

NKBA examines how codes and standards affect the kitchen and bath industry

As NKBA continues to grow, it's apparent through its revised by-laws, that it is truly an Association focused on representing the entire kitchen and bath industry.

With the addition of the Advisory Council of Builders/Remodelers in 2002 to the NKBA governance team, the Association is becoming more involved with every aspect of the construction and remodeling industry, as every NKBA member is affected by local, state and national codes and standards that dictate how building and remodeling is conducted throughout North America.

And although there are many issues to consider in the code formation process, one important consideration is cost effectiveness. The health, safety and welfare of the consumer is a top priority, but the cost effectiveness of the standards is a major factor.

For every dollar of increased cost due to new code compliance, the building and design community loses a certain number of potential clients who can't afford these changes.

NKBA has already begun to take steps to influence future code changes and protect its members.

In May, Peter Merrill, CKD, a member of NKBA's Advisory Council of Builders/Remodelers, along with Ioanna Pardalis, the Association's senior manager of professional programs, attended the National Association of Home Builders' (NAHB) Spring Board of Directors meeting in Washington, D.C. on behalf of NKBA.

During one subcommittee meeting, a revised code was presented from the American Society of Heating,

Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc. (ASHRAE) that would have made mechanical ventilation necessary for all kitchens and baths.

Merrill, who is also a national director with NAHB and sits on NAHB's Construction Codes and Standards Committee and subsequent subcommittees, was present when the proposed code was discussed.

Merrill pointed out that kitchens and bathrooms with openable windows or passive stack vents (in applicable buildings) did not require mechanical ventilation systems or externally vented exhaust fans.

Due in part to Merrill's input, the wording of the code was amended with the subcommittee before going to the Construction Codes and Standards Committee for approval. Examples like this illustrate how NKBA can have a positive affect on the development of codes.

The International Code Council (ICC) will meet in September to formulate the 2003 New International Codes to replace the 2000 International Codes. The majority of states use some form of the 2000 International Codes, and NKBA would like to be involved in this process.

The goal of NKBA as written in Goal IV of the Strategic Plan states: Public policy and legislation affecting the kitchen and bath industry will be positively influenced through NKBA's leadership role in monitoring and affecting issues of industry concern.

The Association will revisit all goals of the Strategic Plan at the NKBA Board of Directors Strategic Planning Retreat in December to ensure the needs of members are met.

about icc

The International Code Council (ICC) was established in 1994 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing a single set of comprehensive and coordinated national model construction codes.

- Purpose of the ICC: There are substantial advantages in combining the efforts of the existing code organizations to produce a single set of codes. Code enforcement officials, architects, engineers, designers and contractors can now work with a consistent set of requirements throughout the United States. Manufacturers can put their efforts into research and development rather than designing to three different sets of standards, and can focus on being more competitive in worldwide markets. Uniform education and certification programs can be used internationally. A single set of codes may encourage states and localities that write their own codes or amend the model codes to begin adopting the International Codes without technical amendments. This uniform adoption would lead to consistent code enforcement and higher quality construction.

- ICC Code Developments: Any interested individual or group may submit a code change proposal and participate in the proceedings in which it and all other proposals are considered. This open debate and broad participation before a committee comprised of representatives from across the construction industry, including code regulators and construction industry representatives, ensures a consensus of the construction community in the decision-making process.

- For more information: Visit the ICC online at www.iccsafe.org.