



# HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ALLEGHENIES

MARCH 2011 NEWSLETTER

[www.hbaahomes.org](http://www.hbaahomes.org) [www.pabuilders.org](http://www.pabuilders.org)  
[www.nahb.org](http://www.nahb.org)

## NEXT BOARD MEETING

**Monday, April 11, 2011:** The next H.B.A.A. Board of Directors meeting will begin at 6:30 PM at Hoss's Restaurant in Richland.

## NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

**Monday, March 7, 2011:** The next General membership meeting will begin at 6:30 at Hoss's Restaurant in Richland. When you arrive at Hoss's come directly into our back meeting room. Our menu selection will be posted at each table. Please place your dinner order **in our meeting room** by 6:30PM. Please welcome our sponsor, ANDERSON WINDOWS & DOORS.

*\* Both the general membership meeting and Board meetings are at Hoss's Restaurant*

### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING:

6:30 PM Cocktails 7:00 Dinner First Monday of the month

March	7, 2011
April	4, 2011
May	2, 2011
June	6, 2011
July	no meeting
August	no meeting
September	5, 2011
October	3, 2011
November	7, 2011
December	no meeting

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS:

6:30PM at / Second Monday of the month

March	no meeting
April	11, 2011
May	no meeting
June	13, 2011
July	no meeting
August	8, 2011
September	no meeting
October	10, 2011
November	no meeting
December	12, 2011

Our March 7<sup>th</sup> general membership meeting sponsor is:



Here are some bullet points on what I will be talking about on Monday March 7<sup>th</sup>.

- Andersen Windows and Doors solutions for replacement and remodeling
- New Exterior Trim
- New TW Insert Window
- Intelligent Estimate- an on-line estimating tool for remodelers and builders.

**Craig A. Calvetti** Andersen Windows (814) 934-2625 Cell (651) 275-7690 Fax [craig.calvetti@andersencorp.com](mailto:craig.calvetti@andersencorp.com)



## PA-ONE CALL

### IT IS FREE WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

Whether you're laying the foundation of a building or just planting a tree, you must call to have the underground utility lines located before digging. By calling 1-800-242-1776 three working days before you start your project, all member facility owners in your work site area will be notified of your plans and will mark their lines in the vicinity.

### GIVE US YOUR PA ONE CALL BILL.

Members should give their PA One Call invoice to us at the HBAA, we, in turn, verify your membership and fax it to PBA for processing. Last year alone, 825 PBA members used this benefit for a total savings of \$41,250.

*The Allegheny Committee for Affordable Housing is a local political action committee striving to keep housing affordable in our local area. Every time you purchase a 50/50 ticket at our general membership meeting, the proceeds go to this committee.*

## THANK YOU - RECENT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING SPONSORS:

### Anderson Windows & Doors

(814)934-2625

[craig.calvetti@andersencorp.com](mailto:craig.calvetti@andersencorp.com)

### Howard Concrete Pumping Co., Inc.

(412)257-1800

[www.howardconcretepumping.com](http://www.howardconcretepumping.com)

### Ebensburg Insurance Agency

(814)472-9557

[www.ebensburgins.com](http://www.ebensburgins.com)

### Owens Corning

(419)248-8281

[www.ocenergycomplete.com](http://www.ocenergycomplete.com)

### Warmup Inc.

(860)995-5725

[robertheslop@warmup.com](mailto:robertheslop@warmup.com)

### Tyco Rapid Response

(215)412-3846

[darren.palmier@tycofp.com](mailto:darren.palmier@tycofp.com)

If you are interested in sponsoring a general membership meeting, please contact Walt Freidhoff at (814)535-8371.

A new NAHB study sheds light on the emerging composition of the home building industry. The data, which was collected from numerous newly available sources, indicates that small businesses continue to dominate the industry while the share of homes built by large national builders actually declined in 2009.

## YOUR ANNUAL DUES AND THE LOBBYING TAX DEDUCTION FOR 2011

Dues payments to The Home Builders Association of the Alleghenies are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. However, dues payments may be deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses subject to the exclusion for lobbying activity. Because a portion of your dues is used for lobbying by NAHB and PBA, \$99.31 (\$27.00 + \$72.31) is not deductible for income tax purposes.



Leventry, Haschak & Rodkey, LLC

Attorneys at Law

Timothy C. Leventry, LL.M.

Phone: 814-266-1799  
(Fax): 814-266-5108  
E-mail: [tleventry@lhrklaw.com](mailto:tleventry@lhrklaw.com)  
Website: [www.lhrklaw.com](http://www.lhrklaw.com)

1397 Eisenhower Boulevard  
Richland Square III  
Suite 202  
Johnstown, PA 15904



## DO YOU KNOW THE 2009 CODE?

1. Foundation anchor bolts shall be at least \_\_\_\_ inch in diameter and shall extend a minimum of \_\_\_\_ inches concrete or grouted cells of concrete masonry units.
2. The studs used in wood foundation walls shall be \_\_\_\_ -inch by \_\_\_\_ -inch members.
3. Wood sill plates shall be a minimum of \_\_\_\_ -inch by \_\_\_\_ -inch nominal lumber.
4. The minimum net area of ventilation openings shall not be less than \_\_\_\_ square foot for each \_\_\_\_ square feet of under-floor space.
5. The minimum required floor access opening to all under-floor spaces shall be \_\_\_\_ inches by \_\_\_\_ inches.
6. The ends of each floor joist, beam or girder shall have not less than \_\_\_\_ inches of bearing on wood or metal and not less than \_\_\_\_ inches on masonry or concrete...

## PROGRAM LAUNCH COMMUNICATION - PBIP

We want to thank everyone for their patience as we worked to secure a new health insurance solution for our members. Effective August 1, 2010, we partnered with JRG Advisors to provide a health insurance program through Highmark, Blue Cross of Northeastern PA, and other leading health insurers in Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania Builders Insurance Program (PBIP) will make it easy for building industry employers in PA to provide high-quality health insurance at an affordable cost.

Over the past seven months, JRG has been working to transfer local businesses that were previously purchasing our other health insurance program to the new PBIP program. JRG Advisors has a proven track record in turning small business owners strength in numbers into very powerful programs with outstanding benefits. PA builders have access to:

- Fully insured group and individual Health Insurance options
- Dental and Vision Benefits
- Life Insurance, AD&D and Disability
- Voluntary Insurance Products
- Dedicated service, online administration, and ACH premium payment

JRG has been working with builder groups for many years and is headquartered in Wexford, PA. They are staffed to service builders throughout the entire state - including having a staff member onsite at the Pennsylvania Builders Association in Lemoyne.

With Pennsylvania Builders Insurance Program your business has many choices available. Contact the Builders Hotline at 1-888-333-7526 or your local agent/broker to pick the plan that best fits your business needs. PBIP representatives are available to help you. More information can also be found on the PBIP website, [www.PBIPonline.com](http://www.PBIPonline.com).

### ATTENTION MEMBERS

To best serve you, we partnered with JRG Advisors to provide quality health, dental, vision, life, and disability insurance options for our members.

For more information, contact the Builders Hotline at 1-888-333-7526. PBIP representatives are available to help you and your local insurance agent.



## 2009 CODE ANSWERS

1. ½ in. 7 in. *Read the exceptions in this section.* 2009 IRC Section R403.1.6 Foundation anchorage.
2. 2-inch by 6-inch 2009 IRC Section R404.2.2 Stud size.
3. 2-inch by 4-inch Section 404.3 Wood sill plates.
4. 1 sq. ft. for each 150 sq. ft. *Review the changes in this section.* 2009 IRC Section 408.1 Ventilation.
5. 18 inches by 24 inches *See Section M1305.1.4 for access requirements where mechanical equipment is located under floors.* 2009 IRC Section R408.4 Access.
6. 1.5 in. 3 in. *...except where supported on a 1-inch-by-4-inch ribbon strip and nailed to the adjacent stud or by the use of approved joist hangers. This is the same for rafters and ceiling joists.* 2009 IRC Section R502.6 Bearing.

## REMODELERS ASKED TO COMMENT ON CERTIFICATION, RECORDKEEPING COSTS OF LEAD RULE

Remodelers and contractors who are trained and certified under the Environmental Protection Agency's [Renovation, Repair and Painting \(RRP\) rule](#) now have the opportunity to provide the agency with comments on the cost of certification and recordkeeping under the new regulation.

The EPA announced it was seeking comments in a routine [Information Collection Request](#) published in the Federal Register on Jan. 26.

The various estimated cost burdens of the RRP rule are included in a [supporting statement](#) from the EPA.

In its economic analysis of the rule, the EPA estimated that remodelers would spend 3-1/2 hours familiarizing themselves with the rule and completing the initial firm certification form. It should take another three minutes per project to complete, present and explain the post-renovation checklist to the property owners or tenants, according to EPA projections.

Lastly, the EPA said that it expected remodelers to spend a little less than five hours on recordkeeping.

Many remodelers have argued that certification and recordkeeping will entail more costs and time than those estimated by the EPA. This information request presents an opportunity for professional remodelers to demonstrate the actual costs and time commitment dictated by the lead regulation.

Comments from remodelers are due by March 28. Visit the [Federal Register website](#) for more information and to [submit comments](#).

For more information, e-mail [Matt Watkins](#) at NAHB, or call him at 800-368-5242 x8327.



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### **An informative new study from NAHB demonstrates that deductions for mortgage interest and real estate taxes benefit primarily middle-class taxpayers with incomes between \$50,000 and \$200,000.**

The NAHB latest research examines the actual tax benefits, of these tax rules by income and family size, using IRS statistics. The researchers explain that 68% of the benefits of the mortgage interest deduction and 77% of the real estate tax benefits are claimed by those earning less than \$200,000.

With Congress expected to soon initiate discussions on ways to reduce the national budget deficit, such data can be used to help explain the tremendous impact that reductions or eliminations of housing-related tax incentives would have on families nationwide. You can view the full report, titled "Who Benefits from the Housing Tax Deductions?" at [HousingEconomics.com](#)



