

FHBAction News (October 5, 2009)

President's Message

By Jay Carlson



In just a few weeks, the Florida Home Builders Association will hold its Fall Leadership Conference at the beautiful Renaissance Vinoy in St. Petersburg. The three-day conference, October 28-30, will provide members their best opportunity to contribute to FHBA's legislative priorities for 2010, have your voices heard and votes counted on who will lead this great association in the future, and hear the latest information on mandatory sprinklers in homes, Chinese drywall, green building, sales and marketing strategies, and much more. Members will also hear from several candidates for statewide office: Lt.

Governor Jeff Kottkamp, R, and Sen. Dave Aronberg, D-Greenacres, both candidates for Attorney General; Florida Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink, D, a candidate for Governor; and Sen. Carey Baker, R-Eustis, a candidate for Agriculture Commissioner. Additionally, I'm pleased to report that Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation Secretary Charles Drago will also address members during conference. Whether you are a state association leader or just an interested member, you have a stake in what's happening at this meeting. I encourage you to make plans to attend. To learn more, visit www.fhba.com for complete details on the schedule of meetings and events, hotel information, as well as a copy of proposed bylaw changes and the draft budget. I look forward to seeing you there.

Fall Conference Features Competitive Election

The Florida Home Builders Association (FHBA) elects its 2010 officers on Friday, October 30, 2009 during its Fall Leadership Conference Board of Directors meeting at the Renaissance Vinoy Hotel in St. Petersburg – and one race for senior office is being hotly contested. Builders Suzanne Graham of Port Charlotte and Ron Lieberman of Beverly Hills are vying for the office of Secretary – the first step on the leadership ladder that leads to the presidency of FHBA. Graham and Lieberman are both Past Presidents of their respective local HBAs...Charlotte-Desoto and Citrus County. Sarasota insurance agent Bud Swindell is unopposed for the office of Associate Vice President for 2010. In addition to the election, the Fall Conference features committee and council meetings rich in practical information for builders and associates, a Spike Club Honors Reception, and the Installation Dinner where the 2009 Builder, Associate and Remodeler of the Year will be honored and Kay Green, George Kavanagh (posthumously) and Joseph Narkiewicz will be inducted into the Florida Housing Hall of Fame. The conference schedule and registration form are available online at www.fhba.com and the deadline for rooms at the historic Renaissance Vinoy is Tuesday, October 6.

DBPR Secretary to Speak at Fall Conference

Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation Secretary Charles Drago will be a featured speaker during FHBA's Fall Leadership Conference. Drago will address members attending the association's Industry Issues Committee scheduled for Wednesday, October 28 beginning at 1:30 p.m. Drago, who will likely speak about industry licensing concerns, unlicensed activity and home inspectors rule-making, is also expected to take questions from members. Registration for Fall Leadership Conference is now underway. Visit www.fhba.com to obtain your registration form, hotel information, and a complete schedule of events.

AGC Joins Call for Tax Credit Extension

The nation's builders and Realtors have mounted a strong campaign to urge Congress to extend the \$8,000 first-time home buyer tax credit beyond its forthcoming expiration – December 1, 2009. Last week, the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) reported that Florida's construction sector employment dropped by 13 percent between 2008-2009 resulting in the loss of 66,000 relatively well-paying construction jobs. Fort Myers led the decline when it shed 20 percent of its workforce, while Gainesville lost a modest 7 percent of its construction workforce over the year. AGC released the statistics while calling on lawmakers to extend the \$8,000 tax credit and make it available to income eligible buyers. Nationally, 324 of 337 metropolitan areas experienced declines in construction employment between August 2008-2009. By extending the tax credit, more than 20,000 jobs would be opened up in Florida alone, according to the National Association of Home Builders.

Collier Remodelers Gain National Honor

The Collier Building Industry Association's (CBIA) Remodelers Council has been honored with three CADRE Awards from the National Association of Homebuilders (NAHB). The highest national award that a local Remodelers Council can achieve, the NAHB CADRE Awards are presented annually to councils that exemplify the best practices of the remodeling industry. The awards will be formally presented at the NAHB Remodelers Annual Gala in Indianapolis on October 29, 2009. The council received a CADRE Project Award for Government Affairs/Legislation for its efforts on several initiatives, including creating public awareness for and regulating unlicensed/unpermitted construction activity, zoning regulations, and working with Collier County staff on developing efficiencies in the permitting process. Two individuals from the CBIA Remodelers Council have also been honored with CADRE Awards. Bill Varian, CGR, CAPS, CGP, has been named Outstanding Council Chair and Carrie Horner has been named Outstanding Executive Officer/Council Coordinator.

AD&C Credit Woes Threaten Housing

Nearly two-thirds of single-family home builders are reporting a severe lack of credit for housing production, threatening the fragile housing recovery before it has time to take hold, according to a new builder survey of acquisition, development and construction (AD&C) financing conducted by the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). "Across the country, home builders and developers are reporting a deterioration in credit availability and intensifying pressure on borrowers with outstanding loans," said NAHB Chairman Joe Robson, a home builder from Tulsa, Okla. "Lenders are cutting off loans for viable new housing projects and producing unnecessary foreclosures and losses on AD&C loans. With the pending expiration of the \$8,000 first-time home buyer tax credit, these challenges threaten to halt any positive developments we have seen in the housing market in recent months." In the latest NAHB survey of AD&C financing conditions, 63 percent of builders stated that the availability of credit for single-family construction loans worsened in the second quarter of 2009. Builders reporting deteriorating credit conditions cited the following reasons: 80 percent said that lenders are lowering the allowable loan-to-value ratio, 76 percent reported that lenders are not making new loans, 75 percent stated that lenders are reducing the amount they are willing to lend and 62 percent said that lenders are requiring personal guarantees or collateral not related to the project. Two-thirds of respondents reported putting single-family construction projects on hold until the financing climate gets better. NAHB believes that regulators and lenders should provide leeway to residential construction borrowers who have loans in good standing by providing flexibility on re-appraisals, loan modifications and perhaps forbearance on loans to give builders time to complete and sell their inventory.

State Joins Chinese Drywall Symposium

The Florida Department of Health, University of Florida Hinkley Center, and the University of South Florida, College of Public Health are sponsoring the Technical Symposium on Corrosive Imported Drywall November 5-6 in Tampa. The symposium will feature key speakers, selected research and presentations related to the composition, effects and remediation of corrosive gypsum wallboard (Chinese drywall.) This is first conference to bring together researchers from the primary state and federal agencies conducting studies on corrosive drywall. Conference information can be found at: www.drywallsymposium.com.

NewsNotes: NAHB Committee Info

Florida Home Builders Association members interested in serving as a chair of a National Association of Home Builders committee must submit a formal application. Applications can be obtained from www.nahb.org, and must be submitted prior to the October 11 deadline... Remodelers and other building industry professionals can invest in themselves, their businesses and ultimately, their clients' homes by attending pre-show courses from [The NAHB University of Housing](#) at the [Remodeling Show](#) in Indianapolis on Oct. 27-30. The pre-show courses will be held Oct. 25-27. Skills taught in the courses include [scheduling](#), [marketing to aging-in-place clients](#) and [green building](#). Aside from giving participants additional marketable talents, these courses earn credit towards the [Certified Graduate Remodeler](#) (CGR), or [Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist](#) (CAPS) or [Certified Green Professional](#) (CGP) designations, as well as continuing education credit for current designation holders.