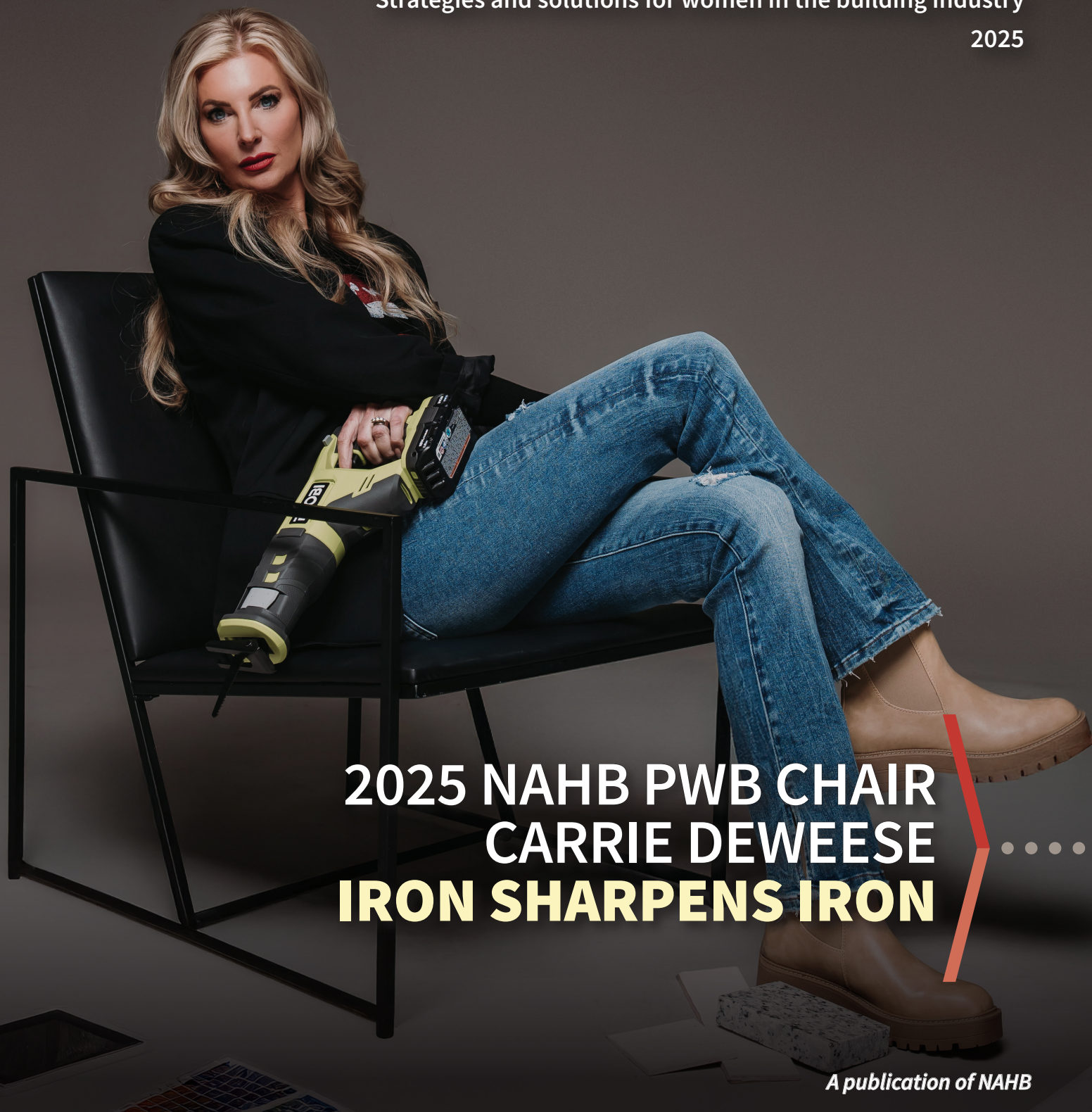


BUILDINGWOMEN

Strategies and solutions for women in the building industry

2025



2025 NAHB PWB CHAIR CARRIE DEWEESE **IRON SHARPENS IRON**

A publication of NAHB

ALSO

Lessons From
Leaders

Celebrating 70
Years of PWB

Building a More
Diverse Industry

Minding Your
Business

SHE DID IT HER WAY

Morgan Molitor

Co-founder, construction2style

It all started as a DIY blog with her husband Jamie. But now, Morgan's knack for strategic marketing and design has helped propel their once-humble venture into a multifaceted business. She was a driving force behind their growth into design and construction, and now she's helping them shape the future.

They've now added an educational hub for both aspiring entrepreneurs and seasoned professionals, started a digital marketing agency called Neon Lion, and set up a non-profit initiative called resilience2reform. And Morgan continues to demonstrate her leadership in the industry, serving in a partnership role in the Contractor Coalition Summit where she advocates for knowledge-sharing and empowerment.

"Dare to take risks," she advises future business leaders. "Surround yourself only with brilliant minds, don't overanalyze, and be laser focused. Your gut will never steer you wrong."

Morgan Molitor.
Building a better industry.

Photo: Chelsie Lopez Marketing & Production

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In This Issue

Honoring the Past, Influencing the Future



12

FEATURES

12 **A Vision for the Future: Iron Sharpens Iron**

By Carol Morgan

Carrie DeWeese sees a vibrant future for NAHB's Professional Women in Building Council—starting with strengthening the group's culture of mentorship and empowerment.

16 **Lessons From Leaders: Q&A: What Was Your Path to HBA Leadership?**

By Andi Dirkschneider Bliss

PWB members Christy Beck, Andrea Eldred and Geraldine Smith offer a deeper perspective into the trajectory of their professional journeys.

18 **Q&A: Clearing a Path Toward a More Diverse Home Building Industry**

By Mitu Walia

To create a more welcoming environment, there must be a collective effort to lessen the barriers to entry.

20 **Celebrating 70 Years of the NAHB PWB Council**

By Allie Jackson

As the preeminent professional organization for women in construction, NAHB PWB continues to set the standard for generations to come.



18



20

COLUMNS

2 **Perspectives**

Luellen Smith reflects on her time as NAHB's 2024 PWB Chair.

10 **Minding Your Business**

Tips on how to elevate your company's digital marketing strategy.

DEPARTMENTS

4 **Advocacy Corner**

6 **National Review**

22 **Power of PWB**

32 **Ad Index**



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On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/nahbpwb>

Perspectives

Setting a Strong Foundation for Continued Growth

Luellen Smith reflects on her time as the 2024 NAHB PWB Chair

Serving as the 2024 NAHB Professional Women in Building (PWB) Chair has been one of the greatest honors of my career. My theme, Building the Future, was a reminder of the collective power we have to shape not only the future of our industry but also the lives of the women who are part of it.

Reflecting on this incredible journey, I am filled with gratitude for the passion and commitment that our members bring to the table. Together, we have built momentum, created opportunities and inspired change.

Celebrating 70 years of empowerment, leadership and progress has been one of the most memorable highlights of my tenure. It's a testament to the enduring legacy of PWB and the many trailblazers who helped paved the way.

As we approach the 4,000-member milestone, it's clear that the passion and commitment to advancing women in this field is stronger than ever. With nearly 100 councils nationwide, we are creating a vast network of support, leadership and collaboration.

Professional development has been at the heart of PWB's initiatives. One of the standout successes from the past year has been our Shop Talk

discussions. These dynamic live online sessions have fostered meaningful engagement by connecting all of our members to share insights, experiences and strategies for success.

Local council outreach and support have been a cornerstone of PWB's efforts. Through proactive outreach calls, we strengthened connections with local councils and have built meaningful relationships. These calls provided an opportunity to listen, share resources and offer guidance tailored to each local council's unique needs.

Our members are a constant source of inspiration, and I am continually moved by the powerful impact we make across the industry. By creating an environment where all voices are valued, we are building stronger teams within residential construction.

As my friend Carrie DeWeese steps into the role of NAHB's 2025 PWB Chair, I know she will continue the focus on mentorship and knowledge sharing. These points are essential to the growth and strength of our council.

With immense confidence, I pass her the torch—knowing that her leadership will guide PWB to even greater heights. **BW**



Luellen Smith

Luellen Smith is the co-founder and owner of Rhino Wine Cellars and Saunas, a custom wine cellar and sauna design/build company, based in the Seattle area. She was the 2024 NAHB PWB Chair, 2023 NAHB Associate Members Education & Training Subcommittee Chair, 2023 Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW) Second Vice President and 2023 BIAW Associate Advisory Council Chair.

BUILDING WOMEN

Chartered in 1955, the NAHB Professional Women in Building Council (PWB) consists of a network of local and state councils and national members. NAHB PWB is a dedicated to promoting, enhancing and supporting home building and women in the industry.

2024 NAHB Professional Women in Building Leadership

Chair

Luellen Smith, Rhino Wine Cellars & Cooling Systems

Vice Chair

Carrie DeWeese, Chinowth & Cohen

Immediate Past Chair

Meg Thompson, CMP, CSP, TSL Construction LLC

Trustees

Alexandra Aitken, M&M Glass, LLC

Stacy Beers, Pacific InterWest Building Consultants, Inc.

Meghan Billings, Meg Construction

Tanya Cromwell, Caddis Builders LLC

Andi Dirkschneider Bliss, Brookline Homes

Laura Dwyer, DuPont Performance Building Solutions

Andrea Eldred, Element Construction

Qadra Evans, Zillow, Inc.

