

CONNECTICUT BUILDER



The Magazine of the Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut

Summer 2025

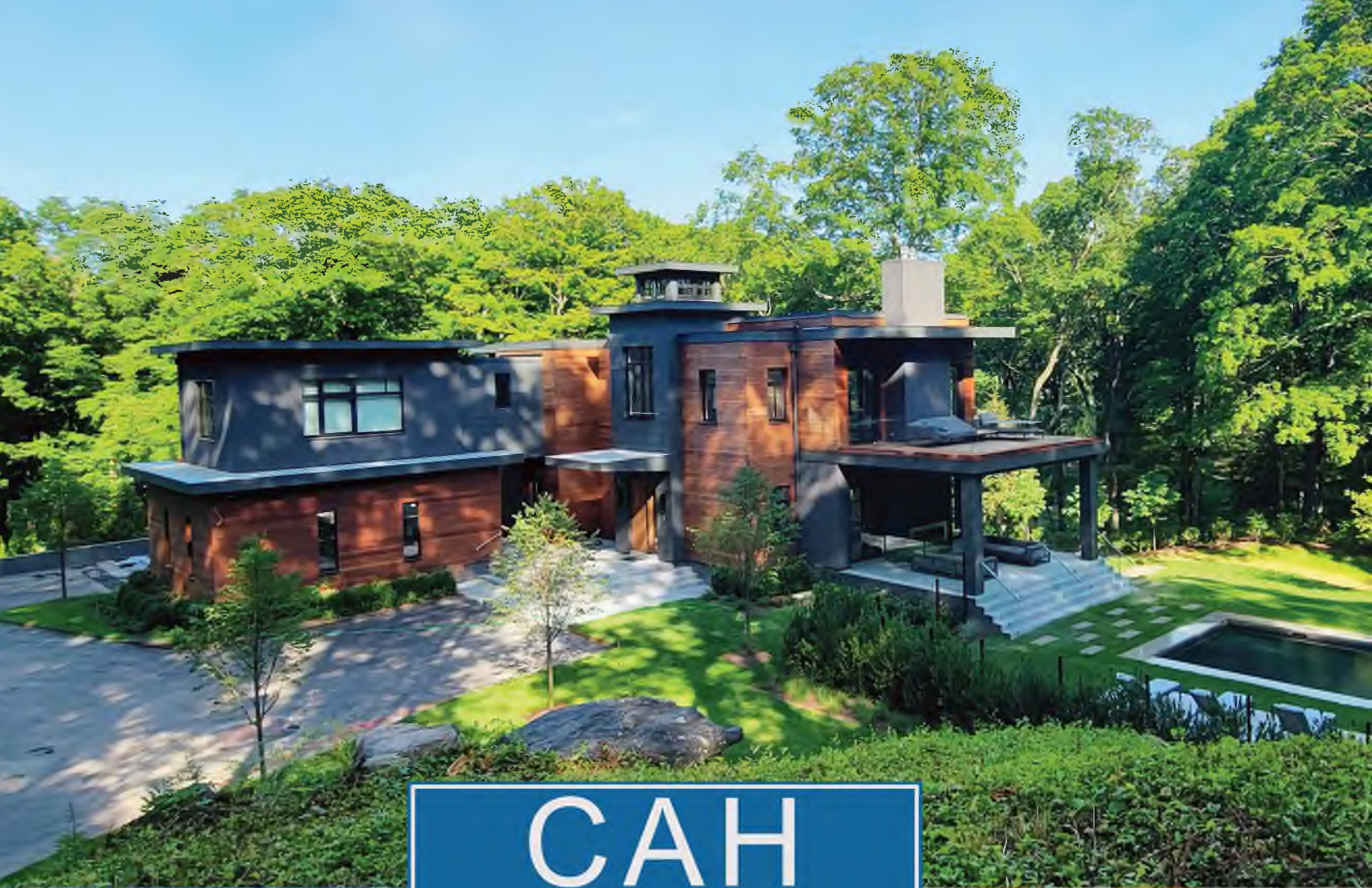
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Christopher Pagliaro Architects
Anastasia Interior Design

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COVER PHOTO – The interior designer of our cover kitchen, Tina Anastasia, describes its special features: “Dualing islands - one for prep and one for sitting provide great circulation, while stunning white oak cabinetry from Iron Oaks, and seamless Trueform Concrete countertops and back-splash furnish calming, yet elegant natural elements in the space.”

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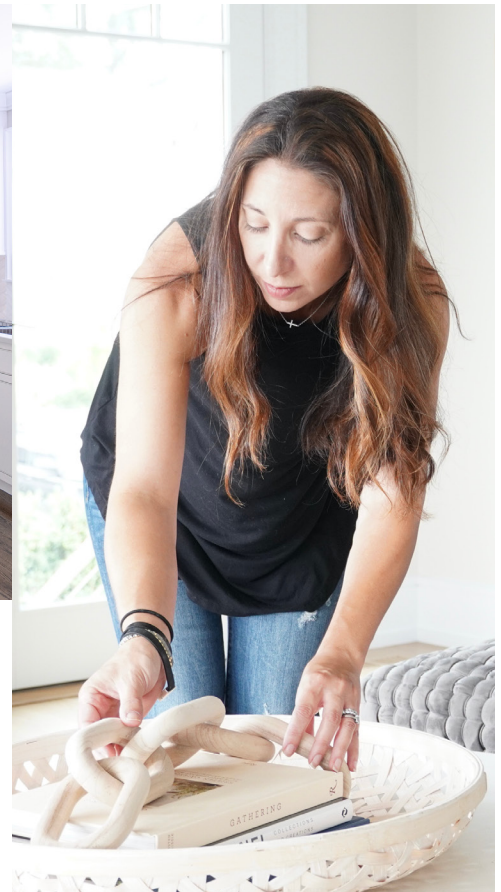
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As we welcome the warmth and excitement of summer, it's fitting to reflect on the significant strides we've made as an industry in the state capitol. With the legislative session winding down, I'm proud to say that our voices have been heard loud and clear. The tireless efforts of our advocacy team have ensured that our concerns and priorities have been represented, and we're confident that our industry's interests have been protected.

I'd like to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude to our Executive Officer and Chief Lobbyist, Jim Perras, for his unwavering dedication and expertise. Jim's work behind the scenes has been instrumental in shaping policy and advocating for our industry's needs. His passion and commitment to our cause are truly inspiring, and we're fortunate to have him at the helm.

But it's not just our state-level team that's driving progress. Our local association executive officers are working diligently to advance advocacy, education, and events that benefit our members and the industry as a whole. From seminars and workshops to networking events and community outreach, these efforts are crucial to our collective success. I urge everyone to get involved, attend a meeting, reach out with questions, and come learn about our association at the local, state, and national level.

As someone who's been fortunate enough to find the HBRA early in my business journey, I can attest to the transformative impact it can have. The growth and success I've experienced are directly correlated to our involvement in the association. The connections, resources, and opportunities provided by the HBRA have been invaluable, and I'm confident that you'll experience the same benefits.

As we look to the coming year, I'm excited to see what the future holds. With the dedication of our team, the passion of our members, and the collective strength of our industry, I'm confident that we'll continue to thrive and make a lasting impact. So, I invite you to join us, participate in our events, and contribute to our mission. Together, we can build a brighter future for our industry and our communities.

Let's continue to work together to achieve great things!

Sincerely,

Anthony B DeRosa

President and Chairman of the Board HBRA of CT ■



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The Heart & Soul of Today's Homes



Architect Chris Pagliaro's 5th Connecticut Builder cover is the kitchen of his recent transformation of a tired 1950's colonial in Southport. See renovated home above left. The project builder was Nick Frate of Fox Hill Builders.

The interior designer of our cover kitchen, Tina Anastasia, describes this kitchen's special features, including great circulation, with "dualing islands - one for prep and one for sitting."

"White oak in a natural finish, and the concrete countertops and backsplash provide natural elements in the space. Striking black framed windows, bring the outside in and add depth."

- Tina Anastasia

The kitchen is where families gather, meals are prepared, and memories are made. The bathroom is a more intimate and private space, used for relaxation, and self-care. It's a place of retreat and tranquility.

In essence, the kitchen is a home's heart - while the primary bathroom is its soul refresher - a space for quiet reflection and personal rejuvenation.



Southport bath by Tina Anastasia. See page 25.

Trueform Concrete supplied and installed the counters and backsplash for Southport kitchen. Trueform creative director, Paul Grech explained the benefits concrete brought to this project:

“Beyond its natural, calming aesthetic, concrete’s chief benefit is its versatility. Concrete is an ideal choice for those seeking very specific parameters—such as a particular color, finish, thickness, shape, feature, or set of dimensions.”

In this project, it’s clear that Tina approached concrete as more of a raw building material than a fixed object - because in designing this one home, she employed concrete in several distinct settings. Trueform fabricated and installed kitchen countertops, matching backsplashes, and two fireplace surrounds.

Concrete - less time to install and minimal seams

Paul described the thinking behind Tina’s choice and what the installation process involved.

“Tina understood that concrete would deliver an unparalleled level of harmony between the vertical and horizontal surfaces for a truly integrated look. Our team visited the home and created templates of the entire kitchen space to ensure that all the individual pieces we fabricated in our NJ facility fit perfectly upon our return. An added benefit of the concrete backsplash is that the installation was completed in a single visit—far less time and energy than the traditional tile and grout method. It also means far less seams—and therefore far less chance of issues down the road. “

“One unique feature we appreciate about Tina’s design is the backsplash area directly below the hood, which projects an extra ½” from the rest of the surface,” Paul explained. “This subtle, proud detail shows the designer’s intent—giving the wall some structure while highlighting and framing the hood itself. Trueform was able to achieve this simply by casting this particular backsplash tile thicker than the rest.”



Trueform’s Paul Grech on trends

“One of the trends we’re seeing over at Trueform is the increasing tendency of designers and architects to integrate smart features - such as shallow shelves for storing spices or plants other small objects—directly into their concrete backsplash. Clever details like this really showcase a designer’s ability to think not only of the end user, but of the usefulness of the material itself.



Another trend we’re witnessing—also captured in this project—is the employment of waterfall legs. Waterfall legs are vertical slabs that run from the edge of a countertop to the floor—essentially “wrapping” the island in a concrete skin. Doing this not only avoids having to detail or finish the side(s) of an island, but it also creates the illusion that the island is a cohesive, encapsulated object. It’s like an exclamation point on the overall design.”

— Paul Grech, Trueform Concrete





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Tina worked with Iron Oaks as the cabinet maker for the kitchen. The Long Island City based company specializes in architectural millwork, handcrafted furniture and cabinetry.



“The homeowner brought us into the project,” explained Iron Oaks Project Manager, Erik Pfannenstiel. “He wanted this kitchen to be a place for him to entertain, and from any site line, this room feels inviting.”



“A lot of time and effort was spent on the islands,” Erik explained.

“The client felt that the concrete counters brought texture and played off each other and the plaster walls. For the cabinetry, we used white oak with slow close drawers, and hardware is so important.



Tina and Chris specified a ½” reveal between the countertops and the cabinets. Chris and Tina’s attention to detail is phenomenal. Chris insists that any transition of material has the right separation. Creating that intentionality helps integrate without being aligned.”

The Heart & Soul of Today’s Homes

(continued)

Integrated Thermador appliances from Aitorio blend seamlessly with cabinetry, and another great feature of this project is the hidden pantry, which creates a little mystery. This is a definite trend. In other projects, we’ve used sliding doors and pocket doors to hide a coffee station, and a hidden door to a basement Speakeasy called the “Rabbit Hole”. In this case, the door to the pantry looks like a cabinet.”



This project was a great example of everyone—Tina, Chris, Trueform, Iron Oaks and the client—all being on the same page.

The client had a vision, and we all brought it to life.”