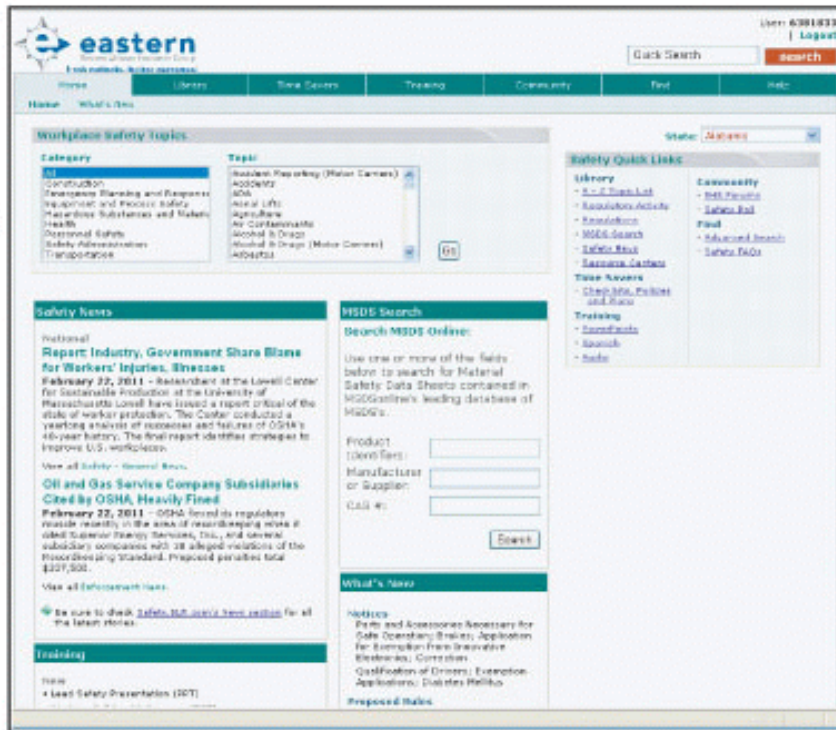


# Another Benefit of the PBA Workers' Compensation Program

**Safety.BLR.com access through Eastern Alliance Insurance Group's Risk Management Resource Center**

What makes Safety.BLR.com access a great benefit?

- Access to this site is normally more than \$995 annually-PBA Workers' Compensation Program members can access it for **free**
- Up-to-date safety news, including OSHA standard changes, large violations, current safety news, etc.
- Info on both federally-mandated and state-specific regulations
- OSHA letters of interpretation, written directives and policies, training materials, toolbox talks, MSDS resources and much more
- Spanish training materials and audio presentations available
- Easy navigation, with searches available by categories, topic, and format (i.e. PowerPoints, quizzes, toolbox talks, etc.)



EAIG offers Program members free access to this resource through the Risk Management Resource Center on [www.eains.com](http://www.eains.com). Policyholders must first register on [www.eains.com](http://www.eains.com) in order to access the Safety.BLR.com. Policyholder registration codes and instructions can be found on the last page of the policy packet materials, or policyholders can call 1.888.654.7100 to ask for EAIG web site assistance.

Safety.BLR.com is yet another great reason for businesses to join the PBA Workers' Compensation Program!

**Program Coordinator:**  
 McConkey Insurance & Benefits  
 Contact Tisha O'Donnell, CPIA  
 717-755-9266 or [todonnell@ekmconkey.com](mailto:todonnell@ekmconkey.com)  
[www.ekmconkey.com/pba.htm](http://www.ekmconkey.com/pba.htm)

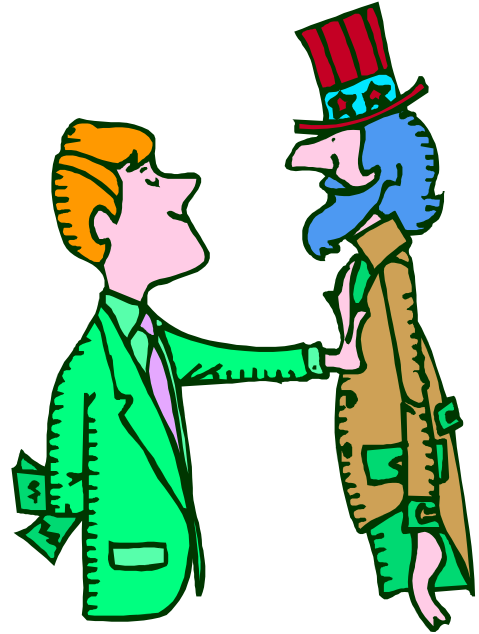


## HELPFUL TIPS FOR BUILDERS THIS TAX SEASON NAHB

Members who are looking for ways to save some cash this tax season need look no further than an informative article that appears in the latest Nation's Building News <http://www.nbnnews.com/NBN/issues/2011-02-21/Business+Management/2.html> . There, tax expert Kathy Pickering, executive director of The Tax Institute at H&R Block <http://www.thetaxinstitute.com/>, provides 10 great tips to help you through this tax season five of which are noted below:

