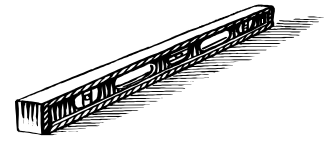


The Straight and Level

An Independent Newsletter from the
Home Builders Association of the Upper Rio Grande
Established 2005
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April 2009



Presidents Message

Bob Van Iwaarden

"Six common mistakes NOT to make during this recession"

Most all of us business owners are good leaders in a good "up-market", but it takes challenging times like these to identify the great ones.

The most important thing to accept is that a "down market" cycle works against our most basic and valuable instinct: OPTIMISM! Optimism is what makes most business owners successful. When others see risk, someone else sees opportunity. You can survive and do well provided you avoid the following common mistakes.

1. **Failing to face reality:** Optimism must be our core trait as business owners but taken too far it will become a weakness! The facts are unique to each one of our business' so don't let national economic news ruin you. Conduct a FACT based assessment of what really is happening in your market, buffer your optimism with that and stick to those facts.
2. **Trying to sell through it:** Trying to sell through a down mar-

ket without cutting selling expenses will sink you if the market continues to shrink. Cut those costs or you are increasing the cost of each sale.

3. **Delayed cost cutting:** Cash is mandatory in a down market because profits are harder to come by. A strong balance sheet, especially CASH, translates into the ability to rebound. What if this recession drags on two years or more?
4. **Decision freeze:** I don't know about you but in this recession I have seen more fear and uncertainty than in past down markets. There is a lot of negative news and gloomy headlines and a huge loss of confidence in Washington's intelligence. Their attempt to insulate the free market and not let bad business' fail has crippled many business owners and customers optimism to the point they freeze up because they feel they have lost control. Don't freeze up, look hard at your market facts and react as needed.
5. **Failure to plan:** Have you put off completing your 2009 budgets because you can't predict the future? Try making a "best", "worst" and "likely" budget, then pay attention and be ready to allocate your resources to maximize all you have as needed.
6. **Failure to lead:** Great leaders know when to light a fire under the troops and when to calm them down. Even if you feel panicked inside lead in a steady optimistic way so employees are not afraid.

2009

HBAURG Board of Directors

President: Bob Van Iwaarden

Vice President: Keith Helmstetter

Secretary: Ron Marx

Treasurer: Brett Zielke

Directors: Leonard Brown
Grover Hathorn
Pat Martinez
Dick Shaw
Don Smit

HBAURG Board Meetings are held monthly, 2 weeks prior to the Monthly Membership Meeting and Dinner, which is held the last Tuesday of the month.

ANNUAL HBA GOLF TOURNAMENT

Friday, June 5, 2009

Cattails Golf Course

Alamosa

Hole Sponsorships Available For \$100.00

Contact: Grover Hathorn, 873-5804

More Details in the May Newsletter

Mark Your Calendars!



Notes from Bee

Contact Bee to make dinner reservations, 873-5440 or email at hbaurg@aol.com



APRIL 28TH—MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND DINNER

Location: Inn of the Rio Grande, 33 Santa Fe ~ Alamosa (formerly the Holiday Inn)

Steak & Enchiladas (8 oz. sirloin & 2 cheese enchiladas served with papas & green chili, does not include salad or homemade rolls)

OR King Salmon Steak (broiled & garnished with hollandaise sauce, includes salad, twice-baked potato, vegetable of the day & fresh homemade bread. Choice of coffee or tea.

Time: Social Time 6:00, Dinner at 6:30

Cost: \$15.00 per person—Reservations are recommended*

*Reservation Deadline ~ Noon, Thursday Apr. 23rd

Welcome New Members!

Ben Lowder
Finish Pro, Inc.
Monte Vista
719-580-5980

Executive Officer's Report By Bee Marx *Mind The Gap*

Imagine leaving a window open all winter long – the heat loss, cold drafts and wasted energy! If your home has a folding attic stair, a whole-house fan or AC return, a fireplace, or a clothes dryer, that may be just what is occurring in your home everyday. These often overlooked sources of heat loss and air leakage can cause heat to pour out and the cold outside air to rush in – costing you higher heating bills.

Air leaks are the largest source of heating and cooling loss in the home. Air leaks occur through the small cracks around doors, windows, pipes, etc. Most homeowners are well aware of the benefits caulk and weatherstripping provide to minimize heat loss and cold drafts. But what can you do about the four largest holes in your home – the folding attic stair, the whole-house fan or AC return, the fireplace and the clothes dryer? The March, 2009 issue of Builder includes the following tips and techniques that can easily, quickly and inexpensively seal and insulate these holes.

Attic Stairs: An easy, low-cost solution to this problem is to add an attic stair cover. An attic stair cover provides an air seal, reducing the air leaks. Add the desired amount of insulation over the cover to restore the insulation removed from the ceiling.

Whole-House Fans and AC Returns: An easy, low-cost solution to this problem is to add a whole-house fan cover. Installed from the attic side, the whole-house fan cover is invisible. Cover the fan to reduce heating and air-conditioning loss; remove it when use of the fan is desired.

Fireplaces: A recent study showed that, for many consumers, their heating bills may be more than \$500 higher per winter due to the air leakage and wasted energy caused by fireplaces. An easy, low-cost solution to this problem is to add a fireplace draftstopper. Available from Battic Door, a company known for its energy conservation products, a fireplace draftstopper is an inflatable pillow that seals the damper, eliminating any air leaks. The pillow is removed whenever the fireplace is used, then reinserted after.

Clothes Dryer Exhaust Ducts: An easy, low-cost solution to this problem is to add a dryer vent seal. This will reduce unwanted air infiltration and keep out pests, bees and rodents. The vent will remain closed unless the dryer is in use. When the dryer is in use, a floating shuttle rises to allow warm air, lint and moisture to escape.



SAFAX
With Dick Shaw
Certified Safety Professional
Rio Grande Safety and Health, LLC
873-5484

Aerial Lifts—Watch Out Below!

In 2007, we wrote a SAFAX article about the use of Aerial Lifts in the construction industry. Since that time, we've seen an increased use in these great tools so we thought it was about time for a refresher.

The use of aerial lifts for residential and commercial construction is becoming more common, especially here in the San Luis Valley. Many times these handy aerial lifts are much easier and faster to use than traditional scaffolding. But, there are some serious dangers associated with their use that must be considered.

Aerial lifts include boom-supported aerial platforms, such as cherry pickers or bucket trucks. The major causes of fatalities are falls, electrocutions, and collapses or tip overs.

Aerial equipment may be made of metal, wood, fiberglass reinforced plastic, or other material; may be powered or manually operated; and are deemed to be aerial lifts whether or not they are capable of rotating about a substantially vertical axis.

Use these **Safe Work Practices** when working with Aerial Lifts:

Safe Work Practices

- Ensure that workers who operate aerial lifts are properly trained in the safe use of the equipment. Document that training.
- Maintain and operate elevating work platforms in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Test lift controls each day prior to use to determine that the controls are in safe working condition.
- Conduct daily inspections on the rigging and cables. Document.
- Never override hydraulic, mechanical, or electrical safety devices.
- Never move the equipment with workers in an elevated platform unless this is permitted by the manufacturer. Check the specs first.
- Do not allow workers to position themselves between overhead hazards, such as joists and beams, and the rails of the basket. Movement of the lift could crush the worker(s).
- Maintain a minimum clearance of at least 10 feet, or 3 meters, away from the nearest overhead lines. Assign a worker to keep watch.
- Always treat power-lines, wires and other conductors as energized, even if they are down or appear to be insulated.
- Use a full body harness with a lanyard attached to the boom or basket to prevent the worker(s) from being ejected or pulled from the basket.
- Never secure your body harness and lanyard to an adjacent pole, structure, or equipment while working from an aerial lift.
- Always stand firmly on the floor of the basket, and never sit or climb on the edge of the basket or use planks, ladders, or other devices for a work position.
- Set the brakes, and use wheel chocks when on an incline.
- Use outriggers, if provided.
- Do not exceed the load limits of the equipment. Allow for the combined weight of the worker, tools, and materials.
- No horseplay or jokes when operating a manlift.

"What's Hot?" AND "What's Not?" By Bee Marx

The following "What's Hot?" and "What's Not?" items were listed in the January, 2009 issue of Builder.

Out: Biggie-sized developments and homes sold by the pound.

In: Quality over quantity.

Out: Too much of any one price point in any one area or development.

In: Mixed-income neighborhoods offering different product types and price ranges.

Out: Houses of seven or nine or 13 gables.

In: Simpler, more economical roof and building forms.

Out: Ostentation.

In: Modesty and restraint.

Out: Complete deference to the automobile.

In: Greater planning emphasis on bikes, alternative forms of transportation and the pedestrian experience.

Out: Lawns with blanket sprinkler systems in the South and West, where water resources are scarce.

In: Low-flow plumbing fixtures, appliances and landscaping irrigation systems tied to native xeriscaping.

Out: Driving to qualify.

In: Smaller, more affordable housing options close to work and play.