

# BUILDINGWOMEN

Strategies and solutions for women in the building industry

2023



**2023 NAHB PWB CHAIR  
MEG THOMPSON  
TOGETHER WE SOAR**

*A publication of NAHB*

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# Perspectives

## 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 dedicated to promoting, enhancing and supporting home building and women within the industry.

## I See Our Future Like Those Before

*Terri Everhart reflects on her year as PWB Chair*

Shortly after being recognized as the 2020 National Association of Home Builders Woman of the Year, I began serving as the NAHB Professional Women in Building Chair in February 2022 – two highlights of my professional and personal life.

Overjoyed, I'd like to seize this opportunity to share a couple of my mantras: "I am" and "I see you."

I see your future, I see your strength, your diversity, your pride and your passions. I see that you are a leader! I see you *and* I want to motivate, mentor, guide and cheer you on like my predecessors did for me.

They saw me and I extend the same to you, the future of PWB.

Our Council has persevered and thrived over the years, and I SEE that we will continue to strengthen our dynamic force.

### Celebrating recent PWB accomplishments

Under the leadership of my friends Darylenn Dennon and Betsy Sheppard, PWB chartered 17 new councils in 2020, the most in any one year.

With a bit of my competitiveness showing, I was determined to reach 75 councils. We are on track to accomplish that goal by the time this article is published.

Our stretch goal was to reach 2,750 PWB members nationwide during my tenure. We achieved that during the 2022 Fall Leadership Meeting and proceeded to crush that goal and surpass 3,000 members by the end of my term in February 2023.

Furthermore, we hosted six Shop Talks, five local council outreach calls and two webinars throughout the year to share valuable professional development opportunities with PWB members.

Congratulations to PWB for truly flourishing. I could not be prouder to be a small, yet mighty, part of the celebration.

Keep being PWB proud.

I want *you* to be seen and heard.

Go into that gathering with the strength of "I AM." I am strong. I am a mom. I am a builder. I am a tradeswoman. I am determined. I am sassy. I am happy. I am silly. I am human. I am having fun.

Let our one voice say, "I am PWB proud."

I want every member of NAHB to know who we are, what we do and why we do it, so they also want to be part of our PWB family.

Thank you for allowing me to be your 2022 National PWB Chair. I AM ... honored. **.BW**



Terri Everhart  
2022 Chair, NAHB Professional Women in Building Council

### 2022 NAHB Professional Women in Building Council Leadership

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#### Vice Chair

Meg Thompson, CMP, CSP, TSL Construction LLC

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##### Awards & Recognition

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##### Membership & Communications

Stacy Beers, Pacific InterWest Building Consultants, Inc.

##### Professional Development

Carrie DeWeese, Chinowth & Cohen

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## Tackling the National Construction Labor Shortage with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

*How to remove barriers to bring more women into the home building workforce*



By Allison Paul

Home building is no stranger to industry-wide challenges. The last two years served as a testament to builders' resilience amid supply chain shortages, rising home prices and interest rate hikes.

But the most daunting challenge affecting home building nationwide is the ongoing construction labor shortage.

### The Challenge

A 2021 National Association of Home Builders survey found that more than 80% of single family home builders reported a shortage of framing crews and carpenters, while 55% of builders reported shortages in all 16 job categories in the questionnaire.

Women make up 11% of the U.S. con-



Alicia Huey, NAHB Chairman on Capitol Hill.

struction workforce, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics. However, less than 4% of

women hold skilled labor positions — today's most in-demand employment category. Instead, 71% of women in the industry hold office and administrative jobs.

"The constrained availability of lots over the past couple of years, along with the labor and material shortages, put a lid on overall home building activity," Zonda's 2022 New Home Lot Supply Index stated.

The challenge is straightforward: Home building is suffering due to a nationwide labor shortage.

As women hold only a small portion of skilled labor positions, there is a unique opportunity for women to fill this need and diversify the workforce

— but how?

**The Solution**

The solution to a nationwide construction labor shortage is not straightforward.

Several factors hinder women from seeking employment in construction trades, including inadequate employee benefits and limited affordable housing options.

NAHB 2023 Chairman Alicia Huey testified in June 2022 before the House Ways and Means Committee that for small businesses to thrive, Congress should focus on flexible, incentive-based solutions to allow more employers to provide paid leave and other important benefits.

“While the unavailability of paid leave and childcare is a barrier to women entering the workforce, Congress cannot ignore the equally large role that affordable housing plays... Programs like the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, which helps finance the production and preservation of affordable rental housing, are critically important,” Huey said during the testimony.

Huey’s advocacy is powerful on a national platform, but community efforts are equally important.