- Deducting your home office. You can claim this deduction only if you have a room, or a distinct portion of a room, dedicated exclusively and regularly for your main place of business. The rules differ slightly depending on whether you are self-employed or an employee.
- Self-employed health insurance deduction ; This is applicable if you're self-employed and pay health insurance premiums for yourself and your family. For 2010, you can also deduct those premiums from your income for purposes of calculating self-employment tax. For 2010 and after, you can deduct the cost of health insurance premiums for your children younger than age 27 at the end of the year, if they don't have access to employer-provided insurance. This applies even if the child is not a dependent for tax purposes.
- Cell phones can be deducted; The good news for 2010 is that you can deduct cell phone expenses related to your business under the regular rules for business property. So, if you purchased a cell phone in 2010 for \$200, and you use the phone entirely for business purposes, then you can deduct up to \$200.
- Start-up business expense deduction increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for 2010 only; If you started a new business in 2010, you may be able to deduct up to \$10,000 in start-up expenses, which includes costs such as advertising and employee training prior to opening the business.
- General business credit modified; Eligible small businesses may carry back the general business credit for five years instead of one year. So, if you qualify for a credit such as the Energy Efficient Home Credit, but you have low tax liability in 2010, you may be able to carry the credit back to a prior year, such as 2005, and claim a refund.

For the rest of Kathy's list, please see the full article in NBN <http://www.nbnnews.com/NBN/issues/2011-02-21/Business+Management/2.html> .



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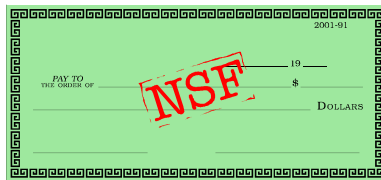
**Citing the agency's sensitivity to potential costs and other concerns raised by NAHB and other trade associations, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) withdrew its proposed interpretation of noise standards on Jan 19, three months after it was published in the Federal Register.**



OSHA had intended to revise its current enforcement policy to require employers to use administrative or engineering controls rather than personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce noise exposures below the permissible level when such controls are "feasible." The new interpretation would have defined the term "feasible administrative or engineering controls" used in the noise standard as meaning "capable of being done" regardless of cost, so long as it does not put a company out of business. In an OSHA press release announcing the interpretation's withdrawal, Dr. David Michaels, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health, said, "We are sensitive to the possible costs associated with improving worker protection and have decided to suspend work on the proposed modification while we study other approaches to abating workplace noise hazards. "OSHA said it was also abandoning the proposed interpretation because of concerns over resources and public outreach.

## BANK OFFICERS REPORT ONGOING TIGHT LENDING

Meanwhile, the [Federal Reserve's January 2011 Senior Loan Officer Opinion Survey on Bank Lending Practices](#) reports little change in the tight lending conditions by banks to businesses and households. The quarterly survey is based on responses from 57 domestic banks and 22 U.S. branches of foreign banks.



With respect to commercial real estate lending portfolios — which include builders' AD&C loans — banks reported no change in credit conditions, although 20% of banks indicated that they had reduced the size of the loans allowed.

With respect to consumers' residential real estate lending, the Fed report showed no changes in prime mortgage lending, but 15% of banks reported tightened lending on non-traditional mortgage products. However, a special question of the survey found that 35% of banks expected to increase residential real estate lending during the first half of 2011. This result was true for both large and small banks.

On the whole, the Fed survey is consistent with NAHB survey data of builders' responses with respect to the direction of tight lending practices, particularly with respect to AD&C loans, but builder responses suggest the situation is considerably more severe than the banks are saying.

With the businesses of many small builders continuing to languish, NAHB's top priority is to restore the flow of AD&C financing as quickly as possible.

The association is continuing to urge regulators to issue more flexible guidelines that will encourage banks to maintain funding for AD&C loans in good standing that fall below their underlying value. NAHB has also been calling the attention of regulators and members of Congress to the fact that, without credit to build viable new projects, the housing industry can neither revive, nor can it provide the engine of job growth that the economy so desperately needs.

## NAHB CHAIRMAN BOB NIELSEN PROMOTES FDIC HOTLINE FOR BUILDERS

I want to let you know about a unique opportunity now available through the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) that may help address your difficulties in obtaining financing for your business.

