

Directors report: Ralph Siemonsma

After arriving in Chicago I attended the Federal Government Affairs committee meeting. Lobbyist reported on the homebuyer tax credit. Several positions are being discussed in congress: 1) To extend the current tax credit for one year. 2) To extend tax credits and expand it to include all purchasers. 3) To extend the tax credits and raise it to \$15,000.00. The committee felt that option 3 would do the most for the building industry. The lobbyist thought the extension and keeping only first time homebuyers would have the most support in congress. There have been some allegations of fraud with the program, which could have negative affect on this program.

The committee was divided on the net operating loss carry- back legislation. The opponents believe that the \$8000.00 tax credit is more important than the carry- back legislation.

Health care was very much on everybody's mind. The committee was divided over the national association's position, which was wait and react.

Chinese drywall is still a major issue in the southeast, with lawsuits that are nearing the litigation process in Louisiana. It still remains primarily a product issue, with medical problems still on the sideline.

Immigration legislation was discussed. President Obama had made campaign promises to Hispanics and the unions not wanting any legal or illegal aliens to work in this country. More to come soon as pressure is coming from these two blocks of voters. The administration is likely to push for employers to be responsible for verifying work status of employees.

I also attended part of the Construction Codes & Standards meeting. Raising Energy Star standards are being considered to keep product efficiencies up. The EPA is trying to turn the Energy Star for Homes program into it owns green program. A letter was sent to the national director opposing this. Disturbing information about President Obama's energy legislation would have such high requirements that Green Building would become ineffectual. Information on this committee will be in the BHHBA office if anyone is interested.

Appraisals are under discussion with the bankers, appraisers, and FDIC.

We are trying to get standards in place which would help make the process more understandable.

NAHB's budget was approved with no more than \$11.6million being used out of reserves to balance it. Most of the short fall in revenue came from low numbers at the IBS show and membership dropping since 2007. Staff at NAHB has been decreased from 401 in 2008 to 298 in 2010 to lower expenses. Some services many decreases to membership as well.

A video was produced by the Kansas City Association, which provides a good example of what is currently happening in their area and how it has affected the construction industry. [www. NAHB.org/NAHBTv](http://www.NAHB.org/NAHBTv)

Area 10 will have a new Chairman in 2010 after the IBS Show, Wayne Foster, from Wisconsin. The IBS show will be in Las Vegas January 19th -- 22nd, 2010.

Thank you for allowing me to serve.
Ralph Siemonsma