– Erik Pfannenstiel,
Design Director & PM, Iron Oaks

The Heart & Soul of Today's Homes

(continued)



"I am always trying to find a way to be ahead of what's next in residential architecture in New England. We have been very busy, and I think that architecture and interior design is finding its way back to more traditional materials. I don't think that means traditional architecture, but rather a way of giving warmth and coziness to the open planning

that people still desire—though many are finally coming back to wanting areas of comfort and enclosure within those plans. Masonry materials, new interpretations of traditional roofing, warmth in the natural materials of the exterior landscape, and detailing of the architecture that offers a hint of the more traditional. That doesn't mean 9-piece moldings, or ridiculously heavy roof rakes, but rather some softness to the designs." — Chris Pagliaro



"In 2025, interior design is focused on creating spaces that nurture health and well-being, including sleep patterns and spaces for relaxation. Products like cold plunge baths and saunas are becoming additions to gym areas. Luxury is no longer

about costs and excess, but more about expressing individuality through artisanal craftsmanship. Moving away from separation, spaces are being created to promote genuine connections and camaraderie."

— Tina Anastasia



Coveledge, Contentment Island Darien

Chris Pagliaro teamed up with Tina Anastasia and Long Neck Builders on a HOBI winning custom home on Contentment Island in Darien. This kitchen features a golden white oak island with quartzite counters, a white oak beamed ceiling and walls of glass for panoramic view of Long Island Sound. The light fixtures, Tina refers to as "The Clams," are made by Shakuff.

The white oak cabinetry is by Frank Byrne, Byrne Woodworking, and the material on the island is Perla Venata quartzite and was fabricated through Point Rock Surfaces, along with the integrated stone sink.



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COVER STORY

Hobbs Inc.

Hobbs Inc. won Best Vacation Home for a 12,000 sf stunner in Cutchogue N.Y featuring this white oak and stainless kitchen with massive stainless steel island, and La Cornue stove with a custom stainless steel hood manufactured by Focal Metals.



Pictured is the view from the Butler's Pantry to the kitchen through a steel and glass dividing wall manufactured by All the Details.



Peter Stofa kitchen

Peter Stofa was recognized with a Best Kitchen Special Focus Award for this spacious white oak kitchen in his Westport home. Stand out features include quartz countertops and book-matched backsplash, motorized Bloom lift door cabinetry, a Miele coffee maker and 2 side-by-side Hafele full extension pantry pullouts. In addition, there are free-floating shelves, a custom range hood with stainless steel band, two 10' x 4' islands with Quartz countertops, and a dining area.





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The Heart & Soul of Today's Homes

(continued)



The 2024 *Custom Home of the Year* was designed by Chris Pagliaro with interior design by Lauren Vallario.

A true Heart of this home

There was an incredible amount of thought and collaboration with the homeowner that went into designing the kitchen at our Five Mile project,” explained interior designer, Lauren Vallario.

“Our client, as well as her grown children, all enjoy cooking, so the layout and the materials were all extremely important. Our client wanted the kitchen to reflect her family’s personality, and didn’t want the typical “white” kitchen.



We explored current trends such as rift white oak to tie in with other elements present throughout the home, but landed on Farrow & Ball Railing, a deep blue/grey, for the kitchen cabinets. This kitchen is sun drenched, so using a moody color was not at all an issue. More and more we are seeing homeowners embrace color again, which is so refreshing! We also brought in subtle texture by using a Portola Limewash finish on the hood and wall above the cooking wall backsplash. We wanted to avoid the heaviness that painting the hood would have brought, if we painted it the same color as the cabinets.



With such vast windows, it was important to bring nature in. We used a classic Calacutta Paonessa marble for the backsplash and island, which brought in the earthy tones of creams, rusts and greys.

While there may be clients who shy away from such a delicate material, our clients embraced it for its uniqueness, and loved having a natural stone in their kitchen. To balance the boldness of the marble and it’s delicate nature, we used a more durable material for the perimeter—honed man-made quartz—to provide easy clean up and a worry free surface for the chef to work on.



One of the most interesting things about this kitchen is the absence of upper wall cabinets. This trend continues to evolve with a less is more approach to cabinetry. We made sure to pack the base cabinets and the oven/pantry wall with organization, to make sure all necessities were easily accessible. A hidden coffee/beverage bar provides a lovely surprise, and a convenient place for the small appliances we use every day.”

– Lauren Vallario, Lauren Vallario Designs

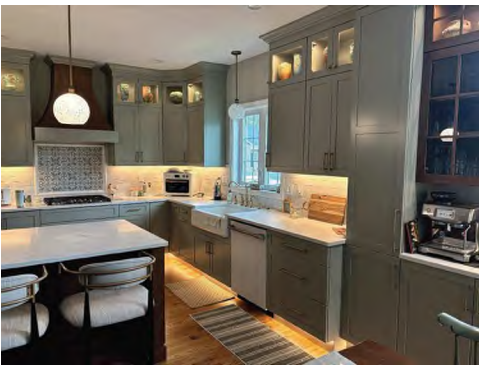


David Trachten, owner of Viking Kitchens, has seen “the full evolution of the trend cycle move from cool tones and sleek lines to warmer, material, and tones and textures with details leaning more transitional.

“As the center of the home, and a space for entertaining, homeowners are choosing to disguise the functionality of kitchens, and showcase their beauty.”

Slab counters - While we have seen the focus on slab countertops become a design priority in recent years, this feature is now making its way to other areas of the home.

A warmer color palette - Kitchens, bars, bathrooms, office spaces, and other functional areas of the home are being showcased in White Oak and other mid-tone wood materials. In turn, this natural finish is influencing a warmer color pallet of creamier whites, greens, and blues.



More detailing and accent lighting - Designs are including a bit more detailing in moldings with subtle profiles for a softer approach. To highlight the details, we are seeing accent lighting throughout—in addition to lighting backsplashes, we are now seeing toe kicks shine, crown molding being up lit, and specialty cabinet interiors glow.

Hidden appliances & hidden walk-in pantries - Appliances and secondary clean up areas, are being hidden away behind doors. Many homes are incorporating countertop

hutches with recessed pocket doors as bars or coffee stations – one can either hide their appliances, bars, and beverage centers or display them. For those who need more storage, hidden walk in pantries are a highly requested addition, sometimes large enough to serve as a secondary prep or clean up space.

Charging stations integrated under islands - Another functional detail that is being hidden away is power and charging stations being integrated under the countertop especially in islands, where code no longer allows for outlets on the sides.



Porcelain slab showers - Showers are being fitted out with porcelain slabs, eliminating grout lines and making bold design statements.



“Kitchens have become a gathering spot for family and friends. Incorporating islands or counter seating into the plan gives the cook a chance to talk to family and friends while preparing a meal. Hors d’oeuvres can be served on an island while people gather around and socialize.

In primary baths - we are using soft colors, soaking tubs, rain showers, heated towel racks, and heated floors. All of these items set the tone for a spa environment and encourage relaxation.”

– Karen Berkemeyer, KB Home




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Current popular trends are specialized storage, in both the kitchen and bath! Pullout organizers for kitchen utensils by the cooking space and hair tools for the vanity keep countertops clear! And the resurgence of especially natural oak is bringing a more organic, earthy color way back into the home!



Leslie Oppel showing the trend of specialized storage in kitchen cabinetry.

P.C. Richard on the popularity of built-in coffee systems

“We’re seeing a tremendous increase in demand for Flush-Mount, Built-In Coffee Systems in new luxury developments. These machines are capable of making anything from an Americano to Macchiato—they grind and roast beans, froth milk, and warm your glasses without cluttering your counter space bringing an authentic café experience right into your own home.”



– Berum Mamoor, Wholesale Manager,
P.C. Richard Builders Division



Traditional Styled

Electronic Fireplace - “At CAFD, we’re seeing a real shift in how builders use electric fireplaces. While linear fireplaces are making technological leaps, more builders are turning to traditional-style electric units to get that classic hearth look without the venting limitations. It’s a growing trend in condos and multifamily projects. SimpliFire’s Inception line stands out with its customizable, realistic flame, no gas lines, and a much easier path to install.”



Outdoor Heating Trends - “More builders are designing outdoor kitchens with the full season in mind. Customizable built-in gas fire pits and innovative infrared heaters like those from Infratech are becoming standard features, offering a strong value proposition. No one wants to shut the patio down in October, and we’ve seen how quickly clients get hooked once they feel the heat.”

Winning Primary Baths



Tina Anastasia was recognized with a HOBI Award for the stunning and creative primary bath in the Southport renovation. A Native Trails matte stone tub sits atop bookmatched calacatta slabs. Klar windows and a Klar glass door inside the slab shower opens to the exterior patio. Another Klar door gives access to the patio directly from the bathroom.

Stone slabs wrap the exterior patio doors and windows, and a white oak vanity with finger groves has a matching calacatta slab and wall mounted faucets.

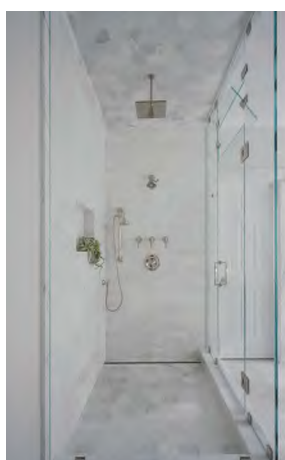


In this Contentment Island soul refreshing bath, Tina used a Native Trails soaking tub from Torroco, sitting below a picture window framing a magnificent water

view. The tub is flanked by double glass showers and double white oak vanities with Perla Venato Counters.



“A well-designed primary bath is more than just beautiful—it’s a sensory experience. Engaging all five senses creates a space of relaxation, comfort, and quiet luxury. Sight is guided by soothing color palettes and natural textures that visually relax the body and mind. Thoughtfully integrated natural light plays a key role—morning sunlight combined with brighter whiter light will gently energize and support circadian rhythms, while dimmable, ambient lighting in the evening helps the body wind down.



Sound can be softened through well-planned acoustics, soft-touch drawers and doors, and layered with the soothing sound of a shower or running a bath. Taste can join the mix with fruit or infused waters (or wine!) nearby—or an adjacent coffee bar can elevate the spa-like experience. Scent plays a pivotal role too—whether from fresh eucalyptus, aromatics, or a signature candle, it sets the tone as one enters the

room. Touch comes through the use of natural stone, the warmth of radiant floors underfoot, and plush bath linens—bringing the private spa retreat experience into your daily routine.

— Beth Krupa, ASID Allied, GREEN AP, Greenwich, CT

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The Powder Room - “Statement powder rooms are the perfect place to unleash bold design. These small but mighty spaces can showcase your wild side and leave a lasting impression. Shown here: a bright white ceramic tile featuring hand-drawn faces for the art lover, and a dramatic geometric stone pattern for the modern design enthusiast. No matter the style, these walls are sure to make guests swoon.”

— Lana Camara, Creative Director, Tile America



Less Labor, More Revenue: The Case for Outsourcing Cabinet Components

A survey conducted by Eagle Woodworking

For contractors, cabinetmakers, and remodelers, time is money—and so is efficiency. The more streamlined the workflow, the more profitable each project becomes. Yet, manufacturing cabinetry components in-house comes with high labor costs, material waste, and production bottlenecks that eat into profits. That's why many industry professionals turn to outsourcing as a smarter way to do business.

By purchasing quality, made-to-order cabinet doors and dovetail drawers, contractors can lower expenses, speed up installations, and maintain high-quality craftsmanship—all while freeing up valuable shop space. Industry data backs this up: the most profitable businesses spend less on direct labor and operate with higher margins, proving that outsourcing key components is a strategic move, not a compromise.

Eagle Woodworking, a leader in custom cabinetry components, has been a leader in this shift. Their precision-crafted doors and drawers offer contractors the reliability and consistency to deliver outstanding results without the overhead of in-house production.

With made-to-order cabinet doors and dovetail drawers, contractors get the best of both worlds—top-tier craftsmanship without the overhead. It's a simple shift that leads to more projects, better efficiency, and bigger profits.

The numbers tell the story. In 2024, the average industry backlog dropped from 10.1 months to 9.1 months, showing that as more firms outsource cabinetry components, they complete projects faster.¹ And it's not just a trend—72% of contractors and woodworkers always purchase dovetail drawers from third-party vendors because it streamlines their workflow.² It's no surprise that consistent quality is the #1 factor when choosing a cabinetry component vendor.² High-profit firms have this down to a science—they spend less on direct labor but still achieve higher margins, proving that outsourcing to trusted vendors leads to better results with fewer internal resources.

#1 Lower Total Cost

The top reason contractors choose to purchase
cabinetry components instead of making them in-house

72%

Of contractors and
woodworkers always
purchase dovetail drawers
from third-party vendors.

Eagle Woodworking scored 4.8/5 for quality and 4.5/5 for timeliness, reinforcing its reputation as a trusted partner for contractors and woodworkers. ■

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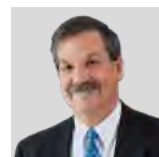
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Your Voice at the Capitol: 2025 Legislative Wrap-Up

By Jim Perras, CEO & Chief Lobbyist, HBRA of Connecticut

“Your HBRA membership isn’t just a logo — it’s your strongest advocate at the Capitol.”

Each year, your HBRA of CT team is on the front lines at the State Capitol—advocating, negotiating, and protecting your business interests. This legislative session was one of the busiest in years, with nearly 500 housing-related bills introduced. Thanks to the support of our members, we helped shape the outcome of some of the most impactful laws in decades.

However, the path to reform is rarely without obstacles. On June 23rd, Governor Lamont vetoed Public Act 25-49, citing concerns over the bill’s “Fair Share” provisions, which would have required each municipality to produce a specific number of affordable housing units. While the bill included many elements

long supported by the HBRA, the top-down mandates proved too heavy-handed for the Governor’s support.

It is widely expected that the legislature will be called into a special session this September to revisit the issue and craft a housing bill the Governor will sign.

The HBRA of Connecticut stands ready to be a constructive force in this next chapter. We will continue to work with municipal lobbies, housing advocates, and state policymakers throughout the summer to help produce a balanced, meaningful housing bill—one that both supports local planning goals and unlocks the housing supply Connecticut so urgently needs.

What Did HBRA CT Do for You This Year?

- Protected builders from expanded liability under wage theft legislation
- Passed land use reforms that ease restrictions on development
- Defended against burdensome DEEP mandates
- Helped create new housing finance programs
- Modernized apprentice hiring rules to support workforce growth

“This legislative session proved to be a truly pivotal one for housing. Many new provisions have the potential to not only incentivize towns to zone and plan for much needed multifamily housing, but also to speed the development process by eliminating certain permitting and parking hurdles – ultimately reducing costs for builders.”

– Kiley Gosselin, Housing Defense Fund

Land Use Reform: Progress Through Persistence

Public Act 25-49 — A comprehensive, 91-page zoning reform bill—years in the making—was passed with many HBRA-backed provisions:

- ✓ As-of-right missing middle housing
- ✓ Limits on outdated parking mandates
- ✓ Incentives for towns that enable development
- ✓ Attorney fees for bad faith 8-30g denials
- ✓ A statewide wastewater infrastructure study

“These are reforms we’ve championed for years—and your HBRA helped deliver them.”


Environmental Oversight: Blocking the Burdens

Public Act 25-84: Fixes to DEEP’s general permit delays and opaque endangered species reviews

 **Public Act 25-33:** Expanded coastal reviews—opposed by HBRA, but we’re now working on a legislative fix for 2026

 **HB 5004 “Green Monster”:** Gutted of appliance mandates due to HBRA coalition advocacy—bill passed in largely aspirational form

(continued)



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Your Voice at the Capitol: 2025 Legislative Wrap-Up *(continued)*

Labor: Big Wins for Workforce Growth

Public Act 25-47: Major reform to apprentice hiring ratios

- Increases 1:1 hiring ratio to first 8 apprentices
- More flexibility, more training, more jobs

 **HB 6955 (Wage Theft Bill):** Stopped again!

Would have made builders liable for subcontractor wage issues—HBRA protected your bottom line.

Housing Finance: Tools to Build

Homes for Connecticut Program (via HB 6992/Bond Bill):

- Backed by HBRA
- Loan guarantees and subordinate financing via CHFA
- Supports new starter homes: SF, townhomes, and condos
- For CHFA-qualified buyers

HBRA helped turn this idea into law—giving builders new financing options and opening doors for first-time buyers.

Landlord-Tenant: Preserving Balance

 **HB 6889 (Eviction for Cause Defeated)** with help from HBRA and CTAA





- Would have created lifetime tenancy conditions
- Protected landlords' ability to manage their properties

Final Word: Your Membership Matters

"HBRA CT saves members millions each year by doing what no one else does: protecting housing at the Capitol."

Special thanks to Bob Wiedenmann of Sunwood Development, our Government Affairs Chair, for his enduring leadership and commitment to our industry.

How You Can Help:

-  Join the Government Affairs Committee
-  Attend a legislative roundtable
-  Share issues impacting your business
-  Stay engaged through HBRA alerts

Got a policy idea or concern? Contact me directly at (860) 500-7796

Your HBRA Membership = Real Value.

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- Legislation shaped by industry insiders
- Results that protect your bottom line

Let's keep building Connecticut—together. ■

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Even with Uncertainty in the Economy – Real Estate is Getting Some of What it Needs

By Luke Williams, President, Calcagni Real Estate



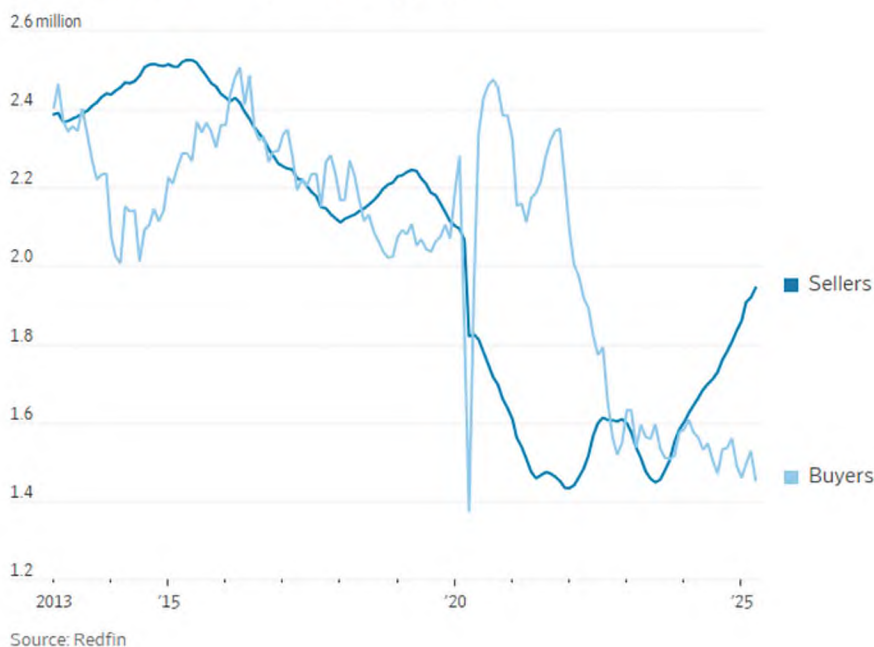
I have been complaining for the past couple of years about the real estate market being out of equilibrium because of the lock-in effect. Many homeowners who have wanted to move to a different sized home, a different neighborhood or state, a home without stairs, or one with more land have chosen not to do so given the relative interest rate environment. These homeowners have a very low mortgage rate on their existing home relative to today's rates. They do not want to sell their home mostly because they do not want to lose their extremely low mortgage and then have to secure a higher-rate mortgage with their new purchase. This has been a very powerful effect of the past 2.5 years.

Homeowners, when there is no lock-in effect, will make their decision to move or to not move primarily based upon the stage of life that they are living in conjunction with their economic circumstances. Even without the abatement of higher relative interest rates, these life cycle events are starting to drive more homeowners to sell. The lock-in effect is losing its grip on the American homeowner. In September 2022, 90% of homeowners with a mortgage had a rate under 6%. Some projections show that by the end of 2025, only 75% of mortgage holders will have a rate under 6%. This is having real effects on the number of sellers entering the market.

Currently, there are more sellers than buyers in the marketplace nationally. There are 500,000 more sellers than buyers as of the past couple of months. This is much needed relief for a market that has been out of equilibrium for so long with very little inventory for many aspiring buyers.

This national trend should start to permeate the Connecticut market eventually.

Home sellers outnumber buyers by nearly 500,000



For now though - **Connecticut and the northeast continue to see strong demand over supply since COVID.**

Connecticut has a thriving economy and is a very attractive place for people to live and work. Unlike Florida and Texas, we do not have an overbuilt housing market. We still have days on market for median-priced sales inventory that is the

lowest we've seen in thirty years, proving that CT still has little inventory relative to demand.

Even though the passage of time has helped free homeowners from the lock-in effect, interest rates drive our industry. In 2024, 74% of home buyers used financing to make their purchase and over 90% of first-time buyers used financing according to NAR.

(continued)



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Even with Uncertainty in the Economy - Real Estate is Getting Some of What it Needs *(continued)*

So, where are interest rates headed and where is the over-all economy headed?

A fundamental around economic theory is that business thrives in stable and predictable markets, where there is confidence in the future, access to affordable capital, and predictable rules of engagement.

In general, we do not have that type of stability in the marketplace currently.

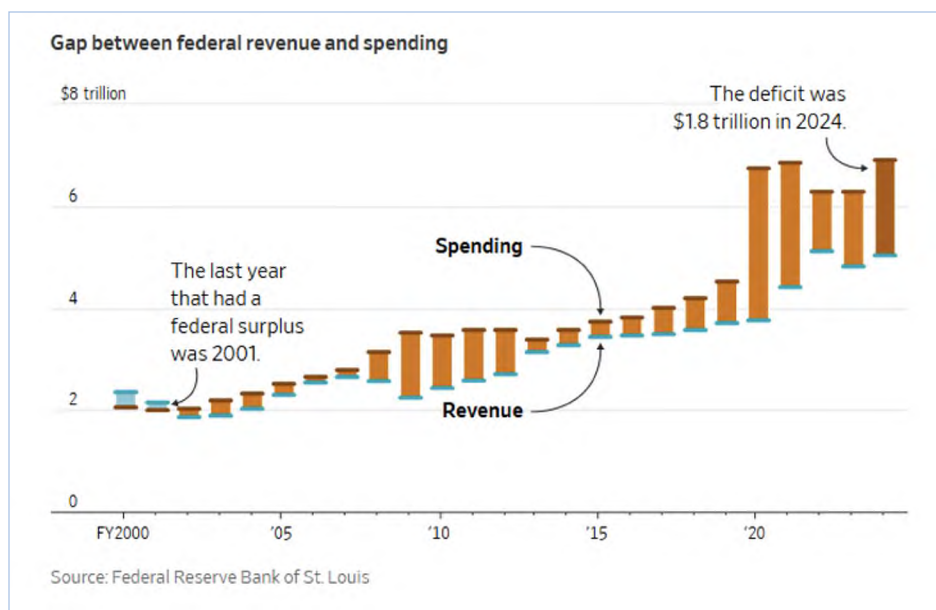
We have a lot of uncertainty around tariffs and their effects on the economy.

This, and other uncertainties, have consequences for how business invests into our collective economic futures. A symptom of the times is that many public companies have discontinued forecasting for Wall Street, and their shareholders.

Many businesses are creating optionality around whether to invest into the future, whether to raise prices and by how much, or whether to fire employees to keep their costs in line. For now, many are freezing all hiring and investment. We undoubtedly have not seen the full effects of the tariffs on inflation.

As of the writing of this article on June 14, the average tariff (tax on imports) is 16% versus an average tariff of 2.5% at the start of this year.

There is also no clear understanding of exactly what tariffs will be implemented and how high a rate they might end up becoming later this year. Tariffs may also be mostly eliminated because of court rulings or a new administration taking a different path on them.



Another fundamental in economics is that countries need to manage their national debt in a sustainable way or they risk paying exorbitant interest rates to service this debt. I would argue that the top priority of every congress should be to pass a responsible budget that balances and supports the needs of the country in a fiscally responsible way.

We have done a terrible job of this for the past twenty years and counting. We have had a budget deficit year on year for over twenty years. Our ability as a nation to come up with a balanced budget that is sustainable and that credit markets will have faith in appears to be an impossible dream. We have the largest peace time budget deficit in our history and it continues to grow.

