

**Subject: 2009-2012 Building Code Changes
Allegheny County Reassessments, Builder Lots and Spec Homes**

In our continuous mission to serve the membership as your advocate for the housing Industry, I want to provide an update on two very important matters in which BAMP has been looking after the interests of its members:

1) Considerations of changes to the 2009 ICC Codes – Chalk Up Another Victory!!

In December I wrote to the membership alerting them of the process that was underway by Pennsylvania UCC, Codes Review and Advisory Council, RAC, who was considering if any of the changes approved in the 2012 ICC codes should be adopted in Pennsylvania. As a result of Act 1 of 2011, any changes between the 2009 code, which is currently in use, and the 2012 code would have to be approved by a two-thirds super-majority of the RAC members. As part of their consideration process, I testified at a public hearing of the RAC last November to encourage the Council to reject all the changes as many of the users and administrators of the code were still becoming familiar with the current version. It was BAMP's position that adopting the over 1,000 changes would only cause additional confusion and costs and that RAC should consider a longer time between adoptions as the current three-year cycle was too cumbersome and costly to monitor (Proposed changes for the 2015 code are due for submission this Spring!) Many of the BAMP members responded to our call to action to submit written comments to the RAC before the December 31st and I am pleased to report our voice has been heard. Yesterday the RAC met and voted to reject all the changes in the code, deciding to keep the 2009 code as is (with of course the fire sprinkler mandate in one and two-family homes that was also removed through Act 1 of 2011)!!! The RAC also decided by a vote of 10-5 to recommend the legislature amend the law to go with a six year review cycle rather than the current three-year requirement. Thank you to all the members who participated in the advocacy effort.

2) Allegheny County Reassessment – Builder Lots and Spec Homes

The last time Allegheny County conducted a county-wide reassessment in 2002, BAMP was forced to organize an effort and go to court to protect the rights of developers and home builders in defense of a section in the county assessment law that recognized that lots in the hands of developers and builders are valued as raw land and that spec homes constructed for sale not be valued as improvements until they are sold to a homebuyer or 30 months after construction. The court ruled in the favor of BAMP and its coalition of builder and developers and this court order has been used by members on numerous occasions since to prevent these type of properties from being miss-valued. As the new assessment values were released in the City of Pittsburgh, there was concern that we might, in the words of Yogi Berra, be experiencing "Dejavu all over again". Reports from members owning lots in the city lead BAMP to reach out to the staff in the county's assessment department to determine if a repeat of 2002 could be diverted. After reviewing a representative sample of subdivisions throughout the county, it appears the lots were again miscoded. However, in working with the county, and the recent court approved one-year delay in implementing the new assessments, we have the assurances from the county that this error can be corrected with some assistance from BAMP. If you are a builder or developer that owns lots in Allegheny county we want to talk to you and assist in correcting this problem. Similarly, if you have a spec home that was built in the 30-month time frame we will want to advise the department of this fact too, so these can be properly identified and valued as well.

To obtain more information about both of these issues and what BAMP is doing to help you in other areas, please join me and your fellow members next Tuesday at our General Membership meeting,

which will be held at the LaMont on Mount Washington in Pittsburgh. While January's traditional topic on the state of the industry and outlook for 2012 will be a highlight of the eventing, we will be sure to give plenty time and attention to these very important issues. Attached is a brochure to register to attend.

BAMP – Celebrating 75 Years of Service to the Housing Industry in Southwestern Pennsylvania

Jim Eichenlaub

Executive Director
Builders Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh
Apartment Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh
2041 Boulevard of the Allies
Pittsburgh, Pa 15219
(412) 434-5690 office
(412) 434-5695 fax
(724) 493-4245 cell

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