The acquisition, development and construction (AD&C) credit crisis continues to jeopardize the livelihoods of countless home builders and threatens to derail the fragile housing recovery now under way. Alleviating a crippling drought of AD&C lending remains our top priority.

After hosting a recent symposium to examine the credit problems that small businesses are facing, the FDIC has moved to create a hotline and website that allows small business owners to make inquiries with FDIC officials or to register their specific issues or problems they may have concerning credit availability.

The bulk of our membership is comprised of small businesses. This is your chance to weigh in directly with the FDIC to discuss any business constraints you are facing due to the scarcity of credit for housing. Any home builder, developer or associate who is unable to obtain financing, is having a hard time with an outstanding AD&C loan or feels that they have been treated unfairly by their lending institution should alert the FDIC either through the hotline or their website.

Calling 866-924-NAHB (866-924-6242) will patch you through to the FDIC's hotline, where you can discuss your specific situation if you choose not to fill out a business assistance form on the FDIC website. Be aware that you will be talking to a live FDIC representative, so have your information at hand. The hotline is operational Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Standard Time.

To provide more details, the FDIC has created a dedicated website for small businesses at [www.fdic.gov/smallbusiness](http://www.fdic.gov/smallbusiness). Go to the website and then click on the Business Assistance Form at the bottom of the page. This will allow you to fill in information and provide details about lending or credit problems you are having with a specific bank or financial institution. It is our hope that the FDIC will follow through and respond to any inquiries it receives.

NAHB is launching new initiatives to combat the AD&C credit crisis and a strong member response to the FDIC hotline will help raise greater awareness of the AD&C credit problems builders are facing and support our efforts to find constructive solutions that will restore the flow of credit to our industry. So once again, I urge you to contact the FDIC today! It is absolutely essential if we are to keep our fellow builders on the job and help our industry rebound from the worst downturn in decades.

# WEBSITES AND “WORD OF MOUSE” ON INTERNET CAN MAKE OR BREAK SALES

In a marketplace where prospective remodeling clients are winnowing down their choices based on what they find on the Internet, remodelers need to ensure that they have an appealing website and also take steps to ensure that it is easy to find, according to participants in an educational seminar at the [NAHB International Builders' Show](#) last month in Orlando.

The first question you must ask is, “Am I even in the game?” said Meredith Oliver, president and founder of Meredith Communications based in Orlando. “The game is in the search engines. You can have the best site in the world, but if you can’t be found when they Google your name, it doesn’t matter.”

Oliver cited three options to improve a website’s placement or rankings in the search engine:

- Paid search marketing is where advertisers pay for search engine placement in an eBay-like auction/bidding system for specific keywords. Paid search results generally appear at the very top and down the right side of the page.
- Organic, or natural placement, results appear below the sponsored search results and local results on most search engines.
- To boost their presence on the Internet, businesses can also choose to buy paid ads from Google, which Oliver compares to online Yellow Pages advertising.

Once a remodeler establishes an online presence, the next step is to manage the online message. “After they Google you, they go to Facebook to find out what people are saying,” said Oliver. “It’s no longer word of mouth, it’s word of mouse.” Oliver cited statistics showing that two-thirds of buying decisions are influenced by the social media and that 60% of consumers trust what they find there more than in traditional ads.

“Social media peer groups are word of mouth on steroids,” said Oliver. “The key to managing your message is being responsive when you get a negative review. Say, “Thank you for your concern, someone will get back to you shortly and address your concerns.” Key best practices in the social media include photo sharing, promoting blogs, buyer testimonials, keeping good community relations and promoting the product.

Since consumers often make snap decisions on whether to peruse a site after clicking on it, Brian Flook, president and founder of [Power Marketing & Advertising, LLC](#) in Hagerstown, Md., said that builders and remodelers need to have a “Nearly Instant Compelling Effect” — or NICE message — to grab consumers.

“Your website must clearly communicate your product’s most sustainable, distinctive and compelling qualities,” said Flook.