Many hope that the Fed will lower interest rates. Remember that the Fed has a

mandate to keep inflation under control (at about 2%) and to support a healthy economy. The Fed will not consider lowering its benchmark interest rates until it knows that inflation is in its target zone.

The budget deficit issue will continue to put upward pressure on interest rates along with the effect of tariffs.

For us to see a significant drop in interest rates we will need the Fed to come to the rescue of a poor economy. If our economy starts to sputter, then we will see rate relief, but likely not until then.

The good news is that the lock-in effect is falling off and allowing more housing to the marketplace regardless of interest rates. ■



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Builder News

Santini Living Opens Fieldstone Ridge Rental Community in Tolland

Eric Santini Sr., Santini Living, pioneered the townhome style rental community in Connecticut. Now, he and his sons Eric and Kevin have opened their newest community, *Fieldstone Ridge*, 21 townhouse style buildings with 10-12 rental units in each building on 51 acres in Tolland.



Fieldstone Ridge:

- ▶ 240 townhome units with attached garages and private basements for storage
- ▶ 112 one-bedroom and 128 two-bedroom units
- ▶ 8 different floorplans ranging from 1,287-1,844 finished square feet—some with first floor master bedrooms
- ▶ Green build—all electric—using heat pumps for heating/cooling and heat pump hot water heaters for hot water and upgraded insulation
- ▶ Large modern kitchens and master suites
- ▶ EV charging stations in parking areas and EV ready in garages
- ▶ Clubhouse featuring 24-hour fitness room, billiard area, event room and golf simulator
- ▶ Outdoor pool area
- ▶ Scenic walking trail with views of the Tolland Marsh
- ▶ Less than 7 miles to UConn's Storrs campus

Arnold Karp, Is Not Afraid of Controversy

In a recent Hearst Media news article, Dan Harr describes New Canaan developer Arnold Karp as “about as welcome in New Canaan neighborhoods as a tax auditor at a gangster convention.”

Karp is fighting the town over three apartment proposals, —all three developments 8-30g, qwith 30% affordable housing, and all spurned by the town of New Canaan in state court appeals by Karp’s company.

Having spent his career as a local home builder with close ties to the community, Karp insists the fears about what he’s doing are overblown—and says he’s taking extraordinary steps to make these apartments fit into one of the state’s richest towns.



Arnold Karp’s battle resembles many others across the state, only it’s more intense, more personal and more public than most. And he’s spending millions of dollars —\$3.5 million and counting, he calculated—fighting for a dream that he believes is noble.

From Karp’s perspective the region, especially this little corner of it, needs housing that middle-class families can afford, but also places for well paid professionals to live at market rates — \$4,500 a month or more for a 2-bedroom apartment.

“I think I can help people. I think giving them housing helps the first step up. I’ve been lucky in life. I think that’s part of what I should be able to leave as a legacy.”

(continued)

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Builder News

Arnold Karp, Is Not Afraid of Controversy

(continued)

Karp is placing himself squarely in a statewide battle over housing, which played out at the Capitol this legislative season.

See article by Jim Perras in this issue.

The basic standoff is over how much the state should do to prod towns such as New Canaan to allow denser housing accessible to more families; and how much affordable housing each town should build.

As for Karp, his would-be legacy makes him a pariah to some people in town. In fact, one sign reads, “The newest 4 letter word in new Canaan is...KARP.”



Karp wants to build 20 apartments on the site of this old house in the middle of town at 51 Main St.

“The world must evolve, even this town. Many of the residents of these buildings would be local workers, or maybe grown sons and daughters of longtime residents, or empty-nesters looking to downsize in town.” says Karp..

The 8-30g state law behind the battle

If a town doesn’t have either the 10 percent affordable housing or a state-approved moratorium, any developer who is rejected for a proposal with at least 30 percent of units set aside as affordable for at least 40 years can file a lawsuit under 8-30g. A judge can approve the project as long as the development meets safety and health requirements.



A rendering of the proposed five-story, 102-unit complex that developer Arnold Karp wants to build on the property.

The economic reality: To make a project work with 30 percent of units paying a low rent, the development must have more than a few apartments, since it's the market-rate residents who are subsidizing their moderate-income neighbors.

That rankles opponents, who call 8-30g an awful way to reach the housing goal. They say it removes local control leads to oversize developments and gives developers such as Karp a cudgel over zoning officials.

Karp’s retort: If New Canaan would work with him, he wouldn’t need to invoke the state law and the proposals might be smaller. “I would not put them as a stellar affordable housing community.”

He knows his 214 proposed units with a total of 65 designated affordable apartments are not the whole answer. “We have a housing crisis. How you solve it is a mixed bag of tools,” he said.

“Arnold Karp is unique because he is particularly vocal,” said Erin Boggs, founder and executive director of Open Communities Alliance, a statewide housing advocacy group, “but there are many developers who would gladly contribute to meeting the state’s need for housing that’s more affordable.”

Clearly 8-30g is not an efficient way to create low-cost housing for large numbers of people. But it doesn't require taxpayer subsidies, it helps open up towns and it can lead to more walkable, lively town centers.

“We will eventually prevail. It may take us many years but I will eventually be building three affordable housing projects in New Canaan.”



Builder News

Dealmakers Tackles Town Moratoriums

At a recent Dealmakers Lunch held at Harrison Meadows CC, the topic was “Moratoriums – Zoning Tools for Communities to Manage Development or the New NIMBY?” Industry experts, Pat Cleary, Principal of Cleary Consulting & Land Use Attorney Tony Gioffre, Managing Partner, Cuddy & Feder LLP focused on how moratoriums impact local development including self storage, multifamily projects and battery storage facilities.



Michael Murphy, Pat Cleary, Tony Gioffre and John Barrett

Dealmakers is a lunch gathering every couple of months for Westchester business professionals with a keen interest in real estate growth, looking to read the proverbial tea leaves regarding the direction of real estate development in the Westchester and lower Hudson Valley region. The bi-monthly event is coordinated by Murphy Brothers Contracting, owners of Mamaroneck Self Storage.

“This is essential knowledge for every elected official who have been tasked with navigating growth in their community.

– Michael Murphy, event coordinator

The next Dealmakers Lunch is scheduled for June 20th at Sam’s of Gedney Way in White Plains, NY. The speaker will be Adam Bosch... “Projects and people: Regional development priorities, the economy, and socioeconomic stress.”

Builders Have Bad News for Donald Trump’s Housing Market

Builder confidence in the U.S. housing market fell sharply in May, marking its lowest level since November 2023, according to a new report from (NAHB). Developers are contending with a sluggish selling season and mounting economic pressures. The downturn comes at a sensitive moment for President Donald Trump, whose administration faces growing scrutiny over trade policy and inflation.

Per the NAHB, persistent uncertainty around tariffs, rising building material costs, and sustained high interest rates have rattled builder sentiment. These headwinds have forced builders to slash prices during the peak homebuying season.

The decline in builder confidence poses challenges for a housing sector central to Trump's economic messaging. The spring season—typically one of the most active periods for home sales—has failed to gain traction.

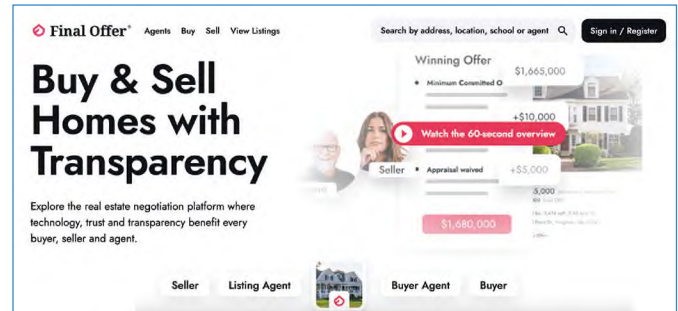
In response, 34 percent of builders cut home prices in May, up from 29 percent in April, with an average price reduction of 5 percent. Sales incentives remained elevated, with 61 percent of builders offering them, according to the NAHB.

- ▶ A recent study by (NAHB) found that more than 3 in 5 homebuyers would prefer to purchase a new-construction home over an existing one.
- ▶ Regionally, on a year-to-date basis, new home sales are down 32.5% in the Northeast, and values fell in half the country, including in Connecticut, as the housing market faces a nationwide downturn.
- ▶ The low inventory in the U.S. housing market has pushed prices upward in recent years. But as markets across the country now note an uptick in inventory, home values are coming down.
- ▶ Still, many potential homebuyers have been priced out of the market due to historically high mortgage rates and economic uncertainty.
- ▶ While many analysts believe interest rates are the housing market's main problem today, prices of homes play a larger role in improving the market.
- ▶ “Markets tend to correct where demand and supply meet.”

Real estate website gives buyers a window on competitive bids for CT listings

A free website is opening windows on what rival bidders are offering for those homes—with a Massachusetts startup looking to add more brokerages using it.

Final Offer is being used in Connecticut by William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty based in Stamford, with a statewide map of listings online at www.finaloffer.com. Final Offer makes the information available for free to registered users on bids for residential properties, with text alerts available for when a new bid is entered on any property. That gives house hunters instant intel, allowing them to mull whether to raise their own offer on the spot.



www.finaloffer.com

T&M Building Company Breaks Ground on Edith Lane in Bloomfield

On Tuesday, April 29, a large crowd gathered for the groundbreaking ceremony at Edith Lane, a new residential community of 32 free standing homes located off Watkins Road in Bloomfield.

The homes will be built by T & M Building Co., Inc., of Torrington. T & M President Greg Ugalde is pictured with the lifted gold shovel. Other T & M attendees included Graham Davis, Dalton Grant, Joe Duva, Andrew Ugalde and Steve Temkin. Also present were Baba Ogunro and Greg Patchen who are involved with the land development.

Construction will begin soon on the three models. Both one- and two-story homes will be offered, all of which will have first floor primary bedrooms. Buyers will be able to select from a choice of floor plans and finishes.

Home sizes will range from one story homes starting at 1,537 sq.ft. to two story homes which go up to 3207 sq.ft., not

including the basements and two car garages. Finished basements will be available as an option.

Among the attendees were Patty Pipernos-Schatz with the lifted shovel and Louis Schatz, the daughter and son of the late Edith Schatz, in whose honor the community is named. Edith Schatz was a long-time area resident and member of Tumble Brook Country Club, which is located just across the street from the new Edith Lane development.

HBRA staff members Eric Person and Ashley Kidd were present along with representatives from many HBRA members including Ryan Carter from Connecticut Lighting, Debra Bernard from The Bernard Partnership, Larry Pelletier from Viking Kitchens, Ben Carlson from Earthlight Solar and Energy Solutions, and Richard Fechter and Bruce Macke from The Hartford Lumber Company. Other attendees not pictured include Doug Meyerson from Mercury Excelum and India Fullerton from Clean Restroom Rentals. ■



Lumber Market Update

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



What has happened Since February?

A lot has happened since my last report in February. 25% tariffs have been threatened, imposed and then removed from Canadian lumber and a lot of other products as well. But when you look at the end result over almost four months, not much has happened. Lumber and panel prices have fallen over this period of time.

All items rose in price from last fall to early March. Douglas Fir hit its peak on March 14th and has since dropped \$157 or 14% hitting a low on May 30th, it has since gone up all of \$1. KD SPF hit its peak on March 7th and is currently at its low for the year having dropped \$165 or 20%. KD SPF is currently trading at 30% less than Douglas Fir. Plywood and OSB peaked sooner being flat from February 14th through March 7th. Both have declined since then. Plywood dropped \$50 or 6% by April 26th and has since risen \$40 or 5% to its current price. OSB, usually the most volatile item, has dropped \$123 or 21% and is trading at its low for the year.

Looking at this with 20/20 hindsight, the markets were likely rising due to optimistic thoughts about the year ahead and perhaps in anticipation of tariffs being applied. That optimism dissolved in the confusion and uncertainty caused by on-again, off-again tariffs and other political and economic uncertainties.

Compared to previous years prices are far lower than in the boom years of 2021 and 2022. As of this date, Douglas Fir and KD SPF are currently priced a bit higher than they were in 2023 and 2024. Plywood is lower than it was in 2024 and about the same as in 2023. OSB is lower than in all recent years.

