meetings at their Stamford Showroom, including one this year in which they donated a 55” HDTV which was won in the evening’s raffle by Jon Drenckhahn of Drenckhahan Excavating.



Jon Drenckhahn & Vinny Vetrini

Bender's new Norwalk showroom offers a boutique shopping experience, while displaying a wide range of KOHLER kitchen and bath products, all the top brands in plumbing and lighting, and a knowledgeable staff to assist with all of your design choices. Bender has been an outstanding supporter of the HBRA, hosting meetings at their showrooms, and sponsoring local and state events, such as the HOBI Awards. Nina Bender is extremely active in the association, and Max Bender serves on the Fairfield County HBRA Board of Directors. Bender recently hosted the Fairfield County HBRA meeting at this newest and largest showroom, which is located on the Post Road in Norwalk. *New England Home* CT magazine photographed the event.



New England Home CT Associate Publisher, Roberta Mancuso, Ryan LePak & Karen Bradbury



Elio Vetrini, builders Rob Michaud, Pete Fusaro, Vinny Vetrini, HBRA President Peter Gaboriault, and Marc Michaud.



Greenwich builder Steve LoParco & Maureen Hanley

Bender Plumbing Hosts Meeting at New 20,000 SF Norwalk Showroom



Joanne Carroll & Nina Bender

(continued)

Bender Hosts Meeting

(continued)



Darien builder John Hertz & Alex Shook



Kim DiMatteo & Maureen Hanley



Bill Charney,
Sharon Mc-
Cormick & Joe
Marietta

Gina Calabro
with Karen
Bradbury &
Stephanie
Rapp



Jon & Rich
Drenckhahn
with Darien
builder Ken
Deleo

Northwest HBA Local Leadership Breakfast – March 23, 2016



Tim Bobroske, Mayor Elinor Carbone, Greg Ugalde, Steven Temkin, Andrew Ugalde.



L-R Tim Bobroske, President HBA of Northwest Ct, Steven Temkin T & M Building Co., Inc., Town council Chair Thomas Winn-Watertown/Oakville, Andrew Thyme Residential Home Funding Corp, and First Selectman Donald Stein-Barkhamsted/Pleasant Valley/Riverton



L-R: John Foeller from T & M Building Co. Inc, First Selectman Michael Criss, Gene Farley Torrington Lumber Co. & Steve Temkin, T&M



First Selectman of New Hartford Dan Jerram, Greg Ugalde & Roselee Fanelli Chair, Legislative and RPAC Committee.



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