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TradeSecrets

The e-newsletter of the Pennsylvania Builders Association

September 12, 2008

TOP STORY

Problems with scrap metal theft continue as PBA presses for action in General Assembly

PBA is continuing its efforts in support of the Scrap Metal Theft Prevention Act, House Bill 1742, introduced by Rep. Eddie Pashinski, D-Luzerne. Scrap metal prices have remained high this year, enticing thieves to target construction sites, utility companies, cemeteries and homes. PBA leaders would like to see the state Senate pass this bill and send it to the governor by Oct. 8. PBA is airing a radio spot in central Pennsylvania on metal theft to educate legislators and their staffs about this issue. PBA also released an op-ed column to newspapers statewide.

SPECIAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Meet the Builder: Builders handle all sales calls at once, associates meet with all the top builders in one evening

Looking for new contracts with builders? Need to find new suppliers, subcontractors, mortgage lenders and more? If so, PBA's Meet the Builder event is tailor-made for you. PBA's 2008 Meet the Builder event will be held 6-8 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 16, at the Sheraton Reading Hotel in Wyomissing.

ASSOCIATES: Speak directly with the region's top builders - all in one night!

Imagine more competitive bids and finding new suppliers and subs. Now stop imagining and attend Meet the Builder! Joe Galantino, a 2007 Meet the Builder attendee, said "I walked out [of 2007's Meet the Builder] with multiple jobs. It's definitely worth the price and even a drive across Pennsylvania." Meet the Builder is a trade show-type event during which associate members meet the region's top builders. Associate members have three minutes to meet one-on-one with builders, allowing time to introduce themselves and products or services. The cost to attend is \$75 per person.

BUILDERS: Handle all sales calls in an evening

Meet the Builder allows you, the builder, to have concentrated three-minute sessions with multiple vendors during a short two-hour span to determine if you share business interests. Best of all, Meet the Builder is FREE for builders!

Peter Gallagher of Liberty Homes Custom Builders said of 2007's Meet the Builder, "In a short time, I was able to meet with so many different vendors. I went into the evening with hesitation, but it turned out Meet the Builder was a tremendous opportunity and benefit for my company." For more information: Visit www.PaBuilders.org and look for the headline that reads: "You're three minutes from new business." You may also contact PBA's Chris Anderson at 717-730-4380, ext. 3011. with questions. Sponsorship information is also

available.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS NEWS

PBA member to testify support of Housing Trust Fund

Gary Lenker of Donco Construction in Dauphin will testify in support of the Housing Trust Fund bill Sept. 17 during a House commerce committee hearing. This bill, HB 2600, would create an affordable housing trust fund within the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. Thirty-eight other states have already created such funds to stimulate production of affordable housing. If created, this fund will be overseen by an advisory committee that includes representation from builders, municipal housing and redevelopment authorities, housing advocates, the Governor and a member of the four caucuses. The trust fund would allow and enable PFHA to build or rehabilitate and preserve housing for low to moderate income persons, elderly, and disabled individuals.

Contractor registration bill expected to pass this fall

The General Assembly is expected to make final adjustments to the Home Improvement Consumer Protection Act, SB 100, before concluding the 2007-2008 legislative session. PBA successfully negotiated this bill to protect members from overly burdensome provisions that had been suggested when the bill was being drafted. If passed, the bill will require a single statewide registration of all home improvement contractors. Contractors who build only new homes will not be affected. Before the new requirements take effect, PBA will provide information to members to help them prepare for the transition.

PBA-supported UCC bill faces adjustments before passage

PBA's Uniform Construction Code bill, House Bill 1096, was delayed because it was amended during a House concurrence vote in July. PBA leaders hope the remaining issues will be resolved so it can be signed into law by the end of the legislative session Oct. 8. A concurrence vote occurs when the House and Senate approve bills on the same topic with slightly different provisions. The amendment affects construction inspections on the properties of state-related universities. PBA has no position on the amendment; however, the association supports other provisions of the bill that will create a technical review and advisory council to advise the legislature and executive branch agencies on matters relating to the state's Uniform Construction Code. The advisory panel will allow builders to provide their expert advice to state officials as bills and regulations are proposed.

PBA will discuss need for nutrient trading program improvements at hearing

PBA and other members of the "Pennsylvania Fair Share for Clean Water Coalition" will testify at a Sept. 17 Senate hearing on Senate Bill 1493—the "Nutrient Credit Trading Program Act," introduced by Sen. Patricia Vance, R-Cumberland. The bill is intended to improve the viability and functionality of the program currently maintained by the state Department of Environmental Protection, which is a major component of the strategy developed by the department to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. A functioning trading program is essential for new housing development to continue in large portions of Pennsylvania. The bill would allow for stakeholder and legislative input into the design of the trading program through the regulatory process. It will also establish an independent board to buy, sell and generate credits, and provide confidence to the purchasers of credits so that they can be assured of their availability over compliance periods that can extend 15 to 20 years or more. For more information, contact Grant Gulibon at 717-730-4380, ext. 3013, or at ggulibon@PaBuilders.org.

Panel discusses limits on pollutants entering waterways

The Chesapeake Bay Commission hosted a panel discussion Sept. 5 featuring state and federal environmental officials about the forthcoming EPA limit on pollutants entering the bay. This limit, termed a total maximum daily load, represents how much of a pollutant may enter a waterway while allowing it to meet water quality standards. PBA and other groups agree point sources, like sewage treatment plants, have done a good job meeting pollution reduction targets, while nonpoint sources, like agriculture, should be the focus for further reductions. Jon Capacasa, director of the water protection division for EPA Region 3, discussed how this limit will be formulated. Other panelists, representing Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, commented on the need to set a series of short-term "benchmarks" or "sub-goals" for the maximum loads, in order to demonstrate progress to the public and generate public and political support for continued funding. For more information, contact Grant Gulibon at 717-730-4380, ext. 3013, or at ggulibon@PaBuilders.org.

Commonwealth Court hears arguments in Bay lawsuit

Commonwealth Court heard arguments Sept. 9 in the lawsuit filed this past February by more than 70 Pennsylvania municipalities against the state Department of Environmental Protection over the design and implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy. The lawsuit asserts that the Department violated a host of state and federal laws and constitutional provisions in creating the tributary strategy, and that the strategy unjustly places the cost burden for compliance on public sewer authority ratepayers, while agriculture and other non-point source contributors to the bay's impairment are effectively unregulated. For more information, contact Grant Gulibon at 717-730-4380, ext. 3013 or at ggulibon@pabuilders.org.

ASSOCIATION EVENTS

Plan to attend your regional meeting

PBA has scheduled its fall regional meetings throughout the state. Plan to attend and take an active role in the future of your association. For more information about regional meetings, please contact your PBA field service director.

Mideast - Monday, Oct. 20; Radisson Penn Harris Hotel, Camp Hill

Northcentral - TBA

Northwest - TBA

Midwest - Thursday, Oct. 30; U.S. Hotel, Hollidaysburg

Northeast - Thursday, Oct. 23; Marvelous Muggs, Moosic

Southcentral - Thursday, Oct. 23; Out Door Country Club, York

Southwest - TBA; Back Porch, Vernon

Southeast - Wednesday, Oct. 22; Sheraton Park Ridge Hotel, King of Prussia

Book your room for the fall board of directors meeting

Plan to attend PBA's fall board of directors meeting, Nov. 6-8, at the Marriott Pittsburgh North in Cranberry Township. PBA has reserved rooms at a special discounted rate of \$121 a night for single or double occupancy. Call 800-228-9290 for reservations before the October 16 room release date.

PBA leaders are available for local association installations

If your local association is interested in a PBA senior officer or regional vice president participating in your local association general membership meeting presentation and/or installation of officers, please contact Mary Ann at 800-692-7339, ext. 3019, or mjackson@pabuilders.org to coordinate the visit.

Blair/Bedford Builders Association hosts residential deck program

PBA members will save \$40 when registering for the residential decks program presented by the Pennsylvania Housing Research/Resource Center. For a registration cost of \$99, members will learn about the proper design, construction and inspection of residential decks during this program 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Oct. 22 at the Hoss's Corporate Center, Duncansville. [Click here to download the registration form](#). Please call Bob Buddenbohn Jr. at 814-693-9710 if you have questions about the event.

BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

PBA workers' compensation program saves members cash on premiums

The Pennsylvania Builders Association's workers' compensation program has been growing at an exceptional rate due to very competitive rates and pricing stability over time. In fact, last year the program exceeded a total sales volume of \$9 million, reflecting tremendous popularity with members. Not only does the program provide competitive rates currently, but it will become even more competitive going forward. For instance, there will no longer be a common effective date, reducing hassles for PBA members. The insurance provider, Eastern Alliance, is now an A- rated carrier. How do you get a quote? It's easy – contact Tisha O'Donnell, program coordinator at 717-505-3153 or by e-mail at todonnell@ekmconkey.com and she'll have a local agent get a quote for you.

Free building permit data available at PaBuilders.org

PBA members have access to one of the most critical sources of housing data – detailed breakdowns of housing starts from the U.S. Census Bureau. The data, which shows the number of units, the construction costs and the year-to-date total by county, is broken down by month dating back to 1999. The bureau's single-family units category includes single-family homes, townhouses and modular homes. Building permit data helps members find building trends in an area, and can assist for media interviews. The service, which costs close to \$500, is provided for free to PBA members. To access the permits, please [click here](#) or visit PaBuilders.org, scroll over the Newsroom tab in the menu and click on "Building Permits" in the drop-down menu. If you have trouble accessing the site, please contact Chris Anderson at 717-730-4380, ext. 3011, or at canderson@PaBuilders.org.

INDUSTRY NEWS

Reviewing the updated outlook on the mortgage market

Randall Forsyth, editor of Barron's Online, explains the reasons the mortgage market troubles have extended beyond subprime mortgages and discusses looming troubles with "option-ARM" mortgages. [Click to watch Wall Street Journal's MarketWatch news video.](#)

Construction, manufacturing spending decline in August

The Associated Press recently reported housing activity declined in August to the lowest level since March 2001, the start of the last recession. Construction and manufacturing spending also declined during the month. [Click to watch news video.](#) Nationally, construction accounted for 6,000 of the total 600,000 job losses this year, according to the U.S. Labor Department. [Click for more from CNN.](#)

Building today for a better tomorrow®

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