Imports and Exports

In the first quarter, imports from Canada dropped another 7% after similar drops in the last two years. Imports from the rest of the world increased 2%, partially offsetting the loss from Canada. Exports from the US decreased and continue to be negligible.

Tariffs

There has been some form of tariff or export restriction on Canadian lumber since 1982. What we do know about tariffs is that the Anti-dumping and Countervailing Duties have been in effect for six years and are due to increase this year. The revision to the duties is calculated on prices that were in effect from 1/1-12/31/2023. Yes, that's 2023! Washington, as usual, is right up to date.

The preliminary Anti-dumping Duty announced on March 4th is 20.07% an increase from 7.66%. The preliminary Countervailing Duty announced on April 4th is 14.38% an increase from 6.74%. These are preliminary duties, the final duties are expected to be announced in August. The final duties usually vary little from the preliminary duties

and will take effect when published in the Federal Register. We can expect duties on Canadian lumber to go from 14.40% to approximately 34.45% by September. Anti-dumping and Countervailing Duties are initiated by industry members, in this case, a group of sawmills. Their claims are then investigated by the Department of Commerce, who if the claims are substantiated, sets and collects the duties from the importer of record (this is often the Canadian lumber mill) when the lumber crosses the border on a truck or rail car.

On March 1st, President Trump signed an executive order starting a Section 232 National Security investigation into Canadian lumber imports. (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/addressing-the-threat-to-national-security-from-imports-of-timber-lumber/> if you'd like to read the entire order) This gives the Commerce Secretary 270 days (November 26th, the day before Thanksgiving) to give a report. If cause is found, additional tariffs or limits on imports could result. We have not seen this type of investigation into lumber before, and therefore we don't have any history to rely on.

The executive order states, "The current United States softwood lumber industry has the practical production capacity to supply 95 percent of the United States' 2024 softwood consumption. Yet, since 2016 the United States has been a net importer of lumber."

In theory, this is a great idea that I support, in practice it doesn't work so well. We do have plenty of timber available in National Forests which haven't been logged much since the Spotted Owl crisis of the 1990's. We should log these forests periodically as logging would improve the overall health of the forests. However the manufacturing capacity to produce lumber from the National Forests in quantity no longer exists. It would likely take years to build a sufficient number of mills to replace most of our imports from Canada and the rest of the world. Some imported species, Ipe and Mahogany for example, do not exist in the United States. Others, we may not have sufficient supplies of and would need to continue to import some of our needs. The United States has been a net importer of lumber for as long as I can recall, perhaps for more than fifty years. I don't know how the White House came up with 2016.

As far as the off-again, on-again tariffs go, there is still some threat that they will return, but for the time being they seem to be tied up in the courts.

What to Expect in the remainder of 2025

While our expectations can still be summed up in part by waiting to see what Washington does, other factors like housing supply, housing demand, interest rates and inflation, will likely resume their usual importance in formulating our expectations. Lumber and panel prices are low from a historic perspective and may be at or near their lows for the year. ■

The Need for Builder Tenacity

By Gregg Wagner, Sr. V.P. BHHSNEP



Over the years the array of challenges facing Connecticut home builders has constantly evolved. Since 2020, these variables have never been more complicated, nor, less in their control. Commitments by builders have always

sought to leverage market peaks and mitigate troughs while maintaining profitability and optimism.

Locally, these commitments are shaped by many of the same concerns affecting builders nationwide, including volatile costs, shifting regulations, and economic uncertainty. However, Connecticut faces an added challenge: an especially acute need for new housing supply. At both the local and national levels, the decision-making and pricing processes are being heavily influenced by new policies and global market trends.

Nationally, builder confidence in the housing market fell sharply in May, marking its lowest level since November 2023, according to a new report from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). Developers on the national level are contending with a sluggish selling season and mounting economic pressures from increasing inventory. Here in Connecticut however, the demand is grossly outpacing supply and yet, the current volatile policies, including tariffs, are quelling their commitments.

The President's trade tariffs and the rise of Dogecoin (DOGE) have had notable implications for Connecticut's residential building sector. While DOGE's influence remains relatively peripheral, the impact of inconsistent tariffs on construction costs and housing affordability in our middle markets is much more pronounced. These tariffs including a 25% levy on imports from Canada and Mexico, and a 10% tariff on Chinese goods.

Given the fact that approximately 70% of U.S. softwood lumber is imported from Canada, this 25% tariff has added an estimated \$4,900 to the price of a typical home. Imported steel, primarily from China, is now subject to a 25% tariff, potentially increasing steel framing costs by over \$1,000 per home. Gypsum imports from Mexico face tariffs that may further elevate construction expenses.

These increased costs have led to higher home prices. The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) estimates that tariffs could add \$9,200 to \$15,000 to the cost of building a home. Consequently, median home prices have risen, pushing affordability out of reach for many prospective buyers.

Connecticut exemplifies the broader national housing affordability crisis. Between 2023 and 2024, home prices in the state jumped by 9.64%, with the median home price reaching \$414,900. Given the median household income of \$93,760, homeownership has become increasingly unattainable for many residents. The increased construction costs due to tariffs exacerbate this issue. Developers face higher expenses, which are often passed on to buyers in the form of elevated home prices. The combination of increased construction costs and housing unaffordability has broader economic implications.

Unpredictable tariffs are contributing to market volatility, affecting project timelines and budgets. The interplay between trade policies tariffs and the rise of Dogecoin has had significant, albeit differing, impacts on Connecticut's residential building sector. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including policy advocacy, supply chain diversification, and exploration of alternative financing methods. By implementing these strategies, our tenacious Connecticut builders can help mitigate the adverse effects of years of under building and help mitigate the significant housing shortage in our state. ■



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Can Your Supplier Protect Your Project?

by Sean Ryan, National Lumber Inc.
Your Partner in Building



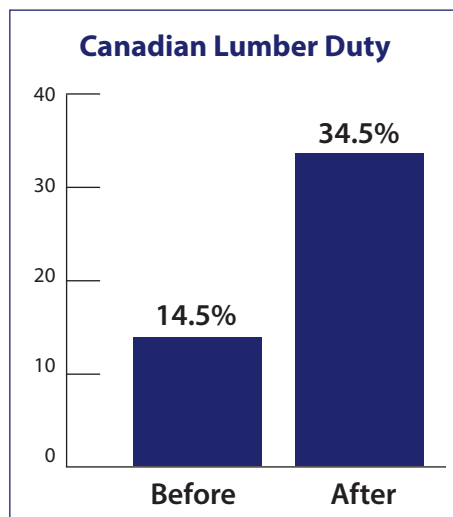
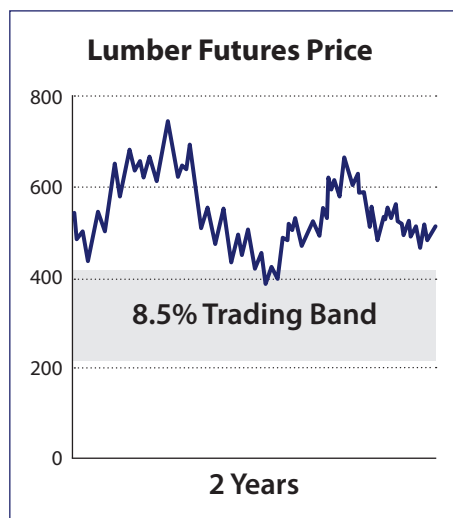
Sean Ryan

Those of us in the commodity lumber space are constantly being sold to. Every lumber broker selling to lumberyards believes they have the best deal in the moment. This also means they must convince you that the right time to buy was yesterday — and the next best time is now. There is a trader known around the Northeast as “Doctor Doom” because no matter what is going on with the housing market, there is always another wildfire, mill strike, port shutdown, or something about to spin the lumber world into another COVID-level panic. For a while post-COVID, it was a good sales line that sparked fear and flashbacks to buying as much wood as you could and hoping some of it would get to you in time.

The successive years have been different. This year, with economic headwinds and bad housing data, the panic is gone and most in the lumber world do not believe we will see a price squeeze like that again. We are back to watching permits and starts carefully.

Now we have seen eleven rate

increases since March of 2022. Homebuyer activity has cooled, pulling down starts. IRRs fell on expensive multi deals, and developers no longer believe 5% proforma rent growth YoY. Lumber futures are stable, trading within an 8.5% band for the last year. What little uncertainty remains is on the



supply side, with little fear of demand roaring back in 2025. Tariff fear put the market on pause three times this year, but threats without follow-through were not enough to make price increases stick.

There are new countervailing duties on Canadian lumber imports coming in early fall, **raising the combined duty to 34.5% — an increase of 20% from the current 14.5%**. As many learned during the spring, any extra duties on Canadian imports can raise U.S. lumber prices. However, many believe those duties are already priced in. While their impending onset might strengthen the market in the short term, there is a lot of European lumber at or near port and more domestic production that could come online to balance it out.

When the upside risk in lumber breaking out from its 200-day moving average is so low—and almost entirely dependent on suppliers learning about unexpected duties without warning—it is a good time to bet on pricing stability.

In this environment, your material supplier should feel comfortable holding prices with minimal premium for your projects over the next twelve months. **Don't be afraid to ask.**



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It's A Game Changer for Pella Connecticut

Two local Army veterans with impressive business creds have acquired Pella Windows & Doors distributorship for Connecticut and New York. Miles Kirwin and Michael Maniaci's entrepreneurial company, Yonah Group, is injecting new marketing enthusiasm and operations know how into Pella CT-NY, and it will offer big benefits to builders and remodelers in both states.

Yonah Group, comes from Mount Yonah, where Miles and Michael first met at US Army Ranger School in 2014. They have been friends ever since, and bring a diverse set of experiences. Maniaci was a building products investment banker at Credit Suisse and Raymond James, and Kirwin a management consultant at Deloitte and Chief of Staff at a tech startup.

They have made a strategic investment in this region's housing market, and they are part of a growing cohort of veterans using the "search fund" model to acquire and operate established businesses with long-term potential. The duo is also from the region: Kirwin grew up between Westchester and Litchfield Counties, and Maniaci is a West Point graduate.

"We've spent our careers leading teams in high-stress environments. Now we're channeling that experience into building a customer-first, locally-owned business."

— Miles Kirwin

Miles and Michael are actively engaging home builders, remodelers and architects by becoming involved with the Connecticut HBRA, as well as Fairfield County and Central CT HBRA associations.

"This is more than a business—it's a platform to create great jobs, serve the community, and deliver industry leading products from the top window and door brand in the U.S. We're investing in talent, technology, and training to make Pella CT-NY the top choice in the market."

— Michael Maniaci

The two partners celebrated Pella's 100th Anniversary at a Fairfield County HBRA gathering they sponsored at the new, hip 314 Beer Garden in Norwalk, where builders were treated to wood fired pizza and craft beer.



Miles & Michael had their new technology Steady Set window on display. The latest in installation innovation—it's 3.15x faster and utilizes less labor than standard fin installation methods.

Kirwin and Maniaci are investing in an expert team that will deliver end-to-end service beyond expectations—from consultation to installation. And Pella is backed by some of the strongest warranties in the industry. Kirwin and Maniaci have the integrity, grit, and long-term vision to lead Pella CT-NY into a new and exciting future. They are well positioned to benefit from the relationships they are already building, as well as a strong demand for custom homes and major renovations, and ongoing growth in the multifamily sector.



Pella CT-NY serves homeowners, builders and architects across Connecticut and Westchester, and Putnam and Dutchess Counties in New York with high-quality window and door solutions. Many Connecticut builders work in both Connecticut and New York, like Connecticut HBRA President and Greenwich builder, Anthony DeRosa. In his recent meeting with Miles and Michael, Anthony emphasized, "For builders, it's all about service."

The CT-NY branch will continue to operate independently as an exclusive distributor, supported by Pella's national resources and product innovation.



Interstate Lumber Rebrands as INTERSTATE:

A Bold New Look for a Century-Old Legacy

A premier lumber & building materials supplier—
Interstate has served over 5,000 builders in the tri state area

Interstate Lumber, a fourth-generation, family-owned business serving builders, architects, designers, and homeowners for over 100 years, is proud to unveil its new brand identity. Moving forward, the company will operate under the simplified name Interstate, accompanied by a modern logo and refreshed visual identity that reflect its ongoing evolution—while honoring its long-standing legacy.