Alison Johnson, Associates in Building and Design, Ltd

Heather Laminack, Ferrier Builders, Inc.

Mindy Lepp, Lepp Design

Kimberley Martin, Cyneburg Services LLC

Nancy Martiniere, BankPlus

Jennifer Robnett, Gayteway Construction Company, Inc.

Geraldine Smith, All Inclusive Construction & Building

Mitu Walia, Landsea Homes

Monica Wheaton, ECI Software Solutions

Executive Officer Liaison

Greg Lane, Building Industry Association of Washington

2024 NAHB PWB Subcommittee Chairs

Awards & Recognition

Tanya Cromwell, Caddis Builders LLC

Membership and Communications

Monica Wheaton, ECI Software Solutions

Professional Development

Mindy Lepp, Lepp Design

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NAHB Professional
Women in Building

Connect GOING BEYOND THE BUILD w/MiTek

At MiTek, we believe our responsibility goes beyond homebuilding—it's about making a lasting impact in our communities.

We focus on educating the next generation of skilled trades, promoting housing access to ensure that everyone has a safe and equitable home, and fostering environmental stewardship to protect the world we share.

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHTS

She Built Foundation:

Inspiring girls to be the next generation of builders

Home Builders Institute:

Preparing individuals for careers in the skilled trades

Habitat for Humanity:

Ensuring everyone has access to a safe and affordable home



Connect with us to learn about our local engagements and how you can get involved.

[MII.COM/COMMUNITY](https://mii.com/community)

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The impact of elections can be profound and have a lasting impact for years to come. That's why it is crucial for NAHB members to be involved throughout every step of the process at the local and national level. BUILD-PAC, NAHB's bipartisan political arm, helps elect pro-housing, pro-business candidates to federal office and is critical to the Federation's success on Capitol Hill. In fact, 92% of the supported candidates won their elections in November 2024.

The Professional Women in Building (PWB) Council has been a vocal proponent of BUILD-PAC over the years:

- **1980** – The first PWB appointee is named to BUILD-PAC.
- **1986** – PWB's legislative and political action role is strengthened with a 25% increase in BUILD-PAC participation.
- **1993** – PWB President Barbara Byrd serves as a BUILD-PAC executive committee member, trustee and Capitol Club chairman.
- **2012** – PWB contributes \$38,100 to BUILD-PAC and adds 800-plus PWB members into BuilderLink, as well as 37 PWB BUILD-PAC Stakeholders.
- **2019** – 100% of the NAHB PWB Board supported BUILD-PAC. PWB members contributed \$99,330. At the International Builders' Show PWB raised another \$31,320. Without fail, PWB members come out in full force to attend NAHB's Legislative Conference (LegCon) every year during the Spring Leadership Meeting. At LegCon, members meet with congressmen and senators to discuss housing-related issues, from affordability to supply costs. It's BUILD-PAC's influence that helps make these in-person meetings possible. Check out these highlights of PWB's boots—and heels!—on the ground during LegCon 2024.

To learn more about advocacy issues, get more information about BUILD-PAC or to contribute, visit nahb.org/buildpac. Also, if you plan to donate, please remember to credit PWB. **BW**

Vitoria Dante and Amy Abeyta from Northern Colorado HBA and Denver Metro Association of Home Builders.



Delegates from the Idaho Home Builders Association, North Idaho Home Builders Association, Eastern Idaho Home Builders Association, Snake River Home Builders Association and Magic Valley Home Builders Association meeting with Idaho Congressman Russ Fulcher.



The Oklahoma delegation at the Cap Club event this year in D.C.

Back row L to R: Cahn Wiggs, John Nail, Ty McCune, Megan Dinnes, Jeffrey Smith, Carrie DeWeese, Jeff Starkweather
Front row L to R: Denise Patterson, Carrie Nail, Kurt Dinnes

All are State of Oklahoma leadership, Tulsa HBA leadership, Central Okla. HBA leadership or NAHB leadership.



PROUD TO BE WOMEN OWNED™

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PWB'S MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Accomplishments in 2024:



NAHB's Professional Women in Building (PWB) Council ended the year with 93 councils (... on the road to 100 in 2025!) and 3,900 total members. PWB also prioritized professional development and member engagement by hosting 13 Shop Talk live discussions ranging in topics from confidence building to strategic risk taking to commanding respect on the jobsite.

Looking ahead:



In 2025, NAHB PWB and Skills USA will collaborate to support students entering the construction industry and help bridge the skilled labor gap. PWB members are encouraged to contribute to this workforce development effort by mentoring students, judging student competitions and donating supplies where needed.

Also, join the discussion on Facebook and LinkedIn where PWB members and local councils will be profiled throughout the year.



NAHB PWB Member of the Year

Terri Everhart is the 2024 NAHB PWB Member of the Year, which recognizes the achievements of a PWB member at the local and state level. Everhart is a business development and sales representative at HomeSite Services Inc., and a respected leader within her local BIA Bay Area and the California Building Industry Association.

Everhart, who served as the 2022 NAHB PWB Chair, has been a staunch advocate for helping women advance in the construction industry. Her commitment to PWB has been instrumental in helping drive key programs and initiatives that have led to increased member engagement and participation, as well as fostering a more inclusive environment for all members.

NAHB Woman of the Year

NAHB's Woman of the Year award recognizes members who exemplify excellence, strong leadership skills and innovative thinking. For 2024, **Tanya Cromwell**, managing partner at Caddis Builders in Idaho Fall, Idaho, received top honors during The Nationals at the International Builders' Show in Las Vegas.

For more than 30 years, Cromwell has worked in the residential construction field in a variety of roles—from retail to home design to construction and development. Additionally, she is active in NAHB at the state and national level, having served as the first female president of the Eastern Idaho Home Builders Association (2015) and the Idaho Home Builders Association (2018). She's also served as an NAHB Build-PAC Trustee (2022-2025) and was the 2024 Chair of the NAHB PWB Awards and Recognition Committee.

Mentoring the next generation of women in home building is at the forefront of Cromwell's work. She often speaks at local colleges—homing in on female students majoring in construction management—about how to successfully pursue a career in a male-dominated industry.

"I have had many mentors in my life, but they were all male. I want to show young women that we can be successful and achieve many great things," Cromwell said.

Equally important to her is the need to build community. She is involved in several professional networking groups with other business owners in her local area. "Networking really has given me opportunities to look outside of the box and come up with some clever ideas that I would have never thought of on my own," Cromwell noted.

She also prioritizes volunteerism, because she says the industry has given so much to her that it's a must she gives back. "I volunteer to make our industry better. I want our next generation to be able to own their own homes and live the American Dream."

As a staunch advocate for the home building industry, Cromwell makes it a point to participate in NAHB's annual Legislative Conference held during the Spring Leadership Meeting in Washington, D.C. She, along with dozens of other PWB members, visit the U.S. Capitol to speak with legislators about issues directly impacting the residential construction field nationwide. "I am passionate about affordable housing for all Americans, so I try to fight for that right," she said.



Tanya Cromwell, 2024 NAHB Woman of the Year

Her involvement in NAHB extends beyond holding formal positions. She is passionate about connecting peers and building relationships. In fact, she served as a guide for NAHB's inaugural Leadership Connect program, even helping a new member navigate their journey within the Federation. "Terri's leadership philosophy is grounded in the belief that true leadership is measured not by the number of followers, but by how many new leaders one can create," says Luellen Smith, 2024 NAHB PWB Chair.

Everhart's continued efforts to build up the next generation of women in the industry not only strengthens the Council but helps ensure future leaders in the Federation start with PWB.

Councils of the Year

This year's Outstanding Council of the Year in the small category is the **Metropolitan Builders and Contractors Association of New Jersey's PWB Council** and its 2024 chair, **Linda Garvey**. This is the small but mighty council's second consecutive COTY win, and they have made great strides in the intervening year.

Metro's PWB partnered with Shore Builders Association of Central New Jersey's PWB to host an event at the New Jersey Builders Association's Atlantic City Builders Convention in March 2024. The two PWBs were able to deliver a speaking panel titled "Leadership, Confidence and the Opportunities for Women in Building," which was so popular that it reached max capacity and required a waiting list. Both PWBs have been asked to return to the 2025 convention.

In May 2024, the Council started a scholarship fund for girls in local high school vocational-technical programs. Members also represented the home building industry at high school career days and fairs throughout the year. If there's one thing the women of Metro's PWB Council are passionate about, it's empowering more women to join the industry.

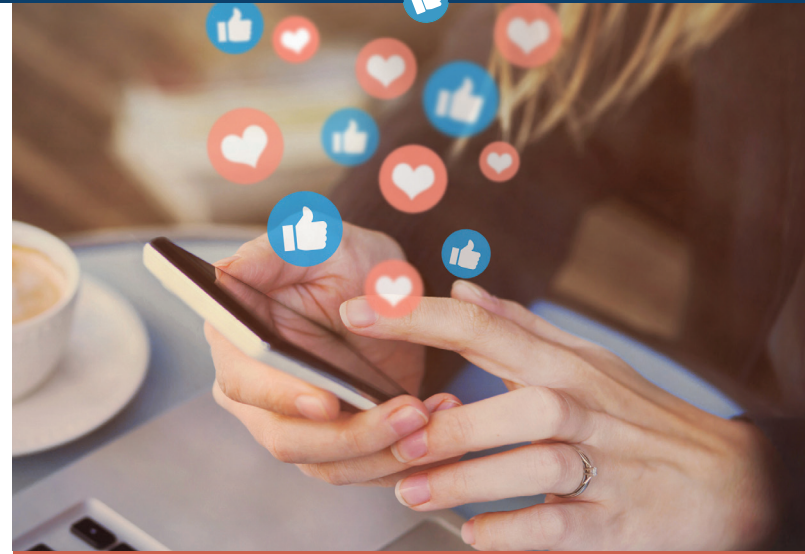


Luell Smith, 2024 PWB Chair presents trophy to the Professional Women in Building Council of the Metropolitan Builders & Contractors Association of New Jersey.

This year's Outstanding Council of the Year in the medium category is the **Professional Women in Building of the Master Builders Association (MBA) of Pierce County** and its 2024 chairs, **Bonnie Buffington** and **Carol Pope**.

Buffington and Pope were instrumental in the years-long campaign to form a PWB council within the Pierce County MBA. When the MBA's board finally voted to incorporate the council at the end of 2023, it was only natural that they were asked to serve as the group's inaugural co-chairs in 2024.

The two women immediately got to work planning a launch event and succeeded in kicking things off with a bang. With a robust slate of speakers and sponsors, it was a night to remember complete with food, drinks, raffle prizes, giveaways and even mini



Let's Talk

The NAHB Professional Women in Building Network on LinkedIn continues to expand its reach. With more than 2,500 members (up 20% compared to last year), this public social media group is a place for PWB members to share business tips and advice, as well as professional development resources, tools and events related to the residential construction industry. Search for "NAHB Professional Women in Building" to find us on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1547627>).

Build community with your fellow NAHB Professional Women in Building members by sharing photos and videos of what's happening with your local council on the PWB Facebook Group page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nahbpwb>). It boasts more than 4,600 members—up by nearly 15% compared to last year.

If you plan to post on either social media PWB group page, be sure to include the hashtag #NAHBWomenInBuilding.

makeovers. Of the more than 160 registrants, 154 attended, making the event a huge success that marked the beginning of a great year of events.

During their first year, the Council hosted monthly events throughout the second half of the year including a VIP tour of a 4,700-acre master-planned community, a fashion event in partnership with Nordstrom and a luxury home panel and trade show. Combined with philanthropic partnerships with the Girl Scouts of Washington State and the Building Beyond Walls charity, Pierce County MBA's PWB Council can boast an auspicious first year.

This year's Outstanding Council of the Year in the large category is the **Greater Houston Builders Association's (GHBA) PWB Council** and its 2024 president, **Sherry Pruitt**. The Council's ac-



Luellen Smith, 2024 PWB Chair presents trophy to the Professional Women in Building of the Master Builders Association (MBA) of Pierce County.

complishments illuminate great success in three key areas over the past year: member engagement, professional development and advocacy.

By hosting popular events such as their Ladies Who Lead Luncheon and the Construction Contessa cooking competition, the GHBA PWB Council has provided members with opportunities to grow professionally while fostering connections within the industry. Additionally, the PWB's award-winning mentorship cohort has been instrumental in retaining members by helping cultivate deeper connections between experienced professionals and new or potential members. Through this program, the Council has created pathways for established experts and newcomers to connect, learn and strengthen the industry's future. GHBA PWB also participated in the Texas Association of Builders Rally Day, which is a pivotal advocacy event held at the Texas State Capitol every two years. Participants have the opportunity to meet directly with legislators and discuss key issues affecting the residential construction industry.



Luellen Smith, 2024 PWB Chair presents trophy to the Professional Women in Building Council of the Greater Houston Builders Association (GHBA).

Meet the 2025 Board of Trustees

The 2025 NAHB PWB Board of Trustees was recognized at the PWB board meeting during the 2025 International Builders' Show:

- Carrie DeWeese, Chair
- Heather Laminack, Vice Chair
- Andi Dirkschneider Bliss, Second Vice Chair & Professional Development Subcommittee Chair
- Stacy Beers, Trustee
- Lisa Cortez, Trustee
- Laura Dwyer, Trustee
- Andrea Eldred, Trustee & Membership & Communications Subcommittee Chair
- Qadra Evans, Trustee
- Linda Garvey, Trustee
- Allie Jackson, Trustee & Awards and Recognition Subcommittee Chair
- Jennifer Landers, Trustee
- Andrea LoMonaco, Trustee
- Kimberley Martin, Trustee
- Nancy Martiniere, Trustee
- Jennifer Robnett, Trustee
- Jennifer Tennyson, Trustee
- Mitu Walia, Trustee
- Monica Wheaton, Trustee
- Luellen Smith, Immediate Past Chair





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Minding Your Business

5 Digital Marketing Strategies to Help Elevate Your Business

From targeted emails to social media ads, don't dismiss the power of your company's online presence.


By Mindy Lepp

In today's competitive home building industry, having a strong digital marketing strategy is no longer optional—it's a necessity. Whether you're a custom home builder, remodeler or materials supplier, digital marketing allows you to reach your ideal customers in ways that traditional marketing cannot.

While digital tools can be powerful, they must be used correctly to be effective. Here are five digital marketing strategies to help elevate your business:

1. Use QR codes to digitally track your print marketing


There's always going to be a bit of mystery when it comes to tracking print marketing, but you can help bridge the gap by utilizing digital tools such as QR or quick response codes. These handy little squares are scanned with a smartphone and can quickly take the user to a desired online destination, such as your company's website. By using QR codes, you're making it easier for potential or existing clients to engage with your brand.

 **Pro tip:** Create individual landing pages for each QR code so that you can track where visitors are coming from and serve them a personalized message. Be sure to keep this page hidden from public view via your company's website navigation. Otherwise, you run the risk of inflating the QR code analytics with random visitors who didn't actually scan it.

2. Don't rely on organic social media posts

Organic social media posts are like throwing a message in a bottle and hoping someone finds it. Years ago, about 20% of your Facebook audience would see your posts. Now? It's less than 1.50%, according to Social Status, a social media analytics tool. Unless you're posting strictly for family and friends, you will need to put some budget dollars behind your content to make sure it gets seen.




 **Pro tip:** Think of organic social media posts as a supporting player to your paid efforts. They help maintain credibility and provide fresh content for those who do visit your account page. Just don't rely on them as your main strategy.

3. Utilize social media ads to get better reach

These days, social media is firmly steeped in "pay to play" territory. If you're not paying to "boost" posts or running ads—relying solely on organic social media posts—you are missing out on reaching your ideal audience.

If you're planning to dedicate marketing dollars to social media ads, it's important to be strategic. For example, if your business


serves a 15-mile radius, don't waste ad spend by targeting the entire country. Also, if you're a home builder, be aware that Meta ads (Facebook) restrict demographic targeting, such as age or income, so you'll need to get creative with interests and behaviors instead.

 **Pro tip:** There are multiple ad types to experiment with including phone calls, website visits and Facebook Messenger interactions. Instead of guessing which one works best, test them all. Rotating through different formats will help you connect with different segments of your audience. While testing, be sure to monitor ad performance. This will allow you to see what's working and what's not, as well as tweak your targeting or creative images in real time.

4. Send e-newsletters to keep your company top of mind

Email marketing is one of the best—and most affordable—ways to stay in front of potential, current and past customers. The “Marketing Rule of 7” is a common philosophy used in marketing communications. It suggests that people need about seven interactions with a brand before they act. If you’re only touching base once and hoping for the best, you’re missing out.


This is especially true in the home building industry where the buying process can be lengthy. People don’t wake up one day and decide, “Today’s the day we hire a builder!” It’s a process that can take months or even years. Your job is to stay in their inbox (without being annoying) so when they’re finally ready, they think of you first.

 **Pro tip:** Not sure what to put in your e-newsletter? Keep it simple. Builders can highlight quick move-in homes, remodelers can showcase before and after photos and anyone can

share helpful tips. Once a month is a good frequency, because if you send too many emails, an uptick in unsubscribes will likely follow. Lastly, don’t forget to segment your list. If someone just bought a home from you, they probably don’t need to see another email about available inventory.

5. Reconnect with past clients

Referrals are gold, but keep in mind that even happy customers aren’t walking around thinking about sending you business 24/7. That’s why staying in touch is key. A simple email or social media update keeps you fresh in their mind so when a relative or family friend starts talking about building a house, they’ll remember to say, “Oh! You have to check out [your company here]!” Instead of hoping people remember you, make it easy for them to do so.

 **Pro tip:** Pick a consistent time each year—maybe after the holidays or during a slower season—to reach out to past clients. You

can use the opportunity to ask how they’re enjoying their home and if they’d be willing to share a few photos. It’s a great way to gather content for your social media. The conversation alone can be a gentle reminder of the positive experience they had working with you.

Remember, digital marketing for the building industry isn’t about doing everything—it’s about doing the right things. QR codes, social media ads and e-newsletters aren’t just buzzwords. When used strategically, they’re tools that can make a real impact and help take your business to the next level. **BW**



Mindy Lepp is the co-founder of LEPPDESIGN, a marketing firm that helps home builders and construction companies across the U.S. by handling all their marketing needs. Based in St. Augustine, Fla., she specializes in creative marketing strategies that drive results.

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A VISION FOR THE

FUTURE IRON SHARPENS IRON

Carrie DeWeese sees a vibrant future ahead for NAHB's Professional Women in Building Council—starting with strengthening the group's culture of mentorship and empowerment.

BY CAROL MORGAN

As the 2025 chair of NAHB's Professional Women in Building (PWB) Council, Carrie DeWeese is poised to lead the way through its 70th anniversary year with a clear mission: honoring the past while influencing the future. A multi-million dollar producer with the Tulsa, Okla.-based Chinowth & Cohen Realtors, a dedicated advocate for workforce development and a seasoned leader in the home building industry, DeWeese brings a unique blend of experience, passion and vision to the role.

With female empowerment and driving meaningful change as some of her core business values, DeWeese understands the importance of helping other women grow within the industry. Joining a professional organization like PWB that connects like-minded professionals with similar goals opens a world of possibilities.

It is DeWeese's hope that PWB will continue to grow under her leadership. For 70 years, the council has influenced policy, changed lives and built a brighter future for residential construction, and she is enthusiastic about further strengthening that legacy.

From Lobbyist to Real Estate Powerhouse

DeWeese's career path has been anything but conventional. Before entering real estate in 2007 she worked as a lobbyist for the State of Oklahoma for five years, focusing on initiatives related to their Department of Human Services. DeWeese played a key role in the movement that led to the creation of 2-1-1, a hotline offering 24/7 assistance from various nonprofits to those in need of social services. While the work was fulfilling, the stress was immense—so much so that she decided to pursue a different career.

Seeking a fresh start, she found herself drawn back to familial roots. Her father, Brian D. Wiggs, has been a custom home builder since 1986. As a child, she spent countless hours on his job sites. From cleaning up debris to working alongside framing and drywall crews, DeWeese gained hands-on experience and learned the value of hard work. Her father instilled in her that success comes from a willingness to do whatever it takes to get the job done. She also learned how to build a home from the ground up—a skill that would prove valuable in her future career.

One day in 2007, her father asked her to sit in for him at an open house for one of his projects. This seemingly temporary role helped DeWeese realize her love for selling real estate—and, ultimately, led her to decide a career change was necessary. DeWeese worked hard to make her transition to real estate a quick one. Her lobbying background and thorough knowledge of Oklahoma state law helped her to pass the Oklahoma real estate exam. She worked, both jobs until her real estate job could fully support her financially, which took just three months.

So how was she able to do it? "I found a mentor [Sheryl Chinowth] early on—an incredible woman who had been pushed out of the boys' club," DeWeese recalls. "I decided to join her in breaking that mold and proving that women belong in this industry." Today, that mentor's company, Chinowth & Cohen Realtors, has

expanded to 18 offices across Oklahoma, Florida and Texas. Nearly 20 years later, DeWeese is a top-producing real estate agent and a respected leader in the home building community.

A Passion for Leadership and Service

DeWeese's leadership journey has been marked by dedication and service at both the local and national levels. Since she began attending the International Builders' Show (IBS) with her family in 2009, she has steadily expanded her role within NAHB. DeWeese first became involved with PWB in 2018 after meeting Judy Dinelle,



2022 chair Terri Everhart inducts DeWeese as NAHB PWB's new chair at the council's board meetings in Las Vegas, Nev., during the International Builders' Show.

"I STARTED SITTING IN PWB MEETINGS, GETTING INVOLVED AND THEN FIGURING OUT HOW TO BRING THIS OPPORTUNITY BACK HOME."

a past PWB national chair and long-time advocate for the Council.

"I realized I didn't have to be someone's 'plus one.' There was a place for me here," she recalls. "There was a much bigger world out there as it related to being a woman involved at NAHB. I started sitting in PWB meetings, getting involved and then figuring out how to bring this opportunity back home."

Determined to bring that same sense of belonging to other women in the industry

at the local level, DeWeese helped launch the Tulsa Professional Women in Building chapter in 2019. It quickly gained traction with 50 women attending the first meeting. She would eventually become the Council's founding chair. This dedication to building up her professional community helped DeWeese earn numerous accolades from her local HBA—the Home Builders Association of Greater Tulsa—including Associate of the Year and Executive Committee Member of the Year in 2019. Four years later, she was named Executive Committee Member of the Year for a second time.

Since then, she has taken on multiple leadership roles within

NAHB PWB including chairing the Government and Communications and Professional Development Committees. She has also served on the Board of Trustees for the 55+ Housing Industry Council and the National Sales & Marketing Council's Professional Development Committee.

A Commitment to Home and Community

Beyond her professional achievements, DeWeese remains deeply committed to the idea of home—not just as a physical structure but as a place of comfort and security. Her real estate philosophy centers on finding homes that need a little love and bringing them back to life.

"I hate the word 'flipping.' I see it as restoration. Every house has a history and I want to honor that while making it functional for the future. Many people don't have the vision to see what a house can become—I do and love sharing that with my clients," she says.

Her dedication to revitalization extends beyond individual homes to entire neighborhoods. DeWeese started the Neighborhood Creation Group in Tulsa in 2020 and has completed dozens of remodels that she has "loved back to life" for her clients. As the Chief Inspiration Officer, she applies what she calls the "Charlie Brown Christmas Tree Theory." This is the idea that anything can be transformed into something beautiful with a little love and care.

She prides herself on providing her clients with a "Ritz Carlton"

"I hate the word 'flipping.' I see it as restoration. Every house has a history and I want to honor that while making it functional for the future."



level of service. Working as a buyer's and seller's agent, DeWeese sells homes ranging from \$127,000 to \$4.5 million. For her, it isn't about the price of the house but rather finding the right fit and future for that home. Even though she is supported by her assistant Farrah Cathey and the staff at Chinowth & Cohen Realtors, DeWeese is hands-on in every transaction from start to finish for inspections, appraisals plus more.

Loving things back to life doesn't stop with home renovations; DeWeese's nearly 14-year-old rescue dog, Tank, can attest to that love. The vet gave him six months to live in the summer of 2024 due to heart problems that caused him to stop eating. Instead of accepting his fate, she researched how to best feed a dog with a heart-friendly diet. As a result, Tank is still alive and thriving today.

Making an Impact Through Workforce Development

DeWeese and her husband Erin, a former NAHB Young Professionals Chair and a Home Builders Institute (HBI) board member, are strong advocates for workforce development. They have worked tirelessly to bring skilled trades training into public schools and underserved communities.

"We met a legislator who owned a plumbing company and couldn't find young people to enter the trade. He explained that if students started training before leaving high school, they could earn their journeyman license within six years and make six figures. That flipped a switch for me. It's something we need to promote more," she notes.

Recognizing that college isn't the right path for everyone, she aims to create more opportunities for young women and help groups in need enter the skilled trades.



The Tulsa HBA White Party. From left to right: Scott & Stephanie Rainwater, Christian & Grace Markes, David & Mary Wiggs, Erin & Carrie DeWeese, Phil & Diana Ball, Leona Wiggs-Newell, Cahn & Joelle Wiggs, Carolyn Wiggs, Allynn Ball, Hailey DeWeese, Brian Wiggs.

"There is a huge gap in the workforce. High school students and underemployed individuals need access to training and education that provides real opportunities. If we can start that pipeline earlier, we can change lives," she explains.

This commitment to education and empowerment is at the core of her leadership philosophy. DeWeese's slogan during her tenure as the 2025 NAHB PWB Chair is "iron sharpens iron." It reflects her belief in the power of strong mentorship and building community, which are vital to strengthening and growing PWB.

Honoring the Past, Influencing the Future

As the NAHB Professional Women in Building Council celebrates its 70th anniversary, DeWeese is committed to leveraging its rich history to drive growth. She acknowledges that every leader wants to leave their mark, but for her, success is about revitalizing what already exists—rather than reinventing the wheel.

"At one point, we had over 10,000 members. We influenced Congress at NAHB's Legislative Conference, raised millions of dollars

and had a powerful voice in the industry. I want to bring people back in, grow our membership and reinforce the strength of this Council," she says.

To do this, DeWeese wants to build on the momentum of PWB's predecessors. Her goal is to bring more women into the fold by amplifying the Council's value proposition and show women nationwide what a powerful voice for positive change they can be when they work together.

"We have an incredible network of sharp, talented women. If we lift each other up, there's no limit to what we can accomplish." **BW**



2025 Leadership Team
(L-R Andi Dirkschneider Bliss, Second Vice Chair; Carrie DeWeese, Chair; Luellen Smith, Immediate Past Chair and Heather Laminack, Vice Chair)

A recognized thought leader in real estate and home builders marketing, Carol Morgan is the founder and president of Denim Marketing. An early adopter of digital trends, Carol has been blogging since 2006, podcasting since 2011 and now pioneers strategies around Google search and AI related to content marketing. Her expertise lies in blending public relations, social media, email marketing, advertising and content marketing into cohesive, ROI-driven strategies that elevate clients' brands and generate results.



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Reimagining homes, redefining the industry

The vision of Katie Kath

Partner and Creative Director,
JKath Design Build + Reinvent

A home's story is written in its walls – the worn hardwood, the sunlit nooks, the timeless details that make it unique. Katie Kath believes in honoring that story while shaping homes for the way people live. She blends history with modern functionality, designing beautiful spaces for everyday life.

With a deep respect for craftsmanship and an eye for innovation, Katie transforms outdated spaces into inspired sanctuaries. She tailors each project to meet today's demands, proving great design isn't just about style – it's about creating spaces that work effortlessly together.

Katie is leading the charge for women in construction. She's an example of how the skills and leadership women offer are invaluable in shaping the industry's future.

"Women should be in the construction space," Katie said. "We're excellent project managers. It's what we do all day long. That's a very particular skill set for women, in my opinion. We're really good at it. And that's the essence of construction, right?"



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BREAKING BARRIERS:

How women are leading the way in construction with the help of tech



It's no industry secret: Women are significantly underrepresented in construction. However, in an industry built by men, more women are breaking barriers and entering both the trades and leadership roles.

According to the 2024 report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, women make up only **11.2% of the construction workforce**. Given that women account for **nearly 50% of the total workforce**, the industry is missing out on valuable contributions.

Katie Kath, partner and interior designer at Jkath Design Build + Reinvent, is part of that 11.2% and an example of how women in leadership positions can improve the industry. She has taken on gender-based obstacles and remains confident that women can change the norms in a male-dominated market.

"Women should be in the construction space. We're excellent project managers. It's what we do all day long," Katie said. "That's a very particular skill set for women, in my opinion. We're really good at it. And that's the essence of construction, right?"

The value of women in construction

The construction industry is facing a labor shortage, opening opportunities for women to step into key roles. Diversity in thought and problem-solving is crucial, and women bring fresh perspectives that can lead to more innovative and efficient building practices.

For young girls and aspiring professionals, seeing women in leadership roles is essential. Representation matters. Rose Quint, assistant vice president for survey research at the National Association of Home Builders, stresses the importance of broadening the industry's workforce.

"We need to reach out to different populations that have traditionally not considered construction," Rose said.

Support networks are crucial for retention. Women like Katie thrive by surrounding themselves with intelligent, creative peers who push them to succeed.

"Our community is full of talented, amazing, intelligent, smart, creative people," Katie said. "And I think the best form of inspiration for me is to be around those people."

Overcoming industry barriers with Buildertrend

While more women are stepping into construction roles, challenges remain – especially when it comes to managing clients and subcontractors. Some homeowners and trades still expect to work with male business owners, which can create unnecessary hurdles for women leading projects.



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LESSONS FROM LEADERS



Q&A: WHAT WAS YOUR PATH TO HBA LEADERSHIP?

BY ANDI DIRKSCHNEIDER BLISS

The mission of NAHB's Professional Women in Building (PWB) Council is clear:

"The NAHB PWB Council is the voice of women in the building industry. We are dedicated to providing the Federation with strong leaders and are a trusted partner for long range planning and strategies for NAHB goals and objectives."

As we continue to lean into 2025 and celebrate PWB's 70th anniversary, it feels like a particularly special year for achieving the goal of fostering strong leaders for the Federation. Looking to fellow PWB members—many of which I consider to be family and close friends—the honors and accolades they've received throughout their journey are awe-inspiring.

This year, many women across the Federation stepped into leadership roles—myself included. As the 2025 President of the Home Builders Association (HBA) of Greater Charlotte (N.C.), I am only the fourth female to hold that position in the HBA's more than 80-year history.

With more women taking on leadership roles within NAHB, I spoke with PWB members Andrea Eldred, Geraldine Smith and Christy Beck to get a deeper perspective about their path to leadership and lessons learned along the way.

NOTE: This Q&A interview has been edited for clarity and length.

How did you get involved in your HBA?

AE: My previous employer was part of the local HBA and I attended many events. When our local HBA started discussing chartering a PWB council, my name was recommended to be a founding member. I was honored and thrilled to take on that



Christy Beck



Andrea Eldred



Geraldine Smith

role and challenge.

As the PWB Chair, I became part of the Board of Directors and started learning the ropes. From there, I became a Builder Director, then joined the leadership ladder. This year, I am serving as the 2025 President of the Hilton Head Area HBA (S.C.)—the second female president in our 60-year history.

GS: My journey to the HBA world was a little unconventional. I did not grow up in the industry. I got into it after leaving a 15-year career in corporate human resources in search of a new challenge. I was helping my now ex-husband build and grow his business from a barely profitable handy man service into a thriving construction and remodeling business. When we divorced, he moved away and I took over the business in a complete leap of faith.

In early 2020, I saw that the Atlantic Builders Convention was being held in Atlantic City. I thought it was a good opportunity to meet some industry contacts. Once I saw that NAHB members got a discount, I looked it up and joined NAHB. Fast forward a few weeks, I joined the New Jersey Builders Association (NJBA) and called the EO as I worried about a potential industry shutdown due to COVID. I joined the daily update calls and met a ton of people in the process.

When a local PWB was being considered, I was the first call to get it started. The role of PWB Chair got me onto the Board in 2022. In 2023, I became the treasurer and in 2024, the vice president. Now, I am the President of the Metropolitan Builders & Contractors Association of New Jersey.

CB: I'd left Raleigh, N.C., then moved back four years later. A dear friend of mine connected me with the local HBA and got me involved in

the NAHB committees when I got back to town. I was tapped as a Presidential Appointee on the Raleigh-Wake County (N.C.) HBA Board and then became Second Vice President. When the person ahead of me on the ladder had to step down, I was unexpectedly fast-tracked to President of the Raleigh-Wake County HBA in 2024.

Did you have a HBA mentor?

AE: Absolutely. Brandon Edwards and Carla Rohal are both national delegates. They were really helpful in teaching me about the local HBA, as well as NAHB. In general, your role in councils and committees can be a little confusing and having someone to help show you the ropes is critical.

GS: I've had a lot of them. Jeff Grantham was assigned to me to be a mentor through the NAHB Mentor Match program several years ago. It has been invaluable to have someone to call when I have questions—and who has experience navigating the HBA world. He has helped me work through so many questions with my local, as well as my leadership path with NAHB.

CB: Gaye Orr got me connected with the local HBA, as well as National. One of the biggest surprises of becoming President of the Raleigh-Wake County HBA was getting exposed to the North Carolina Home Builders Association. I jumped right over the state level, because of my connection with Gaye. She got me plugged in with NAHB councils and committees. Connecting with

everything happening at the state level has been exciting and extremely rewarding.

What advice would you give to others who are interested in pursuing leadership within their HBA?

AE: Don't be afraid to speak up, because your voice is needed. It is important to remember that you are a member of your HBA and your opinion is valid.

GS: Get as involved as you can. Reach out to and talk to everyone. You can get so much great advice by just talking and listening to other members. Remember that you are not alone – everyone has faced challenges. Finally, trust your gut and stand by your beliefs.

CB: Don't hold back. If you want to do it, then do it. Don't wait for someone to come to you. The biggest leadership advice I can give is don't do it for the limelight. Do it for yourself and do it for your industry. Leadership is about making things better. **BW**



Andi Dirkschneider Bliss is the President of Brookline Homes, a production-oriented builder and developer in the Charlotte, N.C., market. She is serving as the 2025 President of the Greater Charlotte HBA, which is the third largest HBA in the nation. Dirkschneider Bliss is also the 2025 Second Vice Chair of the NAHB PWB Council.



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Q&A

Clearing a Path Toward a More Diverse Home Building Industry

To create a more welcoming environment, there must be a collective effort to lessen the barriers to entry.

BY MITU WALIA

It's no secret that women who enter traditionally male-dominated fields are fighting an uphill battle—and the residential construction industry is no different. In 2024, construction employment grew by 133,000, yet women accounted for only 18,000 of those positions, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. That is just 1 in 7 jobs.

The challenges facing women—especially, those of color—working in or attempting to enter the industry range from societal stereotypes to a lack of professional networking and development opportunities. However, some have managed to carve out a space for themselves despite these barriers.

Building Women talked with Camille Jenkins of Camille's Keys, Gloria Marie Fuentes of GloJoy Co and Grace Tsao Mase of Curbio about how they've been able to successfully navigate the residential construction field, as well as their thoughts on how to make the industry a more welcoming and viable career path for all genders and races.

Note: This Q&A interview has been edited for clarity and length.

What has been the biggest challenge for women historically in the home building industry? How has the role of women in the industry evolved?

CJ: Historically, the biggest challenge for women in the residential construction industry has been breaking through gender bias and gaining access to leadership roles. For a long time, women were viewed as outsiders in what was seen as a “man’s industry.” They

weren't given the same opportunities to prove themselves and often had to work twice as hard to gain recognition and respect.

While progress has been made, many of these challenges persist today—particularly for women of color who face the additional barrier of racial bias. Women are now leading teams, running companies and influencing the direction of the industry in ways that were unimaginable a few decades ago. Organizations like Professional Women in Building and changing societal attitudes have amplified women's voices and contributions, but there's still work to be done.

If you could change one thing to help achieve inclusivity in the field, what would it be?

GMF: I believe the construction industry is already one of the most inclusive and equal employment opportunity industries for anyone who is willing to work hard and learn. However, if I could make one change, it would be to continue broadening access to training and mentorship programs. By equipping more people with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed—regardless of their starting point—we can ensure that opportunities in this field remain accessible to all who are passionate and driven.

Why do you think the number of women of color in the industry is so small?

GTM: Societal stereotypes and biases have discouraged many from exploring careers in construction, because it's often perceived as male dominated. Within my own family, I felt the weight of expectations to pursue other paths, influenced by misconceptions

about the industry's value and potential. Systemic barriers—including limited access to affordable education, industry resources and professional networks—have long stood in the way, making the journey even more challenging.

But I believe change is possible if we act with purpose and intention. By breaking down these barriers, we can open new doors for women of color to see themselves and step into roles as leaders, innovators and visionaries in construction.

What has been the greatest challenge in your career?

GTM: Overcoming the feeling of invisibility and the label of being the “forever outsider.” Breaking through these barriers in an industry that often values loud, dominant voices required persistence and confidence.

I earned degrees from Yale and UC Berkeley, secured licenses by examination in multiple jurisdictions and let my innovative ideas and results speak for themselves. Most importantly, being there for others, working hard and surrounding myself with supportive mentors, allies and advocates gave me the courage to lead boldly, proving my value and ultimately gaining recognition for my leadership and expertise.

GMF: Entering the construction field without a formal background. Although my family has been involved in oil and gas and supply chain logistics since the 1980s, which gave me a foundation in the broader world of building and development, I had to bridge that gap by learning on the job.

I overcame it by fully immersing myself, leaning on industry experts and building relationships with skilled trades and mentors. Every mistake taught me something valuable—and I approached challenges with the same tenacity I brought to previous industries.

CJ: Breaking through the barriers to eventually be recognized as a leader and considered for promotions I knew I'd earned. As a Black woman in this field, I often felt overlooked. I had to work twice as hard to prove my value and carve out opportunities for myself.

I overcame this by staying prepared, seeking out opportunities to engage with decision-makers and making the most of every chance to showcase my ideas. I took advantage of “elevator moments” to introduce myself, share my vision and show leaders I was ready for greater responsibilities.

Given what you know now, what advice would you give your younger self?

GTM: Trust her instincts and recognize her inherent worth. Don't hesitate to speak up, even when it's uncomfortable, and never shy away from challenging the status quo. Your perspective as an immigrant and a woman is a powerful asset, not a limitation. And above

all, remember to uplift others along the way and create opportunities for the next generation to thrive, because true success is shared.

GMF: Don't feel pressured to follow the traditional path of going to college just because “it's the thing to do.” Instead, choose a trade you're passionate about (If I could do it over, I'd probably pick electrical!) and go to trade school or community college to master your craft early on. There's value in building technical skills and taking a more hands-on approach, especially in industries like construction.

CJ: I would tell my younger self to believe in her worth and never let anyone's doubts or biases dim her light. Take up space, speak up and always advocate for yourself. Don't change who you are to fit in. Your empathy, analytical mindset and ability to see the big picture are strengths that will guide you and set you apart.



Camille Jenkins



Grace Tsao Mase



Gloria Marie Fuentes

How can we encourage more women of color to join the industry?

GTM: We can encourage them by creating visibility, representation and supportive opportunities. Showcasing the stories and successes of women of color in construction can inspire others to envision their place in the field. Focused outreach efforts such as mentorship programs, scholarships, apprenticeships and partnerships with educational institutions can help provide clear entry points into the industry.

GMF: In 2025, I believe our focus should be on encouraging everyone and anyone who has interest to join the industry, regardless of gender or race. One of the main reasons I believe we have low representation is because many blue-collar jobs and industries tend to attract male candidates. I'm thrilled to see more young women and girls expressing interest in architecture, engineering and construction fields. By continuing to highlight these opportunities and fostering a welcoming environment, we can inspire the next generation to embrace the possibilities.

CJ: Encouraging women of color to join the building industry starts with visibility. Sharing success stories—such as my own journey as a single mom raising three kids, buying my first home and building a successful career in residential construction—shows that it's possible to thrive in this field. To create more opportunities, we need to eliminate barriers to entry by offering scholarships, internships and apprenticeships starting as early as high school. **BW**



Mitu Walia is a Regional Trustee for NAHB's PWB Council and Director of Forward Planning with Landsea Homes (Northern California Division). With 20 years of experience in the home building industry, she specializes in entitlements and forward planning for multifamily residential projects. Walia advocates for equality and inclusivity and is an active member of PWB at the local, state and national level.

CELEBRATING

70
YEARS

OF THE NAHB PROFESSIONAL
WOMEN IN BUILDING COUNCIL

As the preeminent professional organization for women in construction,
NAHB PWB continues to set the standard for generations to come.

BY ALLIE JACKSON



In 1955, the NAHB Women's Auxiliary Group was chartered during what was a much different time for women in the home building industry. Women pursuing jobs in the field—let alone pursuing leadership positions—was not the norm. The group started with 24 auxiliaries and over 1,000 members.

Fast forward 70 years: That same women's group (now known as the NAHB Professional Women in Building (PWB) Council) hosted a jam-packed Board of Trustees meeting during the 2025 International Builders' Show in Las Vegas. The event, which was standing room-only, consisted of a diverse mix of women and men all in support of PWB—as well as its mission of serving as the voice of women in the building and providing the Federation with strong leaders.

Today, NAHB's PWB Council is 3,956 members strong—and has 94 councils nationwide. This growth is thanks to the hard work, passion and dedication of many wom-



en over the last 70 years including Robbie Shoemaker, Karen Dry Schmidt, Polly Shafer, Darylene Dennon, Judy Dinelle, Tammie Smoot, Karen Schroeder, Emily Boyd, Kerry White, Barbara (Barbie) Byrd, Terri Everhart, Alicia Huey, Linda Hebert and Betsy Sheppard to name a few. They, along with countless others, have worked tirelessly to advance the Council's initiatives.

Here's a timeline of key PWB historical milestones:

- **1963:** Robbie Shoemaker, then-president of the NAHB Women's Auxiliary Group, traveled over 30,000 miles championing the group's work in the industry.
- **1974:** The first woman builder, Bettie Stratton, is elected as president of the Auxiliary Group.
- **1985:** Norma Jean Faw won the first NAHB Woman of Year Award.
- **1993:** President Barbie Byrd serves as a BUILD-PAC executive committee member, trustee and Capitol Club chairman.
- **2003:** NAHB PWB's flagship print magazine, Building Women, publishes its first issue.
- **2013:** Nearly half of the women serving on NAHB's Executive Committee have come through the ranks of PWB leadership.
- **2016:** PWB Week launches as a Federation-wide event to celebrate women in building as an integral part of the residential construction industry.
- **2020:** 19 Home Builders Associations charter a PWB Council—the most formed in a single year.
- **2025:** NAHB PWB celebrates its 70th anniversary.

Lifting up the next generation of women in building has been a vital part of PWB's work. For example, the Building Hope Scholarship, created in 1955, provides financial support to qualified students in advancing their education and training in building industry-related fields. The Strategies for Success Scholarship has been providing monetary help to students pursuing an education in a housing-related field, such as architecture, construction management or trade specialties since 2001. PWB awarded \$35,000 in scholarships to local councils and individual members in 2013.

As we continue to reflect on the past 70 years, we must also look towards the future of the Professional Women in Building Council. Ask yourself: What does that look like? Where do we go from here?

It's important to remember that PWB is the voice of women in building on a national scale. Continuing the advocacy work and helping shape the next generation must remain top of mind for all of us.

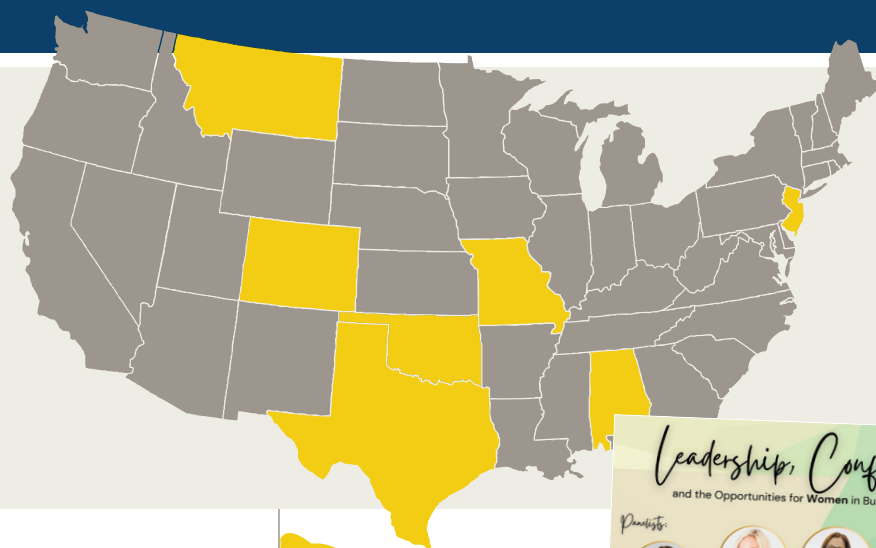
Cheers to 70 years (and many more to come), PWB! **BW**



Allie Jackson began her journey in the construction industry as a teenager, working in building material distribution. She currently works for Oldcastle APG helping home builders in Northern California and Nevada. Jackson is also the 2025 Communications Chair for the California Building Industry Association member.

...../Power of PWB

Coast to Coast



ALABAMA

Greater Birmingham Association of Home Builders Professional Women in Building

The Greater Birmingham Association of Home Builders (GBAHB) Professional Women in Building Council hosted its 2025 Design Trends Panel Discussion in March. The event was generously sponsored by Wellborn Cabinets and Creative Cabinets and Design, who also served as the host venue. This exclusive, members-only event welcomed more than 40 attendees for an engaging afternoon of networking and industry insights. The expert panel featured Jennifer Thompson of Creative Cabinets and Design, Lurenda Avery of Avery Remodeling, Cheryl Jones of Southern Bath and Kitchen and Kristen McGee of Kristen McGee Interiors. Each panelist offered valuable perspectives on the latest design trends shaping residential construction and remodeling, making the event a highlight of the year for GBABH PWB members.



Kristen McGee Interiors. Each panelist offered valuable perspectives on the latest design trends shaping residential construction and remodeling, making the event a highlight of the year for GBABH PWB members.

NEW JERSEY

Metropolitan Builders and Contractors Association of New Jersey (Metro)

Metropolitan Builders and Contractors Association of New Jersey PWB partnered with Shore Builders HBA's Garden State PWB to host an event at the 2024 New Jersey Builders Associations Atlantic City Builders Convention (NJBA ABC Convention). Collaboration began with four members from each council along with each of the Executive Officers to create, implement and deliver a program called "Leadership, Confidence and the Opportunities for Women in Building." Each council had to find a few speakers to participate. The final team was Cindy Cepko, Deb Tantleff, Meryl A. G. Gonchar, Esq. and Kristin Marzarella-Amato. On the day of the convention, the program had a capacity crowd and a waiting list. The NJBA asked the councils to return for the March 2025 convention—and gave them a bigger room!



COLORADO

Home Builders Association of Metro Denver

One challenge this council faced was reaching potential members who were not yet familiar with their mission. To overcome this, they launched a targeted outreach campaign leveraging digital platforms, personal invitations and word-of-mouth promotion. They also created a membership coffee hour where interested people could learn more about their offerings in a smaller setting. Overall, these initiatives fostered a greater sense of community and purpose within PWB Denver, highlighting the impact women can have in shaping the future of the home building industry.



MONTANA



Bitterroot Building Industry Association

The Bitterroot Building Industry Association and their Professional Women in Building Council actively promotes careers in the trades by participating in local career fairs and engaging directly with students. Recently, BBIA showcased the Accelerate Montana program at Stevensville High School and Lone Rock Middle School, introducing students to hands-on opportunities and pathways in the skilled trades industry. This outreach supports workforce development and encourages young people to explore rewarding careers in construction and related fields.

Home Builders Association of St Louis and Eastern Missouri

This council provides opportunities for the local student chapter to attend field trips like Muddy Boots Tours. These tours allow the students to tour job sites at various building stages. They have also developed a “menu” of presentations which they share with high school instructors so they can see which topics council members can cover for them. This way, students can learn firsthand from people in the industry about different career tracks within construction, along with the skills they need to be prepared to apply for those jobs.

MISSOURI

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CLASS PRESENTATIONS	Carpentry	Home Building	Low Voltage Integrator	Resumé Building
	Other Trades	Remodeling	Real Estate	Soft Skills
JOB SHADOWING	Fall Break	Winter Break	Spring Break	Summer Break (also internship opportunities)
SPECIAL EVENTS	Competition in a Box	Etiquette Luncheon	Career Fairs & Build My Future STL	Signing Day

Greater Tulsa Home Builders Association

Members of the Tulsa HBA's Professional Women in Building Council, Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma, sponsors including Sherwin-Williams and teachers from the Union Innovation Lab gathered for a special ribbon-cutting ceremony at the 2025 Tulsa Home & Garden Show. The event celebrated the debut of the PWB-led, multi-partner project—the only mobile Girl Scout Cookie House in the U.S.— built by Union Innovation Lab students. The collaborative effort highlights the power of industry partnerships in empowering future trades professionals and supporting local youth organizations.

OKLAHOMA



TEXAS

Greater Houston Builders Association

The Greater Houston Builders Association (GHBA) Professional Women in Building Council has achieved numerous accomplishments, particularly in member engagement, community outreach, fundraising and professional development. Their councils' diverse programming has fostered an intense sense of involvement among members while also supporting their PWB Scholarship Fund, which provides financial assistance to individuals pursuing careers in the home building industry. This year, they successfully raised enough funds to award \$4,000 to the GHBA Scholarship.

RHODE ISLAND



Rhode Island Builders Association

The Rhode Island Builders Association Professional Women in Building Council focused on collaboration for community impact. The council partnered with the local National Association of Women in Construction Rhode Island to host a professional development session with a local media company. They presented “Sprucing up your Linked-in Presence” to a large group of attendees. The event also included a fundraiser to benefit the Elizabeth Buffum Chace Center for Domestic Violence.

HAWAII

Building Industry Association of Hawaii

Members of BIA Hawaii’s Professional Women in Building Council joined The Howard Hughes Corporation and Ward Village for the topping off ceremony of The Park Ward Village—a time-honored tradition marking the placement of the final structural beam. During the celebration, PWB Hawaii received a \$15,000 donation in recognition of Chair Hinano Nahinu’s leadership and the council’s efforts to elevate women in the construction industry.



CALIFORNIA

Building Industry Association Bay Area

The Building Industry Association of the Bay Area (BIAB)’s PWB Council collaborated with the Girl Scouts on a campaign inspired by The House That She Built.

Through this initiative, they emphasized that girls can be builders too and aimed to inspire the next generation of women in the building industry, construction and design. This partnership with the Girl Scouts flourished, allowing the council to engage with young girls and teach them about the building industry in fun and interactive ways. BIAB’s PWB hosted various educational outreach activities and events throughout 2023 and 2024, ensuring that the message of empowerment and possibility reached as many young people as possible. Events included workshops, hands-on activities and mentorship



opportunities that allowed Girl Scouts to learn about various aspects of the industry.

WASHINGTON

Master Builders Association of Pierce County

This new council has been active. A key accomplishment was an all-women’s build with Habitat for Humanity—the MBAPC PWB team showed up with spirit! By working closely with their local and the surrounding associations both in building, real estate and the local communities, they hope to grow recognition of the building industry and all the possibilities that can be found within it.



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...../Power of PWB



Marion & Polk Counties

The Marion & Polk Counties HBA PWB council proudly hosted the first PWB Build Camp, launching an annual tradition to spark early interest in construction careers. In partnership with the local Career Technical Education Center (CTEC) and targeting students in grades 7-10, the camp aimed to introduce younger students to the field before they become eligible for the residential construction program in grades 11 and 12. Creating the camp required a strong collaborative effort with the school district, CTEC staff, local vendors and volunteer contractors. Twelve students and eight professionals worked together over five days to build three “Zen Dens”—relaxation nooks gifted to the hosting school’s counseling room. Despite needing to relocate due to a scheduling conflict, students were still able to tour CTEC and connect with its programs. Materials for three additional dens were donated and later completed by CTEC students for their new Behavioral Health program. The camp’s success was reflected in enthusiastic volunteer and family engagement, as well as two campers applying to CTEC the following year.



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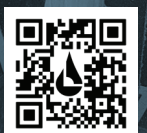
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PWB Supports Three Scholarships for Students, Building Professionals



The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Professional Women in Building (PWB) Council represents women across the home building industry. PWB is committed to being an inclusive and diverse resource within NAHB, as well as within the residential construction industry workforce.

In collaboration with the National Housing Endowment (NHE), PWB's scholarship fund invites individuals seeking further education and training in housing industry-related programs and leadership opportunities to apply for financial assistance.

Three PWB/NHE scholarship programs are available annually to qualified applicants.

Strategies for Success Scholarship

The Strategies for Success Scholarship provides financial support to qualified students interested in advancing their education in housing industry-related programs.

Deborah Ferland, an NAHB PWB past national president, and Austin Ferland initiated the scholarship in 2001.

Requirements:

- Applicants must be enrolled as full-time students at the start of the fall semester with at least one full academic year of coursework remaining after the scholarship is received.
- Applicants must be pursuing an education in a housing-related field (e.g., construction management, construction technology, civil engineering, architecture, design, trade specialties) at a two- or four-year college, university or vocational program.

Being selected as a 2024 Strategies for Success Scholarship recipient has been an incredible opportunity. It has provided me with invaluable resources and support, helping me grow both personally and professionally. This recognition has reinforced my commitment to making a meaningful impact in my field, and I am truly grateful for the encouragement and investment in my future

**—Zykereyes Bennett
Georgia State University
B.B.A. Real Estate
Class of 2024**

- High school seniors are not eligible.
- Applicants must submit a completed application with two letters of recommendation by the application deadline.
- Preference will be given to applicants who are unable to afford a college education without financial assistance.
- Preference will also be given to NAHB student chapter members.
- Scholarship recipients must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5 (on a 4-point GPA scale) for all courses and a GPA of 3.0 (on a 4-point GPA scale) for core curriculum courses. If a scholarship recipient's GPA falls below the minimum GPA requirement, NAHB PWB's Strategies for Success Scholarship Selection Working Group reserves the right to cease further funding of the scholarship.

Building Hope Scholarship

The Building Hope Scholarship provides financial support to qualified students who are seeking education in building industry-related subjects.

In 1955, Hope S. Bettilyon, former president of the NAHB Women's Auxiliary, now called the NAHB Professional Women in Building Council, established this scholarship.

Local PWB councils are encouraged to promote the Building Hope Scholarship to students in their communities.

Requirements:

- Applicants must be enrolled full-time or part-time at the start of the fall semester at a college, university or trade school. Applicants must have at least one course or trade-related program remaining after receiving the scholarship.

How to Give

The generosity of council members, individuals and corporations supports the scholarship fund. Scan the QR code to learn how to contribute.



- Applicants must be pursuing an education in a building-related field or vocational/trade program.
- Applicants must submit a completed application with letters of recommendation by the application deadline.
- Awards are given for tuition and school/program fees only. The award will be paid by NHE directly to the institution.
- Scholarship recipients may be required to provide verification of enrollment prior to award disbursement.

Leadership Grant

The Professional Women in Building Leadership Grant provides financial support to qualified applicants to defray the costs associated with professional development opportunities, including:

- Housing and building certifications
- Designations and licensing fees
- Travel expenses to NAHB's Spring Leadership Meeting and Legislative Conference
- Career development expenses
- Other building-related program costs

Requirements:

- Applicants must be PWB members in good standing.
- Preference may be given to PWB members who have served in PWB leadership roles at the local and/or national levels (i.e., local council chair/vice chair, NAHB PWB subcommittee chair/vice chair, etc.).
- If applicable, proof of course/program registration and/or attendance may be required before award disbursement.

Application period:

Jan. 1 – March 7, 2026

apply.nationalhousingendowment.org

“Being selected as a recipient of the 2024 Building Hope Scholarship is both an honor and a profound encouragement as I transition careers from healthcare as a Critical Care Flight Nurse to a new chapter in construction and development. I believe in constantly challenging myself, learning from those who align with my future goals, and staying true to my desire to be part of projects that positively impact my community. This scholarship has been instrumental in supporting my journey—it has allowed me to attend professional development events that fuel my passion for sustainable and attainable housing; while also easing the financial burden so I can fully focus on my studies. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity and the belief it represents in my potential to make a meaningful impact in this field.”

ELIZABETH MONDO

University of Denver

MS Real Estate & the Built Environment

Class of 2024



Events of Note

NAHB Professional Women in Building (PWB) Council Celebrates 70 Years (2025)

On January 17, 1955, PWB commemorated seven decades of helping strengthen the Federation by promoting industry professionalism and supporting its members at the local, state and national levels. Keep the momentum by celebrating all year long. Learn more: <https://www.nahb.org/nahb-community/councils/professional-women-in-building-council>

NAHB Fall Leadership Meeting (Nov. 17-19, 2025)

Taking place in Denver, Colo., at the Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center. Learn more at nahb.org/subsites/fall-leadership-meeting

International Builders' Show (Feb. 17-19, 2026)

The largest annual light construction show in the world. For more details and to register, go to buildersshow.com. Purchase tickets for the 2026 awards ceremony taking place during the International Builders' Show in Orlando, Fla. Learn more at thenationals.com

NAHB Spring Leadership Meeting and Legislative Conference (June 9-13, 2026)

Occurring in Washington, D.C., at the Grand Hyatt Washington. Learn more at <https://www.nahb.org/education-and-events/meetings/future-nahb-leadership-meetings>.

NAHB PWB Week (Sept. 2026)

Go to nahb.org/pwbweek to view the toolkit and gain access to tools and resources that can be utilized year-round.

Women in Residential Construction Conference Fall 2026

For more details, go to: womensconstructionconference.com.

Building and sustaining a solid membership base requires collaboration

DONNA BARRETT



Donna Barrett

CDBIA's PWB Council "is a place where women help support each other and grow within our industry. It's about mentorship, providing answers and fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels inspired to make a difference."

industry. It's about mentorship, providing answers and fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels inspired to make a difference," Barrett notes.

In addition to mentorship, giving back to the community is also a key priority. In 2021, Barrett recalls the group passing a hat around to raise funds for two women in financial need. Another noteworthy moment is CDBIA's PWB raising \$28,000 in support of women pursuing careers in construction over the last four years.

It's moments like these that further exemplify the council's transformative support. Being part of a community that believes in its members and helps them realize and achieve their goals.

For Barrett, Executive Officer of the Charlotte-DeSoto Building Industry Association (CDBIA) in Port Charlotte, Fla., establishing a local Professional Women in Building (PWB) Council was a must.

The idea came after a conversation with second-generation builder Sandra Cheek, who expressed the need for a support network for CDBIA's women members. This eventually led to the formation of the local PWB in October 2020 with guidance from Debbie Smith and Judy Dinelle. Once Barrett and her team got the ball rolling, the outpouring of support soon followed.

Barrett's approach to recruitment for the PWB is simple: Potential members get the opportunity to experience it firsthand. "We invite [them] to our gatherings first before we accept their membership," she explains. Doing this allows would-be members to get a feel for what the council is like—from the networking to the volunteerism to the professional development.

Today, CDBIA's PWB Council "is a place where women help support each other and grow within our

TINA FRIAS



Tina Frias

est trade association representing the residential construction industry in Nevada, we have many strong and influential women in our membership," Frias says. "It was important to us to get them together to promote women in the industry."

Frias credits SNHBA's founding PWB chair Michelle Merrick with having helped lay the groundwork for the council's early success. Merrick brought a national NAHB rep to the group's first meeting

"As the largest and oldest trade association representing the residential construction industry in Nevada, we have many strong and influential women in our membership. It was important to us to get them together to promote women in the industry."

distributed among six recipients.

While starting a PWB council has been seamless for the SNHBA, Frias says, it's important for locals to remember that "you'll get out of your membership what you put into it." Retention efforts must be prioritized along with recruitment. Doing this requires putting a leadership team in place that's willing to do the work. "My best

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Southern Nevada Home Builders Association (SNHBA), Frias says maintaining a quality membership base has been a top priority for the HBA and its local PWB rather than focusing solely on the numbers. "We want members who are going to stay in it for the long haul," she says.

Establishing a local PWB council at SNHBA was simply a matter of time. "As the largest and old-

est trade association representing the residential construction industry in Nevada, we have many strong and influential women in our membership," Frias says. "It was important to us to get them together to promote women in the industry."

When it comes to their success, collaboration is essential—especially with the larger HBA membership. Recently, SNHBA's PWB worked on an ambassador program to assist with ramping up engagement between the broader membership and the local council. Their biggest efforts have gone into producing their popular Annual Wine Pull event. It raises scholarship funds for women seeking education in the construction industry. In 2024, the event raised nearly \$110,000, which was

advice is to find a few very strong women who want to be a part of the council. They will draw the others in.”



Greg Lane

GREG LANE

Under the leadership of Greg Lane, Executive Vice President of the Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW), 2024 was a landmark year for the growth and success of Professional Women in Building councils across the state.

Now in his seventh year as Executive VP, Lane has seen firsthand the transformative energy PWB councils bring to local home builders associations. He describes the effect as a “huge spark,” noting how the enthusiasm and engagement of PWB members often radiate throughout the entire organization, driving member participation and growth.

“Every time I go to a PWB event, people want to be there. They want to get involved,” Lane said. “They’ve had dramatic impacts on growth in the local associations.” He points to the Clark County PWB Council as a prime example. It has welcomed nearly three dozen new members in the last year and a half.

When it comes to advocacy, Lane’s reach extends beyond

Washington state. In addition to championing PWB initiatives in his monthly meetings with state EOs, he is now serving his second year as the EO Liaison for the National PWB Council, where he shares the success stories of Washington’s councils with peers across the country. He also helped establish a state-level grant program three years ago, offering up to \$1,000 to local HBAs to host PWB events—either to launch a new council or to gauge interest in forming one.

Thanks to these efforts, half of Washington’s 14 local HBAs now have active PWB councils. This milestone enabled BIAW to officially form a state-level PWB council in 2024. That is significant enough in itself, Lane said, but that’s not all BIAW’s local PWB councils have achieved. The Professional Women in Building of the Master Builders Association of Pierce County was named 2024’s Outstanding Council of the Year in the medium category—despite having just been chartered in 2023.

“For a PWB just in their first year to get recognized for all the different activities and events and everything that they’re doing was

remarkable,” Lane said.

Looking ahead, he is optimistic about the continued growth of PWB and its impact on the industry. He believes that increasing women’s participation in leadership roles at all levels—local, state and national—will strengthen NAHB and the industry as a whole.

“The diversity of thought that comes with getting more women involved in the industry will make it that much stronger,” Lane said. “I’m excited to see how that changes our industry and our association for the better.”

Interested in starting a local PWB council?

Email crichards@nahb.org to receive materials and to set up a call to get started.

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Sashco	28

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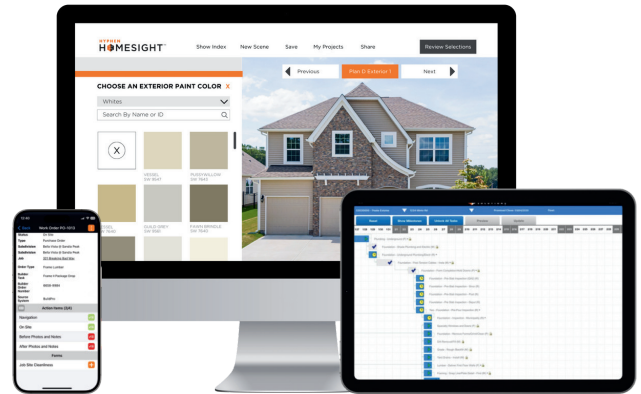
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