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JULY/AUG 2018

12

Incentive Program

City of Bryan Home Builder Incentive Program Spurs Development and Encourages Communication between Builders and the City

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Jeremy Emler
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Justin MacDonald

For the past several months our local home builders associations (HBA) have been gearing up for the statewide membership DIRECTDrive. After training sessions around the state facilitated by the Oliver Group and many local association meetings, our HBAs were determined to boast bragging rights as the top recruiter in our great state.

I am proud to announce that we were successful in growing our membership numbers to nearly 12,000. At print time, we had added a total of 1,159 new members and expect more over the next few months. Here's a big thank you to the 20 local HBAs that participated and made this year's drive a success! (see side bar for new membership numbers per HBA).

The Texas Association of Builders (TAB) first teamed up with the Oliver Group in 2007. In 2007, we saw a 24 percent growth in membership, using the Oliver Group's methods.

As a result of your hard work, determination, and involvement over the past few months, TAB, once again, showed the country that we are the strongest home builders association in the nation with a 17.0 percent increase in state membership May 23 – 24. Our local associations stood up and took advantage of enhancing the most important reason we exist, our members.

This DIRECTDrive was crucial to TAB's continued success. The increase in membership helps TAB to reach its budgetary goal for the year, but more

Strength is in our Members

importantly, it is about being sure that we actively engage and represent our entire industry. The more members we have, the stronger our voice is at the Capitol. It is imperative that the association has a strong position heading into the 86th Texas Legislative Session. Our numbers make us a force to be reckoned with, and in order to have the clout necessary to effect legislation which supports our interests, we must maintain and continue to increase our membership rosters. First and foremost, our lobbying efforts and successes prove to be the number one payoff for our members.

Now that we have hundreds of new members, the fun part begins – serving them and engaging them in the association. Our members are our peers and we need to treat them with care, respect and our undivided attention.

For the new members reading a President's column for the first time, Welcome! I encourage you to get involved on the local, state and national levels. I invite you to attend your first Texas Association of Builders meetings in August as part of the Sunbelt Builders Show™ August 7 – 10. It's important that you and your colleagues turn out for the Dallas event. You'll have the opportunity to listen to keynote speakers, attend education and demo sessions, walk the trade show floor and/or you can even exhibit at the Show. Exhibiting would be a great opportunity for you to put your product/service in front of hundreds of Texas home builders all under one roof. After taking care of business during the day, I highly recommend that you take advantage of the networking opportunities the Show has to offer during the evening, including the Builders' Bash featuring Texas Red Dirt Music legend Ray Wylie Hubbard. He will be in concert the opening night of Sunbelt, August 8, starting at 8:30 p.m. at the Hilton Anatole. Join the party and help us celebrate the best building economy in the nation!

As I wrap up, I want to thank everyone who participated in the membership drive, especially the Executive Officers and

2018 TAB Senior Officers

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*Justin MacDonald, MacDonald Companies
Kerrville, Texas*

First Vice President

*Robert Wood, Custom Homes by Robert Wood
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their leadership and team members. We couldn't have done it without them and the Oliver Group Model. I also want to thank StrucSure Home Warranty for sponsoring the membership training sessions.

I look forward to seeing our largest membership ever at Sunbelt in August. Don't forget builders, remodelers, developers, HBA staff and students can register for free until July 12. Go online today to register, purchase your event tickets and make your hotel reservations at SunbeltBuildersShow.com. ■

HBA	New Members (as of May 24)
Texas Panhandle BA.....	140
West Texas HBA	140
El Paso Association of Builders.....	108
Temple Area HBA	94
Hill Country BA.....	81
HBA of Greater Austin	80
Tyler Area BA.....	68
Coastal Bend HBA.....	54
Big Country HBA	50
BA of Victoria.....	48
Greater Brazos Valley BA.....	41
Dallas Builders Association	40
Heart of Texas BA	39
HBA of San Angelo.....	37
Greater Fort Worth BA.....	32
Greater San Antonio BA	30
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M. Scott Norman, Jr.

I hope that you are having a good summer so far and that you and your family have a great Fourth of July celebration. Before we know it, we will be gathering for TAB's summer celebration – our committee and board meetings and the 18th annual Sunbelt Builders Show™.

Most of this issue of *Texas Builder Magazine* is devoted to the events and trade show that will be held during our week at the Hilton Anatole Dallas, August 7 - 10. I do want to remind you that in addition to the HOMEPAC FUNdango, the Young Professionals Council's Builders' Bash, the 25th annual Star Awards presentations and the exhibits, the business of the Texas Association of Builders will be conducted in committee and board meetings that will be held throughout the week.

If you have never attended a TAB committee meeting, this is an excellent opportunity for you to join your fellow business leaders as we discuss issues that affect the residential building, remodeling



and land development industry in Texas and set goals for the association. If you are interested in the governance or policy positions of your state association, please feel free to attend any meeting that is of interest to you. You do not have to serve on a committee to attend and we welcome your participation and value your input.

There is a new networking opportunity on the schedule this year, and I want to personally invite you to join us. On Wednesday, August 8 from 7:30 – 9 a.m., please stop by the Texas Association of Builders "Member Appreciation Coffee" hosted by TAB's Membership Committee. During this come and go event, you can enjoy a continental breakfast while visiting with TAB's senior leadership and executive staff, learn about what membership in the association has to offer, and visit with your peers from across the state. Start the day off with coffee and conversation before we hear from our Keynote Speaker Roy Spence and enjoy day one of the Sunbelt Builders Show™. Every Show attendee is invited and welcome – TAB members and non-members alike.

Finally, as the dog days of summer continue their long hot march towards the "never seem to get here" cooler days of fall, I hope you take the time to enjoy our hot Texas weather with a cool drink or a dip in your favorite swimming hole. During your summer vacation and Independence

Day festivities, we hope you take time to remember what an honor it is to be in the business of creating the American Dream of homeownership here in Texas. Our Nation's tradition of having a residential housing industry that works to create quality, safe, and affordable housing available to all is sometimes taken for granted.

The membership of TAB has the privilege of working every day to provide housing to the citizens of the greatest state in the greatest country on Earth. Despite the constant challenges faced by our member building companies every day, Texas is not only the top state housing market in the United States, we also have the first (Dallas) and second (Houston) local metro markets nationally as well as four out of the top 10 (Austin and San Antonio). But it is not just the large metro-markets that are doing well right now. From Amarillo to McAllen and El Paso to Rockport to Port Arthur to Texarkana and everywhere in between, TAB members are working hard to build (or re-build) homes to meet the strong housing demand of this state.

We always have a lot to celebrate in Texas and we will certainly be doing so at the Sunbelt Builders Show™ with a great week of activities, exhibits and festivities alongside your fellow housing industry professionals. That is certainly a reason to celebrate this summer, along with our nation's 242nd birthday, of course! ■



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CITY OF BRYAN HOME BUILDER INCENTIVE Program Spurs Development and Encourages Communication Between Builders and the City

Karen Knudsen

Nearly five years ago, the City of Bryan, Texas took a look at their available lots and noticed that many of them had deed restrictions of 2,200 square feet and above. These lots were not moving as quickly as others, so the City sat down to brainstorm ideas of how to get builders in on these lots to jump start their “move-up” home building market – homes for people looking to get out of their starter homes into something just a little bigger. The idea proposed was fairly simple: to waive the building permit cost and the tap fees for water and sewer for single family homes in the range of 2,200-3,000 square feet of heated and cooled floor

space (known as the target range) within the city limits of Bryan.

In 2014, Frank Clark, Jr., Bryan Business Liaison and Special Projects, and Kevin Russell, Director of Economic Development for Bryan, came up with the proposal for the home builder incentive program. The proposal was presented to the Bryan Business Council (BBC), which unanimously recommended to the Bryan City Council to adopt some form of the incentive program. The program was then proposed to the Council and adopted. “The results have been dramatic, I think,” Mayor Andrew Nelson commented. “Not everyone has to build in the target range, but enough did

that it’s been a great area of success. I think you can see the results of the program and can point to it as the difference for why we leaped to the forefront in the number of residential homes in the target range being built in Brazos County.”

The number of target range homes built in Bryan has increased by 300 percent based on the five-year average from 2013 (27 homes) in comparison to the average of the last four years (81 homes). In addition, the number of single family detached home permits has increased overall by 288 percent in Bryan. Bryan city officials are extremely satisfied with the results of the program, and some were



pleasantly surprised. Mayor Andrew Nelson remembers the program being presented back in 2014. "During my time serving on the Bryan Business Council before I became mayor, when it got presented to us, our view was what can it hurt? If nobody takes us up on the offer then we haven't given away a penny. If they take us up on the offer, then it's going to be successful. So there really was no downside."

Although the city initially loses out on the money that would come from the permit and tap fees, the ad valorem taxes easily make up the cost of waiving those fees. Frank Clark, Jr. broke down the numbers. "Right now, for four years and three

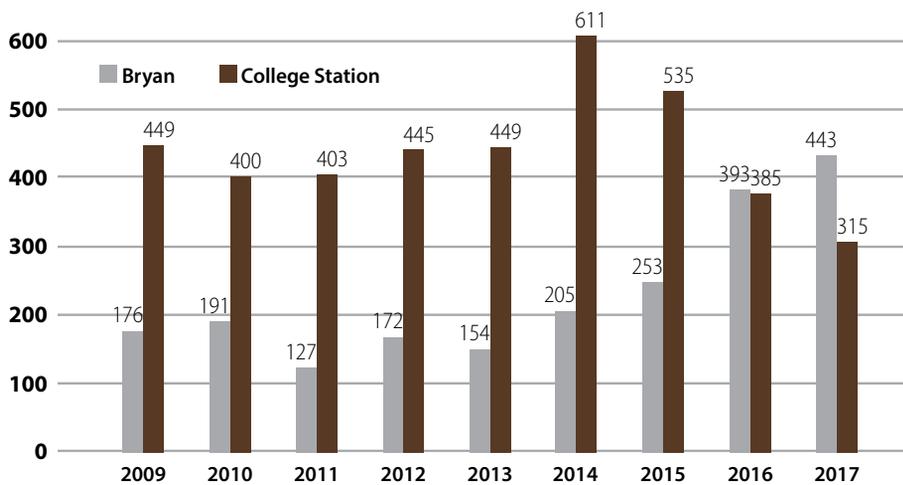
HOME BUILDERS INCENTIVE PROGRAM DETAILS

- Must be single family home construction within city limits of Bryan
- Home must be in target range: 2,200-3,000 sq ft of heated/cooled area
 - Recently updated to 2,000-3,000 sq ft
- Building permits cost waived
- Tap fees waived for water (up to \$400 where the City is providing service) and Sewer (up to \$350)
- Rebate for Parade of Homes fee

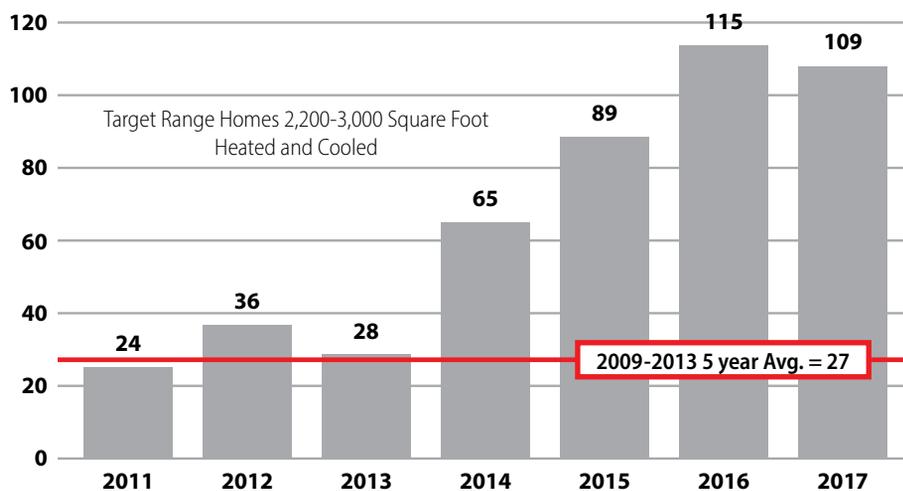
months that we've had the program, through the end of 2017, our payback is 1.3 years on all of our costs associated with the program. The way we are figuring that payback is on additional ad valorem taxes that have been added to the ground."

For the first time in recent years, Bryan surpassed its sister town, College Station, in the number of single family detached home permits issued. Keane Register, Bryan City Manager, explains that the point of the program was to fill a need in Bryan, not to

Bryan/CS Single Family Detached Permits 2009-2017



Bryan Single Family Detached Permits in Target Range 2011-2017



moving that could be productive. It creates jobs for both cities. It creates economic multiplier effects for both cities. It's a good thing for the whole community."

In addition to the waived permit fee and water and sewer fees, the program also includes a rebate for the Greater Brazos Valley Builders Association (GBVBA) Parade of Homes (POH) entry fees. The City reimburses builders' parade fees for all sizes of homes entered into the parade within Bryan's city limits. The idea behind this additional incentive was to increase the number of homes entered into the Parade, which would bring more realtors and home buyers into the neighborhoods and also generate more exposure for builders. Participation in the Parade of Homes within Bryan city limits has more than tripled since the start of the program – from only three or four homes per year to about 15 homes.

Rose Selman, GBVBA Executive Director, confirms that their numbers for the POH have certainly gone up in recent years due to the POH fees reimbursement. "It's a very easy sale to builders when you can say, 'Hey I know you're building in Bryan, and if you want to enter a home in the Parade, the City will reimburse that value to you.'" Rose

outdo their neighbors. "It's not that we're looking to try and create demand. That certainly isn't what we did. The homes in the target range of 2,200-3,000 square feet were being built, but they weren't being built inside the city limits of Bryan."

Frank Clark, Jr. points out that they haven't really driven the home building market in their county with their incentive program because there aren't that many more homes being built, but simply that Bryan is seeing a greater share of the numbers. Kevin Russell describes how the program is beneficial for the whole county, not just Bryan. "Speaking

as someone who has lived in both Bryan and College Station and spent most of my life here seeing it as one community, we're a better community when we have comparable statistics. I think it creates balance. Currently, the program isn't designed to disrupt our neighbors or people in Houston or anywhere else. It simply gives Bryan its share. When we started the program, we had excessive lot inventory. We needed to do something to help move lots, especially those that are zoned and restricted to the target range. Economically, it does not do anyone in Bryan or College Station any good to have lots that aren't

Hear what the LOCAL BUILDERS HAVE TO SAY

JOHN MAGRUDER, OWNER
MAGRUDER HOMES

When did you start participating in the program?

Right when it started.

How much building did you do in Bryan before that?

Very little. We've been a company for 11 years, and back when the program started is a good time stamp of when we transitioned to doing more building in Bryan. We were doing the vast majority of our building in College Station, and the home builder incentive program helped us along in our decision-making process to build more homes in Bryan. At the time, we were growing and were sort of sampling the market, and we identified an area of Bryan that was a very good location with great shopping and good schools. There was nothing in particular that kept me from building more in Bryan originally. We were looking at where property was and if we could sell houses there, and the answer was yes. We now build about 1/3 of our units in Bryan, which would be about 8-12 homes per year.

How has the program benefited you as a builder?

Obviously, it's helped us out monetarily – a standard permit would have been \$2,000, so we are saving roughly \$20,000 a year. We can then pass those savings on to our customers. The program has also created a more desirable work environment in Bryan because they've shown that they are willing to work with us.

Have you come across any hiccups or problems with the program?

No really not at all. It has been a very smooth implementation and was well done by the city staff.

What would you like to say about the program?

It's been a kind of neat experience. The ladies who worked up front to help coordinate everything have been a great help. The program has created lines of communication with guys in other city offices that we wouldn't have met or known otherwise, like Frank Clark, who I have developed a friendship and a relationship with through the program.



“The program has created an open dialogue. The city officials understand some of the obstacles our builders face with rising costs. They’ve shown a sign of good faith. They recognize the importance of the building industry to the economic development of the city. The program has opened up a lot of doors and improved our communication with the city.”

hasn't come across any problems with the reimbursement process!"The info form is very easy and brief. I just confirm the addresses with Frank for the Parade reimbursement, and the turnaround is very quick."

Frank Clark, Jr., who has a long history of involvement in the GBVBA and is currently serving as the GBVBA Associate Vice President and is also on the Texas Association of Builders Board of Directors, explains how the home builder incentive program not only saves builders money, but lets them know that Bryan wants them in their communities. "What we've seen is that it's not necessarily the money making the most impact. It has more to do with the builders knowing we want them here; we're working with them. They know we want them in Bryan and that we're saying thank you for building in Bryan. That's probably been a more powerful statement than anything else."

"It's been fantastic to work with the local home builders association. Rose Selman is

a big supporter of it," Kevin Russell shares. Keane Register, who also has a construction background and a history with the GBVBA, once serving as Associate Vice President back in the '80s, understands the importance of working with the association, adding, "I think as a city we have to embrace all of the home builders. The easiest and best way to do that is through the home builders association." Rose Selman chimes in on how the home builder incentive program has improved communication between the association, builders, and the local city officials. "The program has created an open dialogue. The city officials understand some of the obstacles our builders face with rising costs. They've shown a sign of good faith. They recognize the importance of the building industry to the economic development of the city. The program has opened up a lot of doors and improved our communication with the city."

Another way the City demonstrates its willingness to work with the builders is by giving away a building permit, for any size



home, at the GBVBA builder luncheons. This drawing helps both the GBVBA and the city, as it encourages builders to be more active in the association and also leads to another new home built in Bryan. "Having that ongoing every month has been very positive. More members are coming to meetings. We had a new member at his second meeting win a permit, and he was very excited about that, so it's a great opportunity for the builders," Rose Selman said.

Over the life of the program thus far, there have been zero complaints about the program. The city, town residents, and builders have all found the program to be beneficial to everyone. The only change the city has made to the program has been to vote to extend it – the program is annual and has to be renewed each year – and recently, the council voted to include homes from 2,000 – 3,000 square feet of heated and cooled living space. So while Bryan hasn't come across any problems with the program, they will continue to monitor it and make changes when necessary. Mayor Andrew Nelson said, "Every couple of years we will look at the target range and make sure that it makes

sense. There is a reason why we aren't doing it for any home being built, but for example if we see a need to expand the program for some other range or some other type of home, we will consider all our options."

The home builder incentive program is a prime example of the type of commitment Bryan is making to their community and to the economic development of the town. Keane Register shares, "Our number one goal is customer service in both the commercial and residential area. None of us like the bureaucracy associated with local, state, and federal governments, and we've all had to deal with those in our careers, so we are constantly trying to prove to people that you can do it a different way."

Rose Selman gives some final words of praise to the City on their home builder incentive program and continued commitment to the citizens of Bryan. "It's important to recognize that the City of Bryan has been very open to the needs of their stakeholders. Not a lot of cities have programs like this, and they should be applauded and recognized for their efforts to work with the community." ■

Hear what the LOCAL BUILDERS HAVE TO SAY

JIMMY PITMAN, OWNER
PITMAN CUSTOM HOMES

When did you start participating in the program?

The City of Bryan started this program in March of 2014. I believe we submitted one of the first requests for a home under the program when it was released. At that time, we were seeing impact fees and rising permit fees from other cities being introduced, and we viewed this program as a great opportunity in our continual effort of keeping home prices affordable. The City of Bryan's forward thinking has produced incredible results. The building activity in Bryan has spiked and has attracted a lot of other development and commercial business to locate into the area.

Did you do much building in Bryan before taking advantage of the program?

When this program was released we had built just a few homes in Bryan. Now, about 50 percent of all the homes we build are located in the City of Bryan.

Does the target range of the program work well for you and your clients?

It has been a tremendous benefit for the families we build for. While other cities have increased permit fees and impact fees, the City of Bryan has their incentive program that can reduce the cost of the home to the customer by about \$5,000 and in some cases even more. The City of Bryan has also supported builders marketing their homes and will help pay for a home to be entered into the Greater Brazos Valley Builders Association Parade of Homes™. This has helped with creating visibility for neighborhoods located in Bryan and the builders participating in this program.

How has the program benefited you as a builder?

This incentive program has helped our local home builders meet a need for certain housing that previously was not being met.

How has the program benefited communication between builders and the City?

The City of Bryan has done a great job in communicating with our Greater Brazos Valley Builders Association. We have City of Bryan employees that serve on the GBVBA Board, committees, and recently our Associate Member of the Year was a City of Bryan employee. The City of Bryan has become a strong partner with our GBVBA.

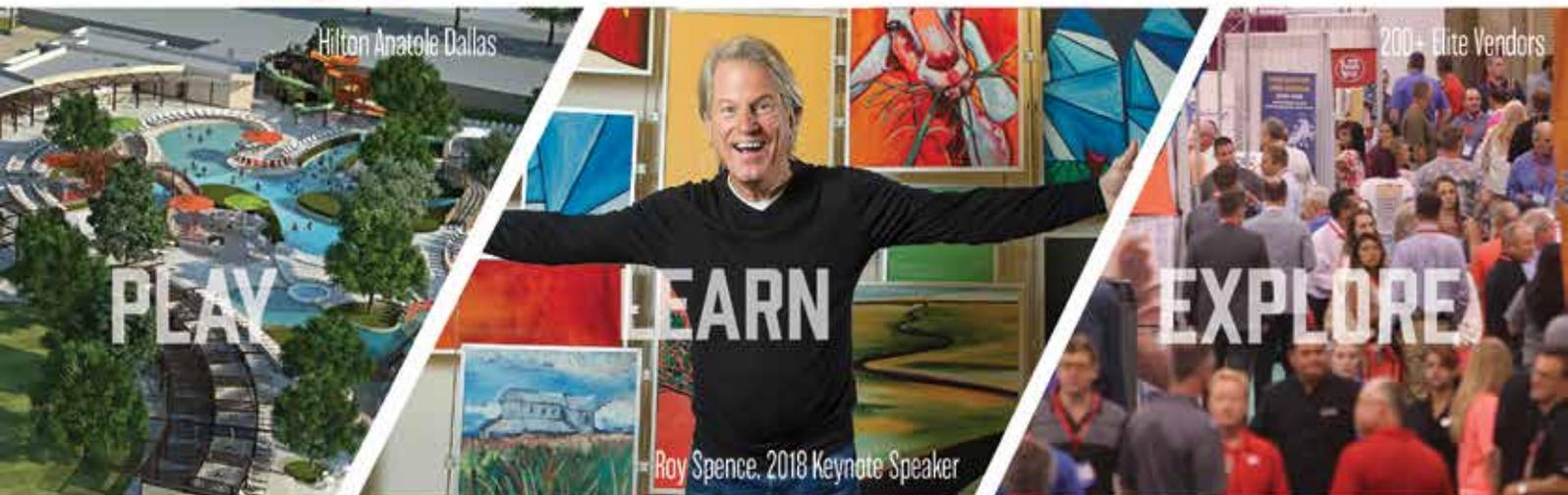


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TAB's Recent Testimony on the Importance of Good Schools and the Impacts of Property Taxes



Justin MacDonald
2018 TAB President

The Texas Commission on Public School Finance met on April 5, 2018 to discuss the role of tax revenue in the school finance system. The formula for acquiring funding for public schools has been heavily debated on how to support more than 5.3 million Texas students who rely on public education. The day included invited testimony from a series of witnesses representing both out-of-state entities and Texas-based stakeholders. Texas Association of Builders President Justin MacDonald was invited to testify before the Commission. His testimony went into detail on property taxes and the major burden it has on homeowners, as well as the importance of good schools and their lasting impact on the building industry.

**Here are excerpts from TAB President Justin MacDonald's Testimony:
*Importance of Good Schools to our Industry***

For me, good schools are important to the Texas residential development and construction industry for three main reasons:

Obviously, a well-educated populace is important to continue the "Texas Miracle" that makes us the top economy and destination for business relocations in the country. A good economy and new jobs are key to the residential construction market and good schools play a big role in continuing our state's success.

Second, there is a saying that the three most important features of real estate are location, location, and location. The quality of an area's public schools is a key decision factor for families and those considering starting a family when deciding where to live (either purchase or rent). The better the schools are, the more desirable the location.

Finally, good education creates the skilled workforce that we so desperately need. We need to continue to promote and advance more Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs at both the secondary and higher education levels to meet the workforce challenges for our state's economy in general, and

particularly in the various construction trades where we are experiencing a tremendous shortage.

With the population of the State of Texas projected to double by 2050, Texas will need thousands of homes to house these residents. And, we need skilled professionals to build these homes. The shortage of skilled workers in the building industry is a critical issue. In 2012, 21 percent of home builders experienced a labor shortage. 56 percent of home builders reported a shortage in 2016, and that number grew to 63 percent in 2017.

Tax Impacts on Homeowners/Buyers and Renters

Another major consideration regarding a household's purchasing power is the property tax burden on a homeowner. Every dollar that is paid in property taxes reduces the amount of mortgage payment that family can afford to make each month. This directly influences the decisions that families have to make regarding whether to buy or rent their home, and where. It also affects whether they can afford to

upgrade or remodel, or in some cases even simply maintain, their home.

The State of Texas homeownership rate is about 60 percent (61 percent in 2017). Therefore about 40 percent of our population are renters.

Renters, however, are not immune from these impacts. As I said before, there is no free lunch. Costs from rising property taxes often get passed on to most renters as well in the form of higher monthly rent payments. The only exception to this is rent-restricted affordable housing; however, taxes still affect those developments because they simply don't get built if the owner cannot charge enough rent to cover the expenses (which include annual property taxes). This, in turn, furthers a shortage of housing in that area, pushing prices upwards.

Good education creates the skilled workforce that we so desperately need. We need to continue to promote and advance more Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs at both the secondary and higher education levels to meet the workforce challenges for our state's economy in general.

I believe that a strong, high-quality education system is vital to the residential construction industry and to the overall economy of Texas, and I realize that taxes are necessary to raise the revenue to pay for that. But the costs of that system cannot be borne disproportionately by a small group of taxpayers. With the revenue burden shared fairly, I think we can all look at taxes as in investment in the future of Texas.

The Texas Association of Builders appreciates the opportunity and will continue to participate in the process with

the Commission and in the legislative, regulatory and local governmental process as we work together to improve our state's delivery of a quality education to our future workforce. We urge the Commission to remain focused on the impact the tax burden has on housing affordability and consider that affordable, safe, quality housing is a crucial advantage Texas has compared to many other areas of our country. This aspect of the "Texas miracle" must be maintained in conjunction with an education system that meets the demands of our industry and the future. ■

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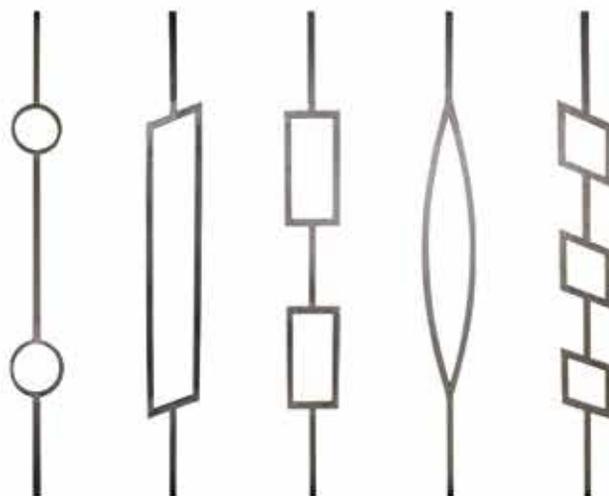
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MUDs:

A PROVEN TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT

Submitted by Trey Lary

Throughout recent years, Texas has experienced continued economic and population growth that is unrivaled across the nation. With our favorable economic environment, the State of Texas is sure to continue to enjoy increased population growth and the need for additional housing. Municipal Utility Districts (“MUDs”) are essential for providing quality infrastructure and affordably priced housing to support such growth.

MUDs are a form of limited local governments created by the state that provide water, sewer, drainage, road, and park infrastructure to new communities. MUDs support well-planned, high-quality development and affordably priced housing in neighborhoods with a wide range of amenities. The Woodlands, Cinco Ranch, Shadow Creek Ranch, Sienna Plantation, and Towne Lake, as examples, are recognized as some of the finest master-planned

communities in the United States. Each of these communities, like many others across the state, is served by MUDs. Growth of our state’s urban and suburban areas has been fueled by MUDs. Over time, hundreds of MUDs have been dissolved and annexed into cities, big and small.

MUDs provide the best mechanism to finance and maintain high-quality infrastructure associated with real estate development. Many cities and counties are unwilling or unable to extend basic infrastructure for new development because the existing taxpayers do not want to pay for infrastructure for new development. MUDs efficiently and equitably fill this void by allowing the residents and businesses who use the facilities to pay for them; existing communities do not pay for or subsidize new developments. In MUDs, “growth pays for itself.”

MUD financing results in lower home prices for consumers by allowing the cost of infrastructure to be paid over time rather than building the infrastructure costs into the initial home price. All of this occurs under the purview of a locally elected board of directors that is subject to city and/or county and state agency oversight and regulation. MUDs operate with a reimbursement model that requires developers to pay all costs relating to the design and construction of infrastructure and bear the financial risk involved. Developers are repaid for infrastructure costs by the issuance of bonds, only when sufficient development has occurred to justify and support reimbursement at a reasonable tax rate. This structure ensures that MUD tax rates decline over time and that developers can offer homes at prices that are the envy of consumers nationwide.

MUDs embody transparent local government. Before a person buys a home

within a MUD, a person receives at least two notices, once with the earnest money contract and again at closing, that the home is located within a MUD. This notice contains information about the MUD's tax rate, or anticipated tax rate, voted bond authorization, and bonds that have been issued. Transparency measures such as this, when combined with the MUD regulatory regime, Texas open meetings, public information, and financial reporting laws make for highly accountable and effective neighborhood government. MUDs are "grass roots" local governments where the directors, who set the tax rates and water and sewer rates, are elected by the residents in the neighborhood. Measuring the success of MUDs is as simple as looking at the millions of Texans who consciously choose to live in MUDs.

We are fortunate to live in a state that is thriving economically, creating new jobs, and developing new neighborhoods and communities. Our success will lead to additional population growth and a continued need for high-quality housing at an affordable price. The continued use of MUDs to foster and manage quality development will be critical to provide for the needs of future growth in the State of Texas. ■

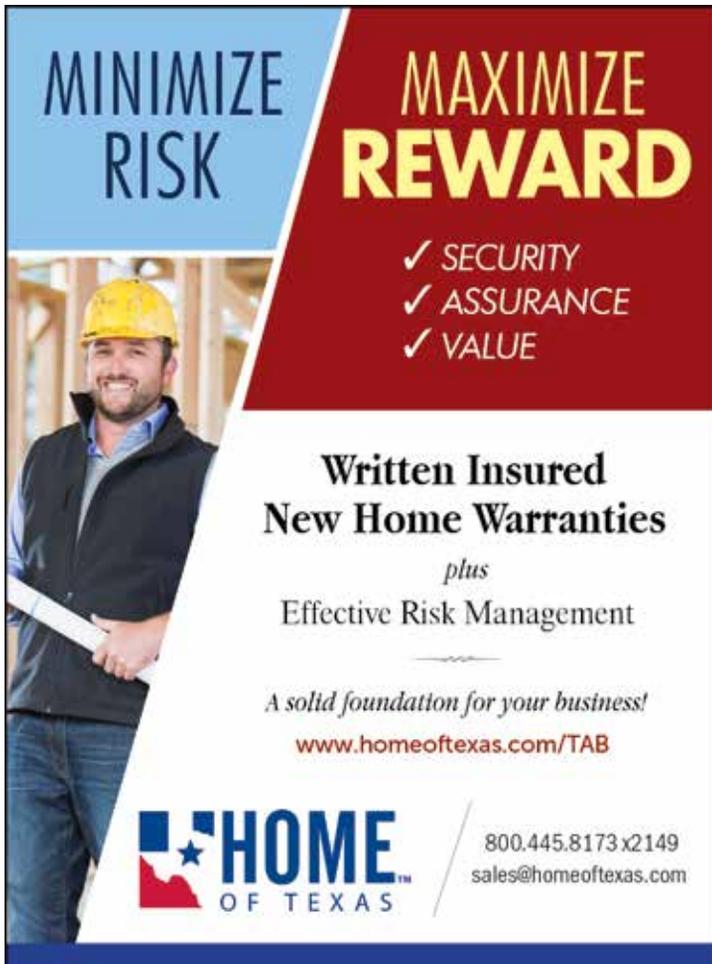
An earlier version of this article originally appeared in the Journal of the Association of Water Board Directors ("AWBD") and is reprinted here with permission.

AWBD is the statewide association for directors of Municipal Utility Districts and similar water districts. AWBD was formed in the early 1970's to provide education and training to locally elected water district directors. AWBD has more than

800 members and AWBD-member districts provide utility service to millions of Texans.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, AWBD commissioned an exhaustive study of the impacts of Hurricane Harvey on MUDs in the Greater Houston area. AWBD recently released the study, which can be downloaded from its website: www.awbd-tx.org. The study concludes that while MUDs have long been recognized for promoting housing affordability, during Harvey and its aftermath, MUDs also demonstrated that they are resilient, reliable, and financially-sound providers of critical infrastructure.

Trey Lary serves on the Advisory Council of AWBD. He is a partner with the law firm of Allen Boone Humphries Robinson LLP in Austin and Houston. Trey works with MUDs and other water districts around the state. You may contact Trey by e-mail at tlary@abh.com.



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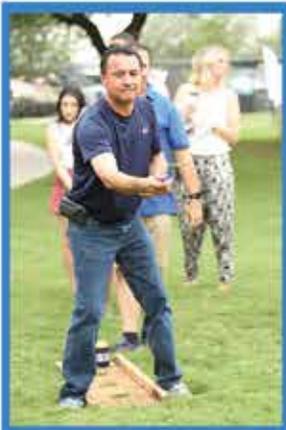
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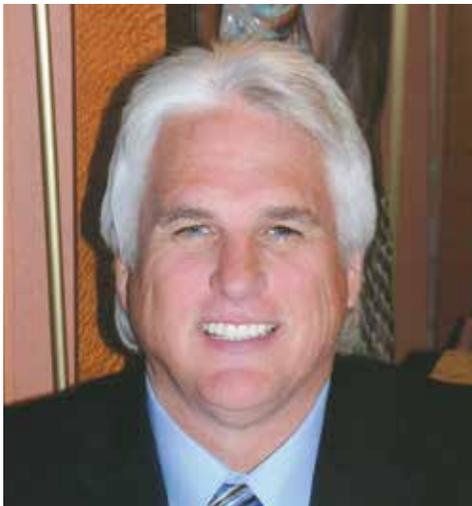
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HOMEPAC is the non-partisan registered political action committee of the Texas Association of Builders. Corporate donations are not accepted. Contributions are not deductible for federal income tax purposes. Contributions to TAB's HOMEPAC are voluntary and are used for political purposes.



Gene Lantrip,
HOME PAC Board of Trustees Chair



Throwing the FUN in HOME PAC FUNdraising

HOME PAC has had a great year of fundraising so far and we're just getting started. This year's upcoming HOME PAC events are guaranteed to be fun and entertaining.

Our first fundraiser of the year was full of drinks, laughs and big golf swings as it was hosted during the TAB Winter board meetings at Topgolf in Austin. More than 100 people attended the event, raising thousands of dollars for HOME PAC.