Founded in 1922 as a small coal and lumber yard in Greenwich, Connecticut, Interstate has grown into a premier supplier of building materials, millwork, windows and doors, decking, moulding, and architectural hardware. At every stage of its growth, the company has remained dedicated to a single mission: empowering professionals and homeowners with top-quality products, expert guidance, and reliable support to bring their projects to life.



L-R: Brian Kurtz (VP of Sales, 4th Generation), Sheldon Kahan (President & CEO, 3rd Generation), Ben Kahan (Sr Marketing Manager, 4th Generation).

“Our rebrand to INTERSTATE represents more than just a name change,” said Sheldon Kahan, President. “It reflects who we’ve always been—your partner in perfect™. We’re still family-owned. We’re still local. And we’re as committed as ever to helping our

customers succeed. While our look is more modern, our purpose remains unchanged: to deliver the service, expertise, and relationships that have defined us for over 100 years—and to carry that legacy forward.”

While the branding is new, Interstate’s core values remain the same. The company has earned its reputation by being reliable, knowledgeable, and deeply rooted in the communities it serves. Whether you’re a contractor on a deadline, a designer sourcing custom solutions, or a homeowner beginning a renovation, the Interstate team is ready to support your vision—every step of the way.

What Sets INTERSTATE Apart?

► Custom Solutions

From one-of-a-kind millwork to specialty moulding, Interstate delivers tailored products that meet exact design and performance requirements—ideal for high-end or unique projects.

► Design Centers

Interactive showrooms allow customers to explore materials firsthand, supported by experienced staff who help guide informed, confident decisions.

► Local Expertise

With in-depth knowledge of regional building codes, climate considerations, and architectural styles, Interstate ensures your materials align with both aesthetic and functional needs.

► A Trusted Team

Many team members have been with Interstate for decades, offering unparalleled continuity and service built on lasting relationships and deep product knowledge.

The updated name and visual identity—including a redesigned logo and refreshed branding—will be launched this spring across all locations and digital platforms. While the look is new, customers can continue to expect the same trusted team and exceptional service that have defined Interstate since 1922.

With a rich history spanning over a century, this trusted company has earned its reputation as a go-to destination for construction professionals, architects, designers, and homeowners.

INTERSTATE offers an extensive selection of high-quality lumber, custom millwork, architectural hardware, and building materials in 9 locations. Interstate Design Centers in Greenwich, Westport and showcase the industry’s most in-demand designs and newest innovations. With a focus on reliability and customer satisfaction, INTERSTATE has become an indispensable resource for those seeking top-tier building supplies and exceptional service in the Westchester County and Fairfield County regions.

In 2021, The Westport Design Center won a HOBBI Award for Best Commercial Rehab and in 2023, INTERSTATE was recognized with a 2nd HOBBI Award, Best Fairfield County Showroom Over 10,000 SF for their Westport Design Center. INTERSTATE has hosted many Fairfield County HBRA events at this award-winning Westport location, and the company has been a strong supporter of the HBRA and the home building industry in Connecticut for decades.

Contact: Ben Kahan, Senior Marketing Manager, INTERSTATE bkahan@interstatelumber.com (203) 413-1684



Greenwich Design Center



Westport Design Center



Shrub Oak Design Center



Tooher-Ferraris Insurance Group: A Legacy of Trust in Risk Management and Insurance

Few companies can match the legacy of Tooher-Ferraris Insurance Group. Since its roots in 1932, this family-owned and operated business has spent over 90 years providing personalized insurance and risk management programs for families, businesses, and individuals throughout the Northeast. With strong ties to the community, Tooher-Ferraris is a trusted advisor and partner to over 2,500 clients.

Their commitment to innovation and service has cemented their reputation as a trusted name in the industry.

"I've worked with companies of all sizes, but this one is truly exceptional. They foster a culture of care, treating both employees and clients with the warmth and respect of family."

— Geoff Knapp,
Vice President at Tooher-Ferraris

Commitment to the Home Building Community

Tooher-Ferraris expertise shines particularly in specialty programs in the building community, where they have cultivated strong, enduring relationships with custom home builders, general contractors, plumbers, electricians, and other essential members of the construction industry. By taking the time to deeply understand the unique risks, challenges, and operational needs these professionals face, Tooher Ferraris has become an invaluable partner. They don't just offer generic solutions; they provide tailored insurance and risk management strategies designed to prioritize their clients' success and protect their businesses from unexpected setbacks. In addition to their directly related services, key partnerships across many disciplines and service providers help clients with any challenges faced by their business.

Beyond their work with individual clients, the company has also been a long-time and dedicated supporter of the HBRA. Their involvement with the HBRA extends far beyond financial contributions. Tooher Ferraris actively participates in initiatives, events, and programs dedicated to strengthening and elevating the construction sector as a whole. Whether through sponsorship, collaboration, or advocacy, their commitment reflects a hands-on partnership focused on driving growth, fostering innovation, and creating lasting value for the industry.



Rebecca St. Germain, VP of
Healthcare Benefits

Leadership at Tooher Ferraris shines through its commitment to impact-driven initiatives. Rebecca St. Germain, VP of Healthcare Benefits, spearheads programs like Circle of Care, which provide vital support to families facing the emotional and financial burdens of a cancer diagnosis. Her efforts ensure families feel cared for during some of life's toughest moments.



Geoff Knapp, VP of Construction Insurance & Risk
Management

Similarly, Geoff Knapp, VP of Construction Insurance & Risk Management, has made significant contributions to the construction industry through his active involvement with the Fairfield County HBRA and HBRA CT Boards, chairing the golf committee, and advocating for initiatives like Pathways to Construction Trades. These programs focus on nurturing the next generation of skilled workers, safeguarding the industry's future while promoting sustainability.

At Tooher Ferraris, these initiatives go beyond business—they reflect a dedication to giving back, fostering growth, and strengthening the communities and industries they serve.

A Trusted Partner in the Community

Trust isn't given—it's earned. And Tooher Ferraris understands this better than anyone. With decades of experience, they are more than insurance experts; they are trusted advisors who genuinely care about the well-being of the communities they serve. Their dedication extends far beyond the office, as they actively contribute to local causes and organizations. From sponsoring Wilton and Weston Little League, Darien Youth Hockey, and Laurel House, to supporting cherished events like Hindley Happening and initiatives like Circle of Care, their generosity touches countless lives.

Tooher Ferraris' commitment to giving back reflects their belief in the power of community. Whether it's supporting youth sports, investing in mental health programs, or empowering families during tough times, they continue to demonstrate that their mission goes far beyond providing insurance. It's about being a part of something bigger—making a positive impact on the people and industries they serve while helping to build a stronger, more connected community. For Tooher Ferraris, it's not just about doing business; it's about doing good.

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David S. Bender In Memoriam



Bender founder and long time supporter of the HBBRA, David Seth Bender, age 73, of Westbrook, Connecticut, died peacefully surrounded by his family on March 1, 2025. David had been the President of Bender Plumbing Supply for over 45 years, growing it from a single branch operation to 6 branches throughout the state, with over 200 employees. His impact on hundreds of customers and team members has no limit. He was known and loved by many.

David was predeceased by his parents Jack Bender and Alice Lewin Bender. He is survived by his wife, Sharon London Bender, his children Max and Nina Bender and her spouse Kevin and children Benji and Summer, and his siblings Norman Bender, Lois Merrill, and Judy Lubner.



ALBANO APPLIANCE

Albano Appliance holds a Spring Open House at their Pound Ridge Showroom

On May 1st Albano Appliance held a sumptuous Spring Open House at their welcoming Pound Ridge Showroom. Over one hundred attendees were treated to grilled meats and fish, freshly baked desserts and first class wine in a sophisticated, luxury indoor outdoor setting.



Grilling at Albano



Fred Albano

"From a design standpoint, sleek, flush appliance installations with very clean lines are the current trend. Outdoor kitchens are becoming a standard when planning a home. In addition to a variety of grill types, the pizza oven is often the centerpiece of the outdoor space."

– Fred Albano



"We look for innovative products that can help our customers in this marketplace. To have natural stone coping match with Porcelain pool decking, is truly amazing. It has allowed our customers to

feel really good about all the features that Porcelain has to offer like no staining, always cool on your feet, and many others."

– Sam Gault, President – Gault Family Companies





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NAHB Spring Leadership 2025



National Housing Center Hall of Fame 2025 Inductee Gregory F. Ugalde

The HBRA of Connecticut proudly congratulates longtime member and past NAHB Chairman Greg Ugalde on his induction into the 2025 National Housing Hall of Fame by the National Housing Center Board of Governors.



Greg Ugalde built his career in the industry on the foundation of service and connection. A lifelong NAHB member, Greg served as Chairman of the Association in 2019 and led the Association as immediate Past Chairman for two years through the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his own words, Greg's introduction to the industry was one of the best things that ever happened to him. Following his graduation from law school, he began to work in real estate law, ultimately falling in love with the world of residential construction. He went on to found GFU Investments, as well as serve as President and Chief Legal Officer for T&M Construction.

Bringing people together is what Greg has found so special about being a home builder, an NAHB member and part of the larger residential construction community. His legacy of finding common ground in order to solve problems has left a lasting impression on his customers, his family, and his peers. Greg truly embodies the vision and spirit of NAHB.

"NAHB has been the cornerstone of my professional journey, providing the platform to lead, advocate, and shape national housing policy while championing industry innovation and inclusivity" – Greg Ugalde

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NAHB Spring Leadership 2025

(continued)

2025 Exemplary Service to Home Building Awards

Lawrence F. Fiano



This award recognizes individuals whose outstanding accomplishments and contribution to housing have had a significant impact on the nation's home building industry. For 50 years, Larry Fiano has served NAHB on its Executive Committee and as a Build PAC Trustee.

It's impossible to separate Build-PAC, NAHB's Political Action Committee, from the name Lawrence "Larry" Fiano. Larry organized Connecticut's 1st Build PAC Golf Tournament in 2003, and grew it to the single most successful fundraising PAC event in the country. Several years ago, it was renamed the Fiano Family Classic in his honor, and the 22nd Annual Fiano Family Classic will be held on July 7, 2025.

As a result of Larry's efforts, the Fiano Family Classic has raised over \$1.5 million to benefit the PAC's work in Connecticut and across the country.

Larry's leadership and commitment in lifting up and supporting pro-housing candidates, has set a benchmark for housing industry advocacy.

As a leader in Connecticut, Larry served as Chairman of the Board and President of the state HBRA for an historic three terms. He was the first recipient of the "most prestigious award granted by the HBRA of Connecticut, the Charles C. LoDolce Award, as well as Central CT HBRA's most prestigious Irving Stitch Award.

Larry is known for his sharp intellect and his incredible sense of humor. He is renowned for his generosity and commitment to the home building industry, both nationally and in Connecticut. But Larry's true legacy will be his kind and giving spirit - as a mentor and an inspiration to countless young builders.

"I have tremendous love and respect for the work NAHB does."

— Larry Fiano

Larry was accompanied to Washington D.C by his wife, Babe Fiano, and his sons Larry and Mark, his daughters Leah and Roseanne, Roseanne's husband, Stephen, their son, Chris, and Chris's wife, Liz. Dozens of HBRA builders and associates were in the audience to applaud him, as Larry Fiano accepted the NAHB Excellence in Home Building Award.



Babe & Larry Fiano



Larry Fiano with Greg Ugalde and standing Alan Hanbury & Ken Boynton



Larry & Jim Perras



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NAHB Spring Leadership 2025

(continued)

Advancing Our Future Together: HBRA of Central and Eastern Connecticut Unite

By Eric Person, CEO HBRA of the Connecticut River Region



In a decisive step toward strengthening Connecticut's home building and remodeling industry, the Home Builders & Remodelers Association (HBRA) of Central Connecticut and the HBRA

of Eastern Connecticut have announced a strategic merger. This landmark initiative will unify the two organizations into a single, robust entity: Home Builders & Remodelers Association Connecticut River Region, Inc., and was approved unanimously by NAHB at the Spring Leadership meeting on June 13th in Washington, DC.

This new association will serve members across Hartford, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, Tolland, and Windham counties, offering enhanced services, increased advocacy strength, and improved financial sustainability—all while preserving the strong legacy and commitment to professional excellence shared by both organizations.

Why a Merger? The Strategic Rationale

The merger stems from both opportunity and necessity. While the two HBRAs have historically operated independently, they share overlapping geographies, aligned missions, and member interests. Financial realities accelerated the push for unification: the Eastern Connecticut chapter has been operating with monthly deficits and no reserves, while Central Connecticut has relied on reserves to sustain operations in recent years.

Unifying the organizations allows for streamlined operations, better deployment of resources, and a significantly stronger voice both at the state and national levels, including with the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

Key Benefits for Members and the Industry

The merged HBRA Connecticut River Region Inc. will become the 64th largest local association in the country, a milestone that carries substantial weight in terms of influence and access to national resources. Members will immediately begin to see benefits such as:

1. Improved Services and Events

A consolidated staffing model and increased operational resources will support an expanded array of educational, networking, and advocacy programs, along with continued access to marquee events like:

- ▶ The Connecticut Home & Remodeling Show
- ▶ Parade of Homes
- ▶ Multiple golf tournaments
- ▶ The Charitable Foundation Auction, among others.

2. Operational and Financial Efficiency

The merger will reduce redundancies by integrating administrative, financial, and operational systems, allowing for smarter budgeting and cost-sharing. Eastern Connecticut's financial challenges will be mitigated through access to Central's more stable reserves and infrastructure.

3. Broader Market Reach and Recognition

With a new name and unified branding, the Connecticut River Region HBRA will benefit from enhanced public awareness, stronger marketing potential, and more opportunities for industry engagement statewide.

Implementation Roadmap: From Plan to Integration

The merger process has been guided by a joint Merger Task Force (MTF), which has held multiple in-person and virtual meetings to ensure a thoughtful and member-driven process. Key milestones include:

- ▶ Operational Integration – Following approval, the integration of databases, systems, staffing, and branding will begin in earnest.
- ▶ Full Integration will be completed by January 1, 2026 – The new association will formally launch at the Lobster Fest on August 28th, at the Westbrook Elks Club – the first joint event of the newly names Association. Members will enjoy uninterrupted service throughout the transition.

Overcoming Challenges Through Communication and Vision

Acknowledging that change can bring uncertainty, the Connecticut River Region HBRA leadership has committed to early and transparent member engagement. Joint events, phased dues adjustments, and intentional efforts to celebrate shared culture are being implemented to ease the transition. The association is also addressing logistical issues, such as event accessibility, by planning to rotate major programs across the expanded region.

A Unified Future for Connecticut River Region's Building Industry This merger represents more than administrative change—it is a strategic realignment designed to amplify the voice of the Connecticut's home building and remodeling professionals, elevate the quality of services provided, and ensure long-term sustainability for the industry. With the strength of two associations behind it, the Home Builders & Remodelers Association Connecticut River Region, Inc. is poised to usher in a new era of innovation, collaboration, and impact for its members and communities alike.

For questions or comments, members are encouraged to contact Matt Gilchrist, Patrick Caulkins, or Eric Person, who have jointly led this initiative with dedication and foresight.

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NAHB Spring Leadership 2025

(continued)

Building More Homes



On June 11th in Washington D.C., Congressman Joe Courtney, representing Connecticut's 2nd District, met with a large group of Connecticut HBRA homebuilders to discuss how we can continue working together to build more homes in eastern Connecticut. "All hardworking people should be able to afford a home, but for too many, rising costs have made it unattainable," said Rep. Courtney. "When we increase supply, costs go down. Congress has a role to make that happen, and I strongly support bipartisan incentives to get shovels in the ground on new housing construction."



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Developers Forum Highlights

March Forum – Industry Forecast Under a Second Trump Term

In the wake of the 2025 presidential inauguration, Forum members convened for a forward-looking conversation on how a second Trump administration may impact the residential construction sector. Moderated by Ken Mita of Central CT Construction Management, LLC, the event featured presentations from Attorney Tim Hollister (Hinckley Allen), Alex Casarotto (Sanford & Hawley, Inc.), and Jeff Miller (Larew, Doyle & Associates). Key topics included anticipated deregulation, the effects of trade policy and tariffs, and evolving capital market trends.



Alex Casarotto
(Sanford & Hawley, Inc.)



Jeff Miller
(Larew, Doyle & Associates)



Attorney Tim Hollister
(Hinckley Allen)

April Forum – Legal & Safety Insights for Builders

The April Forum, guest-hosted by Joe Williams of Shipman & Goodwin, offered members a timely and informative look at legal and safety issues impacting developers and builders. Panelists included Sarah Kettenmann, Associate at Shipman & Goodwin, and John McCarthy, Managing Director of Pro Safety Services. The discussion covered best practices in jobsite safety, compliance with emerging regulations, and proactive strategies to mitigate legal risk in a complex regulatory environment.



L-R John McCarthy, Sarah Kettenmann, Joe Williams, Jim Perras

May Forum- Wellbuilt Company Mixed Use Development Lafayette Stamford



On May 1st, Wellbuilt Company hosted the Developers Forum meeting at their creative new mixed use community, Lafayette Stamford.

Meeting chair, Joanne Carroll, opened with comments on the current housing market in Connecticut:

“I think we would all agree that Connecticut, and for that matter the country, needs a lot more housing - both multifamily and single family! Our state has a shortage of between 120,000 & 380,000 units, and the BIGGEST CHALLENGE is affordable housing! We need at least 86,000 units. In fact, we are the most constrained housing market in the country, and the HBRA of CT & our CEO lobbyist Jim Perras are working on legislation that would help developers fill that gap”.

In introducing the evening’s panel, Carroll explained that she had first met Wellbuilt partners, Mitch Kidd & Scott Lumby, at a HOBI Judges tour of their successful award winning rental community, Stillwater on Stamford’s west side. She thanked Wellbuilt for hosting the forum at Lafayette Stamford, a combination of market rate and affordable apartments and retail on Stamford’s east side.

At that point, Mitch Kidd described the challenges and constraints Wellbuilt overcame, including navigating Stamford’s Below Market Rate (BMR) program, construction and community challenges – to turn their vision into reality.

A distinguished panel of presenters spoke about how their organizations were instrumental in bringing this exciting project to life:



L-R Joanne Carroll, Richard Muskus, Mitch Kidd, Scott Lumby, James Grunberger, Matt Conway, Peter Grant

- **James Grunberger, Chairman, East Side Partnership**
How Wellbuilt worked with the East Side Partnership to earn community trust and build relationships.
- **Richard Muskus Jr., SVP & Chief Lending Officer, First County Bank**
What developers need to know in working with community banks on projects like this.
- **Sipho Simela, CEO/Founder, Matrix Rental Solutions & Peter Grant (Matilda Realty)**
How using Matrix changed the leasing process at Lafayette, and the difference it makes for both developers and tenants.

- **Matt Conway, Executive Director, The RiseUP Group, Inc.**
www.theriseupgroup.org

How public art and engaging youth play a role in transforming neighborhoods, and helping residents feel pride in where they live.

June Summer Social – Coastal Views & Industry Connections

The Forum's Summer Social was held at the picturesque Saybrook Point Inn in Old Saybrook, owned by the Tagliatela family—longtime HBRA and Forum supporters. Attendees enjoyed a relaxed evening of great food, signature cocktails, and lively conversation overlooking the marina. The event offered a perfect sendoff into summer while strengthening the professional bonds that define our Developers Forum community.



Looking Ahead

The Developers Forum returns this September with more expert-led discussions, timely insights, and invaluable networking. We look forward to seeing you there!

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Home Building Industry Day at the Capitol Advocacy in Action

The 2025 Home Building Industry Day at the Capitol (HBID Day) was a resounding success, showcasing the strength and unity of Connecticut's residential construction industry. This year, the Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut (HBRA CT) was proud to partner with the Lumber Dealers Association of Connecticut (LDAC), further broadening our coalition of industry advocates.

The day began with a networking breakfast and welcoming remarks from HBRA CT Government Affairs Chairman Bob Wiedenmann and LDAC's Bob Sanford. This set the stage for a dynamic and substantive legislative panel discussion, jointly moderated by HBRA CT and LDAC leaders.



L-R Bob Sanford, Bob Wiedenmann

Panel participants included key lawmakers from several committees central to housing policy:

- **Housing Committee:** Co-Chairs Rep. Antonio Felipe and Sen. Martha Marx, and Ranking Member Rep. Tony Scott
- **Planning & Development Committee:** Co-Chairs Sen. M.D. Rahman and Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw
- **Banking Committee:** Chair Rep. Jason Doucette and Ranking Member Rep. Tom Delnicki
- **Insurance Committee:** Chair Rep. Kerry Wood and Vice Chair Rep. Jill Barry

The discussion covered critical and timely topics such as land use reform, landlord-tenant issues, financing obstacles, and regulatory barriers to housing development. Legislators engaged directly with attendees, offering valuable insights and fielding thoughtful questions from industry professionals.

Following the panel, HBRA members took to the Capitol to meet directly with their local legislators, while HBRA senior officers and staff held meetings with legislative leadership to continue advancing our shared goal of increasing housing opportunities in Connecticut. ■



L-R Jim Perras, Bob Wiedenmann, House Minority Leader Vin Candelora, Ken Mita, Anthony DeRosa, Eric A. Santini

May Member Mixer:

Our annual May GMM & Member Mixer was held May 7th at a fun new venue, Elicit Brewing Co. in Fairfield. We enjoyed some of CT's best local craft beer, and associate members sponsored tabletop displays to showcase their businesses and new products, including our Imperial Sponsors Andersen Corp. and California Closets.

Our "Member Mixer Scavenger Hunt" was again a hit, encouraging attendees to visit our event sponsors and meet new members as they found the answers to each question on the scavenger hunt card to be entered in a raffle drawing when completed



L-R Ashley Czerniecki (Ashley Nicole Social Co.), Tarra Del Chario (Accurate Lock and Hardware), Lora Mazurak (Torroco Design Center), Robin Carroll (Karp Associates Inc.), Michelle Hughes (Tile America), Lisa O'Mara (Smarthome & Theater Systems)



L-R Brian Kurtz (interstate Design Center)



L-R, Michael Maniaci, Martin Farrell, Miles Kirwin, of Pella Windows and Doors





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HBRA Kicks Off Summer at 2025 Annual Meeting & June GMM

The HBRA welcomed its largest crowd of the year on June 4th for the 2025 Annual Meeting and June General Membership Meeting, hosted by Elite VIP Partner, Ring's End, at their Darien lumberyard location.

Members and guests enjoyed a beautiful summer evening with delicious pizza from Colony Pizza Hot Oil Rig, a Pig Roast from Hoodoo Brown BBQ, and drinks from Raise the Bar.

Top industry vendors—including Andersen, Azek, Benjamin Moore, Maibec, Marvin, Upstate Door, Velux, and Weyerhaeuser—were on hand to showcase their newest products and connect with attendees.

Ring's End held a raffle with exciting prizes, and the HBRA's \$250 membership raffle was sponsored by Andersen Windows & Doors.

A highlight of the evening was the installation of the HBRA's 2025–2026 Board of Directors. Rob Michaud of Michaud Development Group was sworn in for his second year as Board President, alongside Senior Vice President Brian Kurtz (Interstate+Lakeland Lumber), Vice President & Treasurer Chris Shea (Domus Constructors, LLC), and Board Secretary Karen Bradbury (Closet and Storage Concepts).



L-R Angela Cullinan and Henry DeLaRosa
both of Ring's End



L-R Bill and Nichole Charney, Niko Charney and Joe Hall
(Advanced Home Audio Inc.)