He said a killer website must:

- Clearly communicate the company’s message
- Give visitors what they want quickly
- Be easy to find using a search engine
- Be easily navigable — with the most important links at the top left (plans, communities, etc.) and the least important links (about us, contact us) placed further right
- Entice visitors to drill deeper
- Successfully collect customer data and provide immediate feedback
- Have outstanding photography, snappy headlines that stand out and compelling copy that is keyword coded for enhanced search engine optimization value



The abundance of information available online to today’s prospects means that the sales professional should be prepared for a shortened buying cycle, according to Jeff Shore, president of [Shore Consulting, Inc.](#), in Auburn, Calif.

“Today’s Internet lead is highly educated, highly motivated and highly ready, willing and able to buy,” said Shore.

The buying cycle for these customers ends up being much shorter because most of the legwork has already been done, he added.

“There is no reason this should be a long, drawn-out process,” said Shore. “Give the Internet prospect the opportunity purchase on visit one.”



## NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING

Home Builders Association of the Alleghenies  
 Richland Square III, 1397 Eisenhower Blvd.,  
 Johnstown, PA 15904  
 Phone: (814)269-9268 Fax: (814)269-1429  
 Newsletter Advertising Contract

NAME OF COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 REPRESENTATIVE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 FAX: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Member of the Home Builders  
 Association of the Alleghenies?

Yes No

Order for advertising within our monthly Newsletter:

- All ad copy and artwork must accompany this contract.
- All advertising artwork must be photocopy ready. (B&W only)
- All advertising contracts are for a minimum of 3 months.

Business Card (3 1/2 x 2")	\$10.00 x _____ months = \$ _____
1/8 page (5" x 2")	\$15.00 x _____ months = \$ _____
1/4 page (5" x 4")	\$25.00 x _____ months = \$ _____
1/2 page (5" x 8")	\$45.00 x _____ months = \$ _____
Full page (8 1/2" x 11")	\$90.00 x _____ months = \$ _____

Order for a flyer attached to inside of our monthly Newsletter:

- The flyer must be of size 8 1/2 by 11, on standard weight paper.
  - All the flyers are to be created by the advertiser and given to H.B.A.A. (Please call HBAA for an estimate of the number of flyers required)
- \$75.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ sheets x \_\_\_\_\_ months = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Circle month you are requesting your ad period to start:  
 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

- All advertising contracts must be prepaid, please attach check payable to the H.B.A.A.
- All advertising must be supplied to the H.B.A.A. office a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the advertising month.

The HBAA does not discriminate against any person or company in accepting paid advertising in its newsletter. Acceptance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement of the advertiser, its products, services or claims. The HBAA shall be held harmless in the event that a newsletter is not published or distributed as planned, or in the event that an ad is omitted or incorrectly displayed.

Advertiser \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

HBAA \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## FUDDLER'S CORNER



Getting  
 Ready  
 for  
 Taxes

**Home Builders Association  
Timothy C. Leventry  
Suite 202, Richland Square III  
1397 Eisenhower Blvd.  
Johnstown, PA 15904**

**Return Service Requested**



**HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF THE ALLEGHENIES  
NEWSLETTER**

MARCH 2011

Timothy C. Leventry, E.O.  
1397 Eisenhower Boulevard  
Richland Square III, Suite 202  
Johnstown, PA 15904

(814)269-9268

FAX: (814)269-1429

President: Leon Lechene  
web site: [www.hbaahomes.org](http://www.hbaahomes.org)  
email: [info@hbaahomes.org](mailto:info@hbaahomes.org)

**STAY INFORMED!!**

If you receive this newsletter via U.S. Mail, then you are missing out on information. We email our members with the latest information and updates on things happening in the home building field. Don't miss out anymore. Make Sure We Have Your Correct Email Address and Fax Number So We May Let You Know Important Information as we get it. Please forward this information to us at HBAA via email or fax.