Be sure to mark your calendars and make plans to attend the annual FUNdango and Statewide Washers Tournament during the Sunbelt Builders Show™ on August 7, 2018. Tickets can be purchased online at www.SunbeltBuildersShow.com.

In addition to our core supporters who donate yearly to HOME PAC as a \$5,000 Capitol Club member, \$3,000 Diamond Key member, \$1,500 Platinum Key member, \$1,000 Gold Key member, \$500 Silver Star member, or \$250 Lone Star member, HBAs

have been very creative in raising funds for HOME PAC over the years. Holding events such as fish fries, golf tournaments and clay shoots not only help raise funds, but brings people together for an important cause. By contributing to HOME PAC, you and your association are making a difference in the industry, in your community and at the state level. Fundraisers at all local HBAs are vital to our PAC's success.

Fundraising doesn't have to be mundane or difficult. It can be an opportunity for people to come together in advocating for critical issues to the home building industry. Even if it's just passing the hat at an association meeting, every dollar counts. And don't forget to purchase a TAB 2018 blue saw blade lapel pin from your local association. Purchasing a pin will help your association reach its annual HOME PAC goal.

Without HOME PAC's active political participation, decisions affecting the future of the Texas residential construction and land development industry will be influenced



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by outside interests and activists' groups, many of whom represent interests directly opposed to our own. It is only through the voluntary contributions of our members that HOMEPAC can help preserve a positive political climate for the home building and land development industry in Texas.

Thank you to those TAB members and local HBAs across the state who continue to support HOMEPAC year after year. No matter what type of fun you put into your local fundraising, be sure to keep those

donations coming so that we can continue to support pro-housing candidates for state offices. Our members are the reason for our success and your support will make the difference for the future of our industry and housing for Texans! ■

For more information, or to contribute to HOMEPAC, please visit www.texasbuilders.org/government-affairs/HOMEPAC.

Gene Lantrip is the volunteer chair of HOMEPAC, the political action committee of the Texas Association of Builders. He is the owner of Lantrip's Custom Homes.





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Lois W. Kolkhorst
State Senator

First and foremost, you are to be commended for your active involvement in sponsoring and passing HB 7, the tree mitigation bill, during the past regular and special sessions. Passage of this TAB priority bill will go a long way towards positively addressing development costs and housing prices. How did your knowledge of the building industry, including your sponsorship of a similar bill in the 2013 session, help you understand the importance of HB 7 and the issue at hand?

For my entire career in public service, I have had a good relationship with the building industry and the tree mitigation issue has been something we've discussed for a long time. I've filed many versions of this bill in the past and I still believe in my heart that a landowner owns the trees on their land, it's a fundamental property right that must be defended. If we let the government decide who owns trees on my property, what is next? My prior experience in 2013 on the issue taught me how difficult it would be to pass a bill, but HB 7 was designed to accommodate the concerns of the local municipalities while reducing burdens not just on builders, but on all property owners in Texas.

You served seven terms in the Texas House of Representatives before being elected to the Senate in 2014. The obvious differences aside, what are the different nuances between the House and Senate?

The most striking difference is the size, and how that impacts the process of legislating. The Senate has 31 members and the House has 150, so the smaller body of the Senate allows the process to be a bit more nimble. Also, representation of constituents varies greatly, over 900,000 constituents for a Senator and over 180,000 for a House Member. My Senate District 18 is large enough to fit the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island within its boundaries.

During your time at the Capitol you have served on many different committees, including your current commitments as Chair of Administration and active membership on the Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs Committee, the Finance Committee, the Health & Human Services Committee, and the Transportation Committee. What were some notable accomplishments for you and the Legislature this session? What are some issues that you would like to see addressed during this upcoming Legislative session?

Over the years, I have passed legislation that impacts every code of state law. I have passed laws dealing with everything from lessening the impact of regulations on small businesses such as home bakeries, to toughening penalties on cattle rustlers. The human trafficking issue was tackled with legislation from my office last session, along with passing a bill to help lessen our state's maternal mortality rates. I passed legislation last year to add more transparency to local taxing entities, which gives more transparency tools to those paying property taxes, and I sponsored legislation to reduce the amount of regulation done by state agencies.

You have always been a great friend of the home building industry and our members appreciate the opportunity to work with you. For yet another year, the Texas housing economy is leading the nation in the area of production, affordability and job creation. What can be done at the state level to ensure that Texas sustains this status in the future?

It is vital that we maintain our low-tax, low regulation environment in order to sustain the Texas Miracle. While Texas is often seen as a business-friendly state, we still have over 226,898 regulatory restrictions in the Texas Administrative Code. This is more than 14.9 million words, and would take 829 hours (or 21 weeks) to read.

Texas has the fourth highest number of regulatory restrictions. For comparison, Florida is ranked fifth with 52,924 fewer restrictions than Texas.

Water and road infrastructure funding are imperative to the economic stability of Texas' future. As you can imagine, our industry is very supportive of a dedicated, to long term funding source for both water resources and road infrastructure. How do you see the Texas Legislature maintaining and tackling these issues in the future?

The recent work on transportation and water infrastructure funding has been vital to allowing Texas to maintain its growth. Both the water infrastructure programs and the transportation funding provided by Props. 1 and 7 are a good start and provide a model for future work. If you want to have cities, you've got to build roads that ease the congestion in and out of these areas. That means focusing on major corridors that connect cities to suburbs and restricting tolls on these thoroughfares. No Texan should have to pay a fee to get to work and I have been very skeptical of tolling as a reliable revenue source.

BIOGRAPHY

Lois Kolkhorst

Texas State Senator, District 18

Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst is a fifth-generation Texan, with ancestral roots dating to the Texas War of Independence. Born and raised in Brenham, she went on to graduate from TCU where she played collegiate golf.

After serving seven terms in the Texas House, she was elected to the Texas Senate in a special election in 2014, becoming only the 17th female senator to serve since 1845. She proudly represents Senate District 18, which spans 21 counties, covering a third of the Texas coastline and nearly 1 million constituents.

As the Chair of the Committee on Administration, Senator Kolkhorst oversees many administrative functions of the Senate and controls the Local & Uncontested Calendar, where nearly half of all bills are considered each session.

Recognized as a fiscal conservative, she is a member of the Senate Finance Committee, and holds the distinction of being the only lawmaker in Texas history to serve twice in both the House and Senate as a member of the Budget Conference Committee to write the final version of the state budget.

As a member of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services, she has passed landmark legislation to toughen medical privacy and promote public health while also frequently collaborating with CASA to protect foster children.

Senator Kolkhorst serves on the Senate Transportation Committee as well as the Senate Select Committee on Texas Ports. A longtime advocate for private property rights, she is a member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs, the Texas Agriculture Policy Board and the Texas Windstorm Insurance Oversight Board.

The SWIFT funds have proven to be incredibly successful in helping small rural water systems continue to provide service and to facilitate the construction of major projects that help to bring water to rapidly growing areas in my area, like West Harris County and North Fort Bend.

Hurricane Harvey was one of the largest catastrophes in Texas history. What can the Legislature do next session to help ensure local governments and entities receive the much needed state and federal disaster assistance, while ensuring that the use of public funds is done efficiently and responsibly?

Coordination is key. Mayors and judges have to know where to turn both in the storm response and the storm recovery phase. That means ensuring that these officials are prepared and aware of the proper protocol. They need to know what resources will be available before the storm even hits.

Proper oversight is also necessary to ensure that the largest amount of taxpayer dollars reach their intended target. I'm glad that Governor Abbott has appointed Commissioner Bush and Chancellor Sharp to assist in this and I have enjoyed working with them on storm response.

It is estimated that 25 percent of the cost of a home is a result of regulations imposed by the government. What are your thoughts on the influence that government has on rising home costs and other barriers to homeownership due to tax increases, fees and other regulatory burdens?

Again, our state is awash in unnecessary regulations. To the extent that these regulations prevent us from providing the necessary housing to our citizens, they need to be removed. I filed and passed legislation last session that seeks to curb the rising rate of state regulations passed by state agencies, essentially saying that for every new burdensome and costly rule, an old

rule must be removed: one out for every new one put in the code.

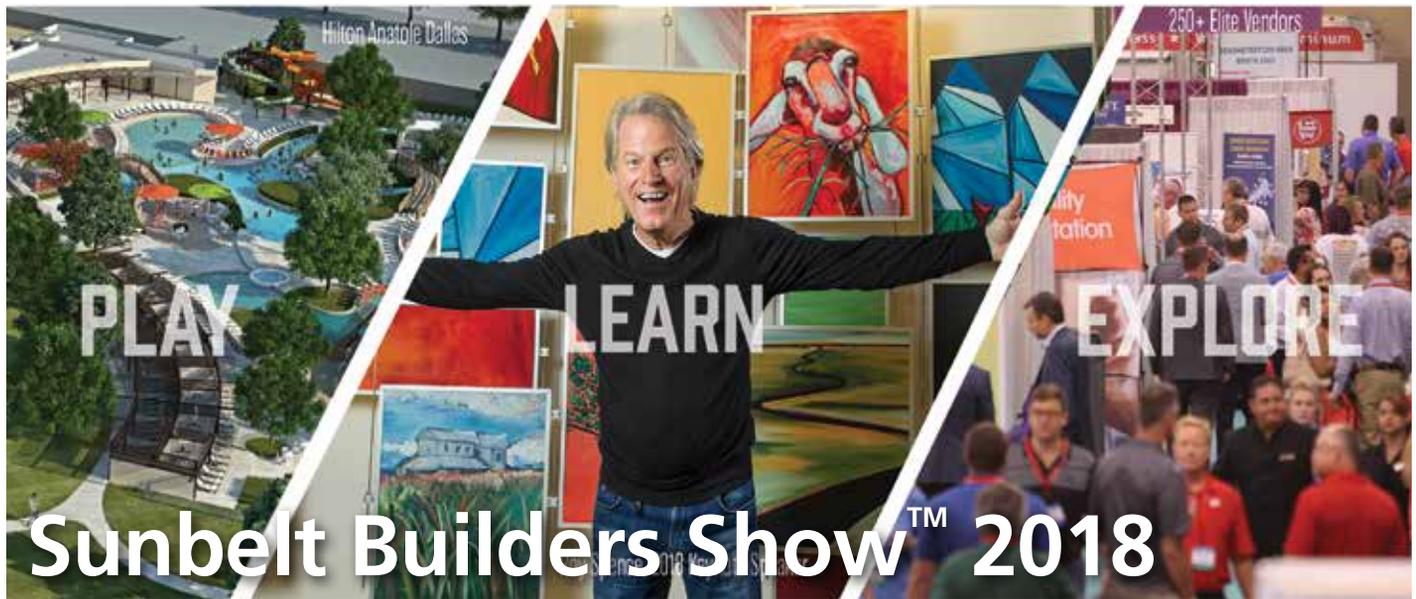
Property taxation is the most oppressive form of taxation because all of our freedoms flow from the ability to own private property. Property taxes prevent hard-working Texans from achieving the American Dream. It forces seniors to abandon the homesteads where they've made their life. And it drives minority communities from neighborhoods where they have lived for generations. The state must address property taxes in order to allow the people of Texas to achieve the ultimate American goal: property ownership.

What can the business community do next session to better influence the budget process and help maintain or solicit funding for programs like the Texas Workforce Commission's Jobs Education for Texans (JET) program, The Texas Education Agency's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, and our Texas State Technical College (TSTC) campuses?

Stress the Return on Investment. These hands-on programs for technical degrees normally graduate their students quickly and help them get real, high-paying jobs. They churn out workers with the skills Texas needs to continue to thrive, and our education system needs to always recognize these results.

The skilled labor shortage in Texas is an issue of great concern to our industry. What are your thoughts on providing increased access to career and technical training in Texas' public schools in order to accelerate training the workforce that our growing state needs?

I have supported legislation that links job creators directly into the classroom to help see that students are learning the skills needed for a job immediately upon graduation. We will only sustain the Texas Miracle with an educated workforce, a big part of that is access to career and technical training programs. ■



Tiffany Acree and Donnie Evans, Co-Chairs for the Sunbelt Builders Show™ Committee

Connecting with your community is important in every facet of your life. Make your summer plans now to spend August 8-9, 2018 with your residential construction community at the 2018 Sunbelt Builders Show™. The award-winning Show, hosted by the Texas Association of Builders (TAB), draws thousands of residential construction industry professionals from across Texas to come together and network, exchange ideas, see products & services, listen to excellent keynote speakers, attend quality educational sessions & demos and simply enjoy being together and learning from other professionals in our industry.

Every year, we look forward to bringing the members of the home building community together to create meaningful customer experiences and relationships. Meeting likeminded people inspires us, gets our creative juices flowing and gives us the opportunity to build partnerships. Being among our peers energizes us and gives us a prospect to be or find industry mentors. We discover new ideas to make our companies stronger and find solutions to our everyday challenges. At Sunbelt, you can reconnect with old friends and make new ones.

Mark your calendars and reserve your hotel room from August 7 – 10 at the Hilton Anatole Hotel in Dallas' Design District. We are planning a dynamic trade show with excellent products and services for you to visit, as well as producing lively networking events including the FUNdango & Statewide Washers Tournament benefitting HOME PAC, TAB's political action committee; the Builders' Bash featuring Ray Wylie Hubbard benefitting the Texas

"As a builder, the Sunbelt Builders Show™ offers me an excellent opportunity to get face-to-face time with many of my vendors that I'm doing business with, check-out new products and services, get updated on new codes and government regulations and network with other builders from all across the state, all in one convenient and time-saving location.

I am truly amazed at all that I can get accomplished at the Sunbelt Builders Show™, all within a few days."

— Donnie Evans, Co-Chair for the Sunbelt Builders Show™

Builders Foundation; the Star Awards program which is celebrating 25 years of recognizing the best in the industry; and the TAB Summer Committee and Board of Directors meetings.

This year's keynote presentations include Roy Spence, The PromiseLand Project, whose focus is on purpose driven living, respect and stopping the myth that the only path to success is a four-year college degree. We also have Matthew Pollard, the Rapid Growth Guy, who is going to help you differentiate yourself and put an end to competing on price and helping you understand why you can't (and shouldn't) be everything to everyone. The education and demo lineup include design, customer satisfaction, finding hidden margins, tax reform, techniques, high performance walls, benefits of screens and a home water softening system, how plumbing systems and water conditions interactions can affect

“As an associate – I just find it imperative to support the industry that supports your product or service. Sunbelt has been a major contributor to the growth and success that StrucSure Home Warranty has had in Texas over the years. When we are working on our yearly budgets, Sunbelt is one of the first items that we include and it is instrumental to our business model. If you are selling to builders or in the housing industry in Texas, you need to participate in some form at the Sunbelt Builders Show™ — it is the best money we invest all year long.”

— Tiffany Acree, Co-Chair for the Sunbelt Builders Show™

home performance and more. The trade show will include more than 200 companies with the latest products and services to help you build the best for your customers’ new and remodeled homes.

The Sunbelt Builders Show™ is returning to the iconic Hilton Anatole Hotel after last year’s successful event at the property! The JadeWaters resort pool complex, exclusive to hotel guests, includes luxury cabanas, a swim-up bar, lazy river, splash zone and two 180 foot slides are great additions to the property, especially during our summer event. In addition to the waterpark, it has both indoor and outdoor facilities including a spa, health club and is home to a valuable fine art collection of more than 1,000 pieces.

The negotiated room rate for attendees of the Sunbelt Builders Show™ is \$195 which includes the resort fee. The \$25 resort fee includes self-parking for one vehicle, guest room and public space WiFi, kids 12 and under eat dinner free in Media Grill and Counter Offer (one kids menu meal per adult entrée), access to Verandah Club and Fitness Center, 15 percent discount on spa services in V spa, two Starbucks per day in Counter Offer and Jade Waters Resort pool complex admittance from 9 a.m.- 9 p.m.

Besides being located next to the Dallas Design District, the Anatole is located within a six-mile radius of many museums, the Dallas World Aquarium, the Dallas Zoo, Deep Ellum, Trinity Groves and so much more. The hotel is situated about 15 minutes from Dallas/Love Field Airport and 30 minutes from DFW International Airport.

As your 2018 co-chairs, we are honored to have the opportunity to invite you to make your summer plans now and join us at the Sunbelt Builders Show™. We simply know that Sunbelt is an excellent opportunity for you and your business. It is a great way for you to stay connected and support your industry, therefore supporting yourself. To register, make your hotel reservations, purchase a booth or get more information go to www.SunbeltBuildersShow.com. ■

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UPDATING THE PAST: Historic Renovation Combines Past and Present Design for Homeowner's Dream Home

Jessica Hovel

The idea for the Historic Grapevine Remodel and Addition on Franklin Street originated with the homeowners' idea to keep the historic look of the house while expanding and modernizing the space within. The overall style they strived for was an updated, modern Craftsman for the interior and for the exterior the historic exterior façade that was already present.

The project first and foremost had to be in line with the Grapevine Historical Preservation Ordinance. The rise of the McMansions had started to encroach on the historic charm of Grapevine, leading the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission to create stronger regulations and standards on houses for the overall preservation of the remaining historical

homes, as well as the vintage charm that Grapevine has been known for. An architectural firm with experience in that arena was key to the success of this project.

This begins the collaboration of the homeowners, Jay Brown of Tahoe Custom Builders, and Josh Archer of M. J. Wright Architects for the Grapevine Remodel. Josh was selected by the homeowners for his experience with historic renovations and his previous dealings with the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission. Josh, an accomplished and creative designer, was key to making everything work. As Jay explains, "it was a very architectural driven project."

Josh Archer has worked with the Grapevine Historical Preservation

Commission for about 15 years and had finished at least 25 projects within the town of Grapevine. M.J. Wright has been awarded numerous contracts after being referred by the Grapevine Historical Preservation Director.

HISTORIC GRAPEVINE REMODEL & ADDITION

WWW.TAHOECUSTOMBUILDERS.COM

Local HBA Affiliation:
Fort Worth

Project Location:
Grapevine, TX

Builder:
Tahoe Custom Builders, Inc.

Architect:
M.J. Wright & Associates, Inc.



“The home has a very historical significance to the town in that it was the home of one of the first car dealership owners in Grapevine during the 1940s. It was originally a modest one-story home and the carport was used to show off the vintage cars that he would bring home from the lot,” described Josh.

Jay’s involvement in the project was somewhat random. “I received a phone call from the owner who asked me if I was interested in doing a remodeling project in Grapevine. Of course, I said yes, and everything just took off from there.”

The inspiration for the exterior design was a collaborated effort with Josh taking the lead in making sure the exterior kept the historic value since it is a corner lot with a lot of street visibility. “It took a lot to bring it in line with the expectations of the historical society and hats off to him for what he did there,” Jay credited to Josh.

Josh had to negotiate with the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission to mold the home not only into something that the historical society wanted, but also what the homeowners wished for their home. “We couldn’t necessarily do what we and the homeowners wanted

because we had to bring together what the historical society wanted for the home.”

Everything from the type of doors was predetermined from specialized pallets. Doors, windows, brands, styles, paint colors, exterior siding materials, open rafter design from the eaves and overhangs, style of exterior trim and doors were all things that had to go through the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission. The team began the process of working with the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission on the remodel in April of 2015, and after several public meetings with the Commission’s approval, ground was broken in December of 2015. The home was completed October of 2016. It wasn’t always easy for Josh to work with the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission because the Commission’s rules and guidelines are so rigid, but he did concede that the rules are important to the preservation of Grapevine, and at the end of the day, the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission did their job well. Striking the perfect balance between making the historical society happy and the client happy is what Josh constantly had in mind during the project.

“My favorite aspect of the whole project was coming up with a design that would make the homeowner feel like they have something so unique and different. It was fun coming up with a floor plan for the space arrangement. The end layout is really cool in that it’s not typical for what you expect to see when you walk into a home like this. The final result has the look of an old craftsman home but with modern lines and a contemporary feel,” Josh said.

Josh designed the home to have an enclosed entryway to give the initial feel of the home to be close and cozy before you walk into the open concept living and kitchen area. Part of a craftsman home’s appeal is the low ceilings and closed off spaces that give a homey and quiet sense with privacy to rooms. “The owners didn’t want to have full sightlines from one end of the home to the street, so we created a nice private entry and the family area was opened up off to the side of it.”

The kitchen was designed specifically by the wife, who is a chef and restaurant owner, to be her cooking paradise. “The kitchen was to be a focal point of the home,” Jay said. It features high end appliances, a chalk painted wall by the



pantry so she can write down recipes she wants to use for the week, and an 8' x 10' custom designed island to be used for serving purposes and plenty of entertaining space. The open concept allows the dining room to be off of the side of the kitchen and a custom-made bench lines the wall to allow extra seating for meals.

Features outside of the kitchen include master bathroom with a double entry way so that it is connected directly to the utility room by separate doors. The stairs ascend into a large living space near a look out dormer with window seat, then into the upstairs living space that includes built-in bunk beds with storage. Off this space is the guest bedroom and bathroom. The final upstairs space is substantial with room for children and grandchildren to settle in during visits.

Part of the negotiations of remodeling the home was the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission would concede certain changes with the house if the owners would designate the home as a landmark. The homeowners have had the home in their family for a long time and wanted to retain as much of the old material as possible while still updating

the overall look of the interior and agreed to register it.

Another negotiation in the homeowners' favor was the removal of the carport from the property. "There was a freestanding carport from the house, but the lot and the tight space requirements wouldn't allow us to keep that," Jay said.

"The main problem with the carport is that it was nonconforming to the original property lines, so even if we wanted to keep it, it wasn't an option because of the site standards and zoning requirements for the property. It was over the original property line and encroaching on the neighbor's lot. Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission allowed us to build a garage attached with a breeze way as long as we met their strict requirements on how the garage looked, which way the doors faced, and how the breeze way was connected." Josh explained.

However, the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission was reluctant to allow them to demolish the carport. It was compromised that the materials were to be repurposed, given new life elsewhere and the carport was

fortunately not destroyed in the end.

Jay found the most challenging portion to be re-doing the pier and beam foundation around home. To accomplish this, after the approval of plans from the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission, they had to lift the house up from the ground and restore the crumbling foundation from there. "The original house had no masonry façade on it but we were allowed to add brick veneer around the perimeter of the of the home which also had to be selected by the Commission."

The process for this required two fifty-five-foot-long 'l-beams' to be placed under the original foundation. From there, house movers lifted the home four-feet off the ground, while they built a new and repaired the old foundation, including piers and footings. "This was all done while the home was up in the air. They then set it back down on the new foundation. It was quite a cumbersome and extensive process," Jay said.

The homeowners also wanted a second story added to the home. In order to create the more open concept below, they wanted enough space for a guest bedroom and a den moved up to the

second floor. The challenge there came with the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission’s sightline rules and height requirements. The way the ordinance is written, it is almost impossible to design a second story that is visually appealing architecturally. Grapevine was originally a low income single story old farm home township, and trying to build these 3,000 sq.ft. homes that loom over these smaller homes was something that the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission was designed to protect against.

“It is very difficult to design a second floor in Grapevine in general. The most difficult thing we had to do for this remodel was to design the second floor and keep the roof lines underneath the line of sight requirements set up by the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission. But I think the end result is very appealing and we pulled it all off very nicely,” explained Josh.

The home originally had boxcar siding and much of the material from the original design with various updates, and as possible was salvaged by Jay’s team to be repurposed into the new design. “There was an existing ridge beam that was signed by the original builder from the 1940s. We wanted to incorporate that piece of lumber into the new ridge beam

of the addition for the second story,” Jay commented. “That was a really great find.”

Much of the original materials taken out of the original home were salvaged and set aside for accents in the new home. Josh felt that one of the best finds for him was the original shiplap found underneath the sheetrock and wallpaper, which was in perfect condition. There are now accent walls in the living areas covered with the shiplap that was repurposed. The original box car wood siding that was popular in the 40s was retained by Jay for the exterior facade, as well as some of the framing materials. Also, some of the new trim was milled out of the original lumber that the homeowners asked to be reused.

The home started at 1,600 sq.ft. and a 1,200 sq.ft addition was created. for a final total of 2,800 sq.ft. There is a wading pool in the backyard, which is a quiet little space where the homeowners can relax and enjoy a lazy afternoon in the historical home of their dreams.

For Jay, this was a highly visible project that was also quite challenging. “We had people walking into the home uninvited throughout construction and calling me from our yard sign asking for me if the home was for sale – which of course it was not. I loved the process, I loved



working with the homeowners. And their home is now a true showplace worthy of its historical designation.”

Josh is more than happy to admit that it was the homeowners' positive involvement with the project that not only made it a pleasure to work on, but what helped the end result become an award-winning project. “When you have homeowners that are willing to work with you, respect your opinion and expertise as well as understand that we are limited to what the Grapevine Historical Preservation Commission endorses, it makes our job so much easier. The homeowners are wonderful people and I am so proud to have been a part of it and honored to be part of its recognition,” concludes Josh, and Jay wholeheartedly agrees. ■

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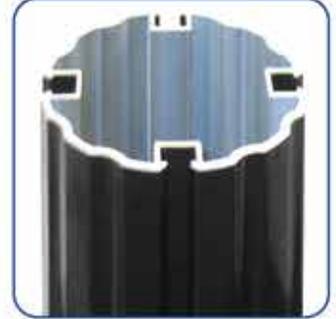
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Diane McGroarty
Diana Homes, Inc.

DIANE MCGROARTY

CONQUERS COASTLINE CONSTRUCTION

By Jessica Hovel

Diane McGroarty, a member of the Coastal Bend HBA, has been in the building industry for over 20 years. She began flipping houses with her brother-in-law in the 1990s in Minnesota before she moved down to Texas to escape the cold, snowy winters of the Midwest. "I started out with my brother-in-law who would help a guy fix up homes and sell them. I worked with him for a year and then did some projects on my own, before I moved down to Corpus Christi to do remodeling projects, but people were telling me that it wouldn't be as profitable because of all the potential termite damage. So, there was a couple who had moved down here from Minnesota previously and a friend of theirs was a builder. He became my mentor, and with his help, I built my first home here on North Padre Island."

Diane founded Diana Homes, Inc. shortly after settling down on North Padre Island. "I started with one spec home that took three months to sell, and I never looked back from there." Taking after her father, Diane always knew she was going to be

the head of her own company. "When you have your own company, you can be your own boss and control your own future. I pay close attention to every detail and I take pride in overseeing my projects from start to finish. I strive to do the best job possible for my clients."

She started with exclusively doing new builds, but then the market slowed down and people started calling her for remodels and additions, which helped keep her company busy to this day. Diane goes to every working jobsite at least once a day to make sure things are going the way she expects them to go. "I think I have been able to stand out as a smaller company because I do everything myself and get recognized for that."

However, building on North Padre Island poses some unique challenges that Diane hadn't dealt with in Minnesota, much less other places in Texas. Due to the annual threat of hurricanes and tidal surge, as well as the environmental concerns of salt water, termites, and building along canals,

home construction on North Padre Island takes a bit more care in how a house is built.

"The environment is definitely the biggest challenge to building on North Padre Island," Diane concedes.

The island is under constant threat from the annual hurricane season, and the devastation of Hurricane Harvey proved to Diane how important it was for homes to follow hurricane codes.

"You could tell which homes, had followed the hurricane codes when you looked at the devastation. The newer ones withstood the hurricane while the older homes were completely demolished."

Since beginning her business on the island, Diane is no stranger to complying with hurricane codes. There are hurricane straps that have to be implemented into the framing of the home before the drywall goes up, an engineer needs to do a windstorm review and multiple inspections during construction. There are hurricane

“YOU COULD TELL WHICH HOMES HAD FOLLOWED THE HURRICANE CODES WHEN YOU LOOKED AT THE DEVASTATION. THE NEWER ONES WITHSTOOD THE HURRICANE WHILE THE OLDER HOMES WERE COMPLETELY DEMOLISHED.”

rods that go from the foundation to the roof and also the industry and energy efficiency standards that must be met. After the blueprints are done, an engineer will do a windstorm review and foundation design. It definitely adds time; every stud has a hurricane strap nailed to it, so it adds a lot of work compared to other areas.

“Since it’s only me and the subcontractors I hire out to, I only do a few houses at a time. But I always have a full schedule; word has gotten out that I’m a thorough, good, honest builder, and I pay attention to all the little details. Business has definitely been good.”

Building along the canals of North Padre Island is also a challenge Diane has learned to navigate around. “Canal houses take longer because they need to have sand brought in to build up the elevation of the lot to build up the foundation in case a hurricane hits. If it’s built right up to the water that’s an additional challenge because you have to set pilings in the water to set the scaffolding on. The pilings are later used for the decking and dock. It’s a unique challenge that is part of being a builder on the island.”

FEMA has required that homes in some areas must be built to at least ten feet above sea level, with some newer ones being placed even higher up. But Diane sees this as a necessary precaution, in order to protect homeowners from losing their homes in the event of severe weather emergencies, especially when building at higher elevations help a homeowner’s flood insurance go down.



Things have definitely changed since Diane started her business down in Texas. “With the population boom happening right now, there has been more building competition going around the island, so it’s been somewhat challenging to be able to compete with the larger companies, but again, my building business has been on the island longer than most of them. I think my reputation of being hard-working and paying close attention to detail has kept me in the race. There has also been the stricter hurricane codes and energy efficiency standards, but I understand why they are in place and it’s a necessary part of being a builder and definitely worth it to the homeowner in the long run, especially since Hurricane Harvey’s destruction.”

One of the most rewarding home renovations Diane took control of was her 2016 Parade of Homes Award-winner. “I came into the project when the homeowners called me to take over after their builder and his subcontractors weren’t showing up to work, even though they had paid him a lot of money to build their home. It was difficult because I hadn’t been there from the get-go and needed to work around what was already in place. The end result was a beautiful \$1.5 million home, and it won People’s Choice for the Parade. It was just really rewarding to have that be the end result.”

There is nothing that gives Diane more satisfaction than watching a home being built from the ground, up. “Clearing the lot off, and seeing it progress and then getting to the final stages where everything looks really nice, I just get a lot of satisfaction making my clients happy.”

“I do what I can to make sure they get what they envisioned while also keeping in mind the climate that I’m working in. I make suggestions if I think there’s a better way of doing things. I want to be sure when I leave the project, I never get a call back for any problems, as I try to do things the right way and the better way.”

With the help of the Coastal Bend HBA, Diane has been able to build a solid foundation of her own for her company. Her subcontractors were in the HBA and asked if she wanted to join, she said yes, and now attends the luncheons once a month and does the Parade of Homes when she can. “The HBA has been an invaluable help to network with other people, especially since I do most of it myself for this company. It’s helped me connect with other industry members who can help where I can’t do things myself. They also really keep up with the legislation that affects us as builders, which makes it another great reason to be involved.” ■

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Homes for Heroes Gifted Veteran Cody Leake a Mortgage-Free Home

Homes for Heroes, the charitable arm of the West Texas Home Builders Association (WTHBA), proudly awarded veteran Cody Leake a mortgage free home in April.

Leake served 10 years in the United States Marine Corps where he was an E-06 Staff Sergeant. He specialized as an Aircraft Rescue and Firefighter Specialist where he was involved in emergency responses involving rescue and recovery operations for both military and civilian victims with a wide range of injuries including fatalities. After many years of bravery and dedication, he was diagnosed with PTSD, TBI, and many other service-related disabilities.

Since retiring from the Marines, Leake decided to help his fellow veterans

by dedicating his life to counsel other veterans who face similar problems. He is also focused on rebuilding his life and trying to provide a safe and thriving environment for his son.

"This home will provide stability for (my son and me) physically, emotionally, and definitely financially," said Leake. "It means the world for me to be able to provide my son with a home so that he can have the comfortable lifestyle that he deserves. I am truly grateful for this blessing.

Homes for Heroes and the WTHBA take care of returning military and first responders who have sacrificed so much for our freedom by providing mortgage free homes to disabled heroes and their families in the Lubbock area. ■



Partners of Villa Homes (L-R): David Villanueva, Emigdio Villanueva, Jr. and Emigdio Villanueva, III

Villa Homes Snags Top Honors Plus More in RGV Parade

Villa Homes, a family-owned custom construction company from the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, had their home entry at 3101 Payton in Mission, Texas awarded Best Of Show in this year's 2018 Rio Grande Valley HBA's Parade of

Homes. With beamed ceilings, wood-look ceramic flooring, and an open floorplan, the home definitely "wows." Colors throughout of soft dove grays and whites create a serene atmosphere, while French doors and large windows bring

the outside light in. The Master Bath is an opulent stunner with separate vanities, a modern soaking tub, and His and Hers showers. This Best Of Show winning home is definitely a masterpiece of beauty and function.

Villa Homes' Parade entry not only won Best Of Show, but was also recognized with the following awards: Best Single-Family Home (\$251,000 – \$350,000 category); Best Architectural Design; Best Master & Bath; and Best Kitchen. ■

Tile Cool Roof Demand is Growing as Builders and Homeowners Seek to Reduce Energy Costs and Build for Resiliency



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To learn more about the Boral Cool Roof System, visit www.BoralRoof.com.

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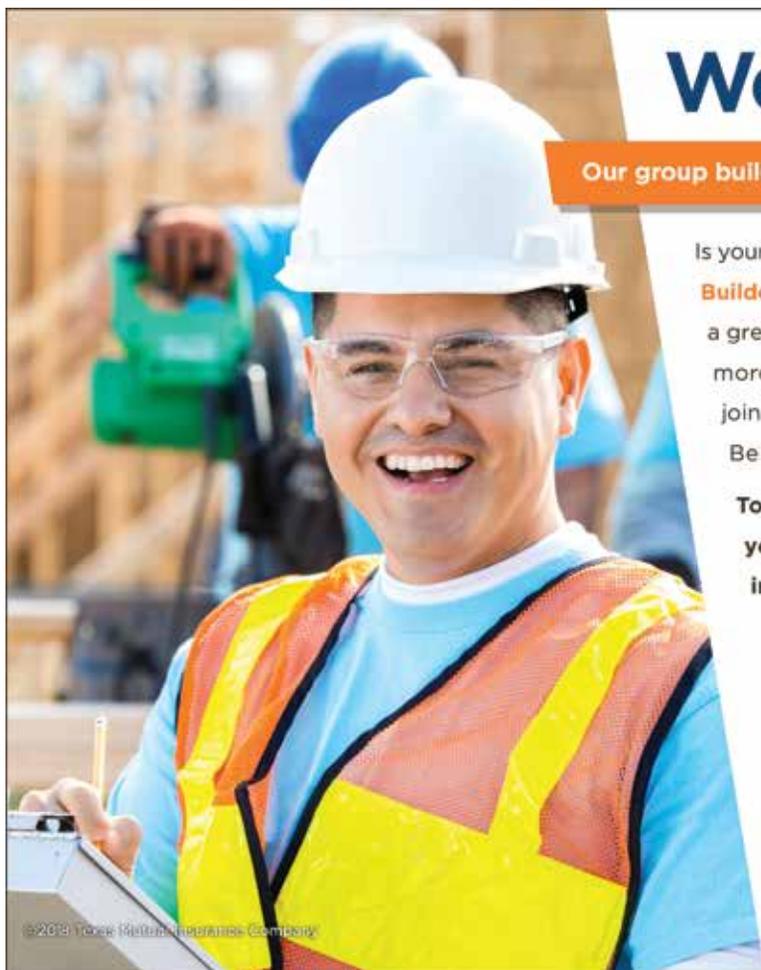
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