L-R Ashley Czerniecki (Ashley Nicole Social Co.), Stephanie Rapp (Stephanie Rapp Interiors), Tarra Del Chario (Accurate Lock and Hardware)



L-R Michelle Hughes (Tile America), Heidi Holzer (Heidi Holzer Design & Decorative Work), Geoff Knapp (Tooher-Ferraris Insurance Group), Lauren Hines (Tile America)



Circle of Care

At the beginning of May, the PWB completed their most recent Circle of Care room. Our project was for a sweet 12 year old girl named Sofia, who lived in Cheshire with her parents and 3 younger sisters. She is nearing the end of her cancer treatments and we were happy to give her the bedroom of her dreams! ■



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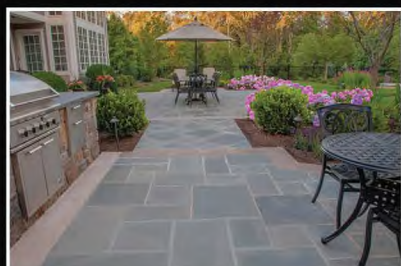
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The HBRA of Central CT News

Each month the Multi-Family Council of Central CT tours a current project or completed apartment complex. This Spring's site visits included *The Grand Ryefield* in Bloomfield, CT constructed by Nelson Construction and managed by CT Realty Trust. The group viewed spacious town houses, and a newly completed club house. In May, the council put on their muddy boots to tour the foundations and site-work of *Fieldstone Ridge* by Eric & Kevin Santini in Tolland, CT. This was a fun "before" walk-thru and chat about design considerations and the early approvals of a

project this scale. The group looks forward to seeing the "after" when the units are completed! In June, the group toured *Franklin Properties' 925 at North*. A newly renovated facility in Hamden, after a complete gut rehab caused by a fire. Lou Tagliatela, Lauren Tagliatela and their team at *Franklin Properties* showed off the newly completed building fit with newly designed common areas such as a gym and business center, plans for a new pool, and units ranging from Studios to 2-Bedrooms.



Lou Tagliatela Jr.
presenting 925 at North

On May 29, 2025, HBRA members came together at *Dunkin' Park* in Hartford to honor the association's Past Presidents. The group also presented the 2025 HBRA Charitable Foundation Scholarships. The fifteen scholarship winners were presented with \$1,000 to help further their education. The evening blended celebration and community spirit with a Yard Goats baseball game, a generous buffet, and exclusive access to the Patron Party Plaza and YG Club. The event highlighted HBRA's rich legacy while supporting future industry leaders.



L-R Past Presidents: Chris Nelson, Gregory Ugalde (First Vice-President), Ken Boynton, Louis Tagliatela Jr, Bob Wiedenmann, Kevin Ahern & Liz Koiva



Greg Ugalde & Liz Koiva presenting to the scholarship winners (in no particular order): Ashley Brown, Madison DeStefano, Joseph DiBacco, Olivia Manganelli, Kyle McKenzie, Gia Sellica-Neuzil, Addison Stetson, Luke Welch, & Emily Willis.

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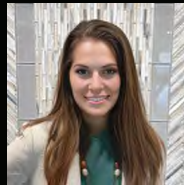
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The HBRA of Central CT News



Held on May 20, 2025, at the scenic Shuttle Meadow Country Club in Berlin, the HBRA of Central CT's 72nd Annual Golf Classic brought members together for a day of friendly competition and networking. With two shotgun start flights, 248 golfers enjoyed a full experience that included lunch, a round of golf, and a banquet dinner. This much-anticipated annual event served up fun, friendly competition, and great prizes in a beautiful outdoor setting to kick off Spring!

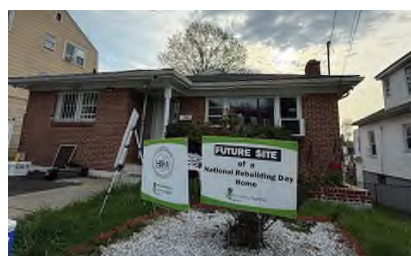


L-R Heleno & Ellisa Xavier (Stone Valley Granite)
Ralph Riccio (EOS)



L-R Team Andersen Windows (L-R): Drew Comeau,
Sandy Quinn, Mike Benedetti, Tony Pion

HBRA of Central CT's Remodeler's Council kicked off National Remodeling Month with a day of volunteerism with Rebuilding Together Hartford. 25 Members joined forces with young professionals from Fresh Start Worx to replace one homeowner's windows and sliding glass door. The window and door package was generously donated from East Haven & Ridgefield Supply, and provided by Andersen Windows. The team, organized by Past President Ted Brown, celebrated a full day of work over pizza and networking, with a shout out from media partners and the Mayor of Hartford's Office!



On April 24, 2025, HBRA members from Central and Eastern Connecticut convened at The River House in Haddam for an exclusive evening of economic insight. Dr. Robert Dietz, Chief Economist for NAHB, delivered a compelling presentation on national trends and their implications for the housing industry, with a focus on Connecticut-specific data such as housing starts, remodeling activity, and multifamily developments.



L-R Kurt Johnson & Chip Poehner (Liberty Bank)



L-R Timothy Bobroske (Timothy Bobroske Construction Services), Greg Ugalde (T&M Building Co.), Patrick Caulkins (Caulkins Home & President of HBRA Eastern CT), Dr. Robert Dietz (NAHB), & Ben Welch (Timothy Bobroske Construction Services)



L-R Sean Ryan (National Lumber), Norton Wheeler (Mystic River Building Co.), Louis Tagliatela Jr. (Franklin Properties)

CENTRAL CT HBRA NEWS

The Prove It Tour made its stop in North Haven on April 23, 2025, offering HBRA members and guests a unique opportunity to explore innovative building solutions. Hosted in collaboration with National Lumber and Huber Engineered Woods, the event featured hands-on product demos of AdvanTech™, ZIP System™, and EXACOR™ materials. Attendees interacted directly with product experts, and those who completed a survey received a free product sample. The event also included a complimentary lunch from DiBella's, enhancing the lively and informative experience.



On March 27, 2025, members gathered at the newly opened Mercedes-Benz Van Center in North Haven for an engaging evening of networking and discovery. Attendees enjoyed a guided tour of the state-of-the-art vans, connected with peers in the industry, and learned about exclusive promotional pricing opportunities available to HBRA members. The event also featured delicious food and beverage from local food trucks creating a welcoming atmosphere for industry networking.



L-R Lorrie Maiorano & Brette Stern (Calcagni)



L-R Patrick MacCarthy (Mercedes-Benz),
Sheila Leach (National Lumber), Ashley
Kidd & Eric Person (HBRA)



L-R Bob Wiedenmann (Sunwood Development)
Jonathan Snyder (Morgan Stanley)

Connecticut HBRA Members Participate in NAHB's Legislative Conference



On Wednesday, June 11, the Connecticut delegation met with Congressman Joe Courtney, as well as staff representatives from the offices of Senator Richard Blumenthal, Representative John Larson, Representative Jim Himes, and Representative Jahana Hayes. These meetings provided members the opportunity to voice key industry concerns, including workforce development, building and energy code changes, tax policy, and regulatory burdens.

A major topic of discussion was housing affordability. HBRA members highlighted that excessive government regulation contributes to 23.8% of the final cost of a new single-family home—translating to approximately \$93,870 of the national average home price of \$394,300. In Connecticut, where costs are typically higher, the impact is even more significant. Additionally, members expressed concern over new tariffs on building materials, which are expected to add an estimated \$10,900 to the cost of a new home.

The 77th Annual CT Home & Remodeling Show, held from March 7–9, 2025, at the Connecticut Convention Center, reaffirmed its status as the state’s premier home improvement event. Organized by the HBRA of Central CT, the show featured hundreds of exhibits from local vendors, offering a comprehensive showcase of home and yard products and services. Attendees experienced a one-stop shopping environment, exploring the latest trends in home design, remodeling, and energy efficiency. The event also highlighted the talents of local students through the 76th Annual Student Design Competition, celebrating innovative ideas in residential design. Johnny Carrier Chairperson and sponsor of the Student Design Competition presented First Place to Linda Chen from Platt Technical Highschool. With its blend of professional expertise and community engagement, the 2025 show continued its tradition of connecting homeowners with trusted professionals, fostering inspiration and collaboration in home improvement endeavors – and was truly a great success!



Chris Mikulski (CT Lighting)



L-R Greg Chandler (Gold Shield Construction), Patrick Caulkins (Caulkins Home & President of HBRA Eastern CT), Liz Koiva (Nordic Builders), & Matt Gilchrist (EG Home & President of HBRA Central CT).



Johnny Carrier Presenting Linda Chen with 1st Prize.

NORTHWEST HBRA NEWS

On May 7, 2025 the Local Leadership breakfast was hosted by the Home Builders of Northwest Connecticut and the Litchfield County Chapter of the Greater Hartford Association of Realtors was held at the Torrington Country Club and 9 local leaders representing towns in Litchfield County updated attendees about their towns.



L-R Harwinton First Selectman Michael Criss, Torrington Mayor Elinor Carbone, Andrew Ugalde, Michael Davis, HBA of NWCT Executive Officer Sheila Leach, Steve Temkin and Matt Gilchrist

The 2025 Annual Golf Outing took place on May 15 at the beautiful Lake of Isles in North Stonington. Committee Chair Shawn Roach of Anchor Insulation sent off the group of 144 golfers with announcements before a shotgun start. The weather held off, as members enjoyed springtime swings with their team-mates and industry partners. Post-golf dinner was held in the ballroom, with Raffle Winners and Golf Tournament Champs announced.



L-R Dana Chapel & Lisa Gencarelli (Chelsea Groton Bank), Maggi Espada, Eric Person & Ashley Kidd (HBRA Central CT).



L-R Matt Gilchrist, Greg Ugalde, Bob Wiedenmann, Nort Wheeler, Sheila Leach, Johnny Carrier



Shawn Roach,
Anchor Insulation



Team Justin Bradley Realtor/Anchor Point Homes



Members gathered at the Peace Dale Shooting Preserve in Wakefield, RI on May 2nd, for the Inaugural Clay Shooting Event. This outdoor gathering combined sport, camaraderie, and a networking lunch in a picturesque setting, kicking off the Spring weather. All levels of shooters were welcome, the experienced bunch competed on a multi-station course that mimicked real hunting scenarios, and the beginners were welcomed and supported by onsite instructors. We look forward to growing this event in 2026 as it was a big hit!

On April 24, 2025, the HBRA of Eastern & Central CT hosted a joint Economic & Political Update at The River House in Haddam. The highlight of the evening was a presentation by Dr. Robert Dietz, Chief Economist for the NAHB, who delivered expert insights on national and Connecticut housing markets, remodeling trends, and multi-family development forecasts. The event featured a networking cocktail hour, dinner, and a robust discussion with questions from the membership. The evening was hosted by Eastern's President Patrick Caulkins & First Vice President Greg Ugalde.



L-R Patrick Caulkins , Greg Ugalde



Barbara Donn & Mike McLaughlin

The HBRA of Eastern CT hosted their March Builder Blend at Keith's Appliances in Norwich. Members enjoyed a warm and welcoming atmosphere for networking and professional growth alongside the Eastern CT Association of Realtors. Attendees enjoyed discussing trends in appliances while building relationships amongst the two associations.

Hosted by Garrett Reed & Jessica Burzycki of Keith's Appliances.



L-R Susy Hurlbert (ECAR)
Jessica Burzycki (Keith's
Appliances) Paul Blanchard
(Overhead Door Norwich)



L-R Victor & Garrett Reed
(Keith's Appliances)



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- Photo Op Published in HOBi Awards edition of Connecticut Builder Magazine
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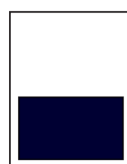
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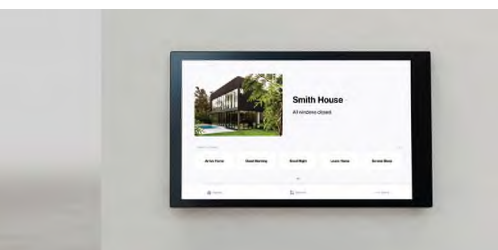
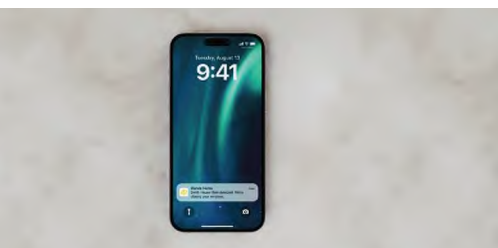


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