Workforce development programs that focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) will be essential to bring more women into skilled trades. For seven years, the Professional Women in Building (PWB) council at the California Building Industry Association (CBIA)



California Building Industry Association Professional Women in Building members support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Building Industry Technology Academy at the 2021 Workforce Diversity Mixer in Southern California.

***Workforce development programs that focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) will be essential to bring more women into skilled trades.***

has promoted DEI initiatives by fundraising and providing scholarships to high school girls enrolled in the Donald Chaiken Building Industry Technology Academy (BITA) at the California Homebuilding Foundation.

The Academy is a four-year construction training program for high school students, including women, people of color, the LGBTQ+ community and students of low-income families. In addition to mentorship and financial assistance, the PWB chapter will co-host a Workforce Diversity Mixer with the Foundation this fall to expand the construction training program to more schools.

More organizations like BITA are emerging across the country, such as Girls Garage, which the PWB of the Bay Area supported at the association’s 2022 Women’s Leadership Conference. These programs will provide more opportunities for young women to explore construction careers.

Educating young women to join the home building workforce gives them confidence to succeed in the industry, but how do we inspire women in the first place?

According to Mollie Elkman, author of the children’s book “The House That She Built,” parents and teachers need to start talking about construction careers — especially with

young women — in early elementary school. Elkman’s book was inspired by Utah’s PWB chapter that built a home from start to finish with a female construction crew in order to highlight careers in the industry. Getting “The House That She Built” into more homes and classrooms can promote a positive narrative around women in construction and inspire a new generation of women to join the industry.

There may not be a quick or easy fix to the construction labor shortage, but you can be a part of the solution. Start by reading a book to a young girl. Support high school training programs and advocate at the local, state and national level.

If we pass on the right tools, opportunities and words of inspiration to the next generation of women, they can build a bigger and better workforce. **BW**



California Building Industry Association PWB 2022 council chair, Allie Jackson, proudly shows off “The House That She Built,” which teaches young girls about construction careers.



Allison Paul is the director of business development for Zonda in Northern Calif. and Reno, Nev. She is a former research analyst, media specialist and director of research for the California

Homebuilding Foundation. She is a two-time CBIA PWB council chair, currently chairs the state board’s sponsorship committee and co-chairs the PWB BIA Bay Area’s communications committee.



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## PWB's major accomplishments around the nation

### Achievements in 2022

#### Strengthening Local Councils

**Achievements:** Professional Women in Building added 12 councils, surpassing the goal of 64 councils by 2023 and reaching 76 councils nationwide. PWB hosted virtual meetings for local councils to share success stories and best practices.

#### Growing PWB Membership

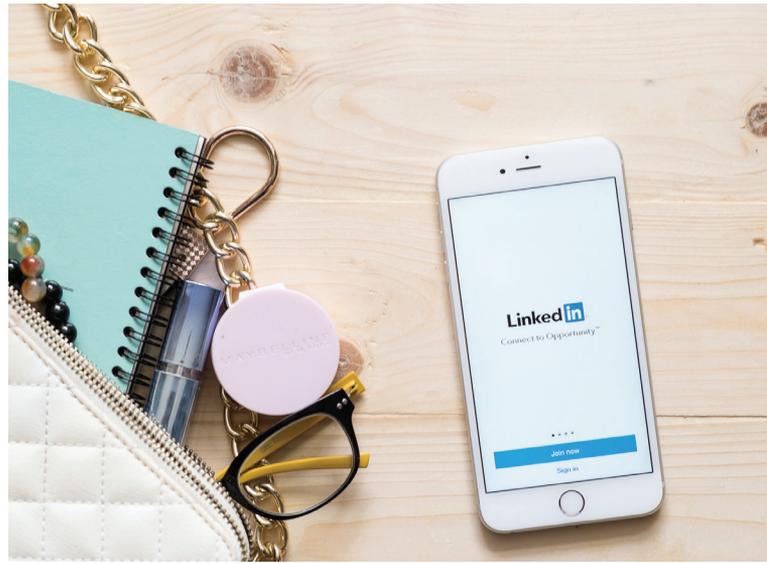
**Achievements:** In 2023, the National Association of Home Builders PWB Council is focusing on diversity and inclusion, as well as leadership development. PWB members are invited to get involved at the national level to keep the momentum going. Here are a few ideas:

1. Participate in an NAHB PWB subcommittee.
2. Join a local council meet-up (new councils are welcome).
3. Access exclusive online content for PWB members.
4. Contribute to PWB member discussions on social media.

Visit [nahb.org/womeninbuilding](http://nahb.org/womeninbuilding) to download the council's event calendar and access exclusive content.

#### Governance & Sustainability

**Achievements:** PWB participated in the first NAHB/National Housing Endowment Leadership Grant Reception at the 2022 Fall Leadership Meeting, as well as NAHB's first Giving Tuesday effort, which raised nearly \$4,500 for PWB Scholarships and Leadership Grants. These scholarships and grants create opportunities for the next generation of women in the workforce and NAHB leadership opportunities.



## Let's Talk

The NAHB Professional Women in Building Network on LinkedIn is more than 1,000 members strong. This public group is a place to read about industry news and trends.

Search for "NAHB" to find us on LinkedIn.  
(<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1547627>)

Share what your PWB council is doing in the NAHB Professional Women in Building Facebook Group. This is also a great place to get industry news and learn from other members. Make sure posts include the hashtag #PWB Proud.

Visit [facebook.com/groups/nahbpwb/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/nahbpwb/) to share in the conversation.

## NAHB PWB Honors Members, Councils

Each year, the NAHB Professional Women in Building Council honors industry leaders, members and local PWB councils for leadership, innovation and community service. NAHB PWB also awards scholarships to council members and students for building-related courses or training. During the 2022 award cycle, NAHB awarded \$11,961 in scholarships to high school students across the country.

### Nora Spencer Honored as NAHB Woman of the Year

The 2022 NAHB Woman of the Year, sponsored by Cornerstone Building Brands, is



Nora Spencer, 2022 NAHB Woman of the Year

PWB's most prestigious award. The recipient demonstrates dedication to her association, her profession and her community, as well as expertise in her field.

The 2022 NAHB Woman of the Year, **Nora Spencer**, is the founder & CEO of Hope Renovations, a nonprofit created to educate women for future careers in construction. These opportunities can help women get out of low-wage jobs, and in turn lower the gender pay gap. Hope Renovations also helps seniors stay in their homes by providing a dedicated workforce to complete necessary repairs and renovations.

Hope Renovations offers skilled trades train-

ing that follows an industry-recognized curriculum developed by the National Center for Construction Education & Research. The program teaches core skills needed to enter the trades and includes a peer-support network; connection to financial, family and mental health resources; employment assistance such as networking opportunities and interview training. In addition, eligible trainees receive a weekly stipend to help with basic expenses while in the program.

Spencer, a North Carolina licensed building contractor, is also a Certified Aging in Place Specialist. She is an active member of the Home Builders Association of Durham, Orange & Chatham Counties and served as their PWB Chair for 2022 and 2023. She is the driving force behind Hope Renovation's mission, which has gained local and national recognition from various news outlets and, most recently, appeared on "The Drew Barrymore Show."



### Mollie Elkman Honored as Member of the Year

**Mollie Elkman** is the 2022 recipient of the Cornerstone Building Brands Member of the Year, an award that recognizes the achievement of a PWB member at the local and state level.



Left to right: Mary Barnes, Director of Corporate Communications for Cornerstone Building Brands, Mollie Elkman, President and CEO of Group Two and Terri Everhart, 2022 NAHB PWB Chair

Elkman is the owner and president of Group Two, a home building marketing agency. She is the visionary behind the book "The House That She Built." Elkman pursues her dreams while balancing family, professional responsibilities and carving a path for other women in the industry. She is a member of the HBA of Bucks and Montgomery Counties.

Elkman's sense of adventure has pushed her to exciting milestones, from traveling solo to Israel and Ghana in her 20s to spearheading innovative social media strategies for the building industry. Elkman's experiences — whether inside or outside of work — have shaped her sense of human connection and inspire the direction of the Group Two team.

Elkman is also a speaker on subjects pertaining to builder sales and marketing, as well as the advancement of women in the industry. She works with a wide range of audiences, from small team trainings to educational sessions at major conferences.

### Outstanding Councils of the Year

These awards recognize local PWB councils in three size categories for overall excellence.

This year's winner of the Cornerstone Building Brands' Outstanding Council of the Year award in the small category is the **California Building Industry Association (CBIA) PWB Council** and its 2022 chair, **Allie Jackson**. This small but mighty council embraced the return of face-to-face events with its Pacific Coast Builders Conference Brunch. The Council initially hoped for 100 attendees, but more than 200 people registered. The brunch featured an all-women panel from Utah PWB's The House That She Built team to a full room of inspired women. They distributed "The House That She Built" books, generously donated by sponsors, to each attendee. CBIA connected with PWB members across the country, as well as potential members who attended. This event also led to a significant number of sponsorships, providing more scholarships than ever.



Left to right: Linda Hebert; Mary Barnes, Director of Corporate Communications for Cornerstone Building Brands; Stacy Beers; Terri Everhart, 2022 NAHB PWB Chair; Allie Jackson; Mitu Walia and Dan Dunmoyer, Executive Officer at California Building Industry Association and PWB Educational Outreach Committee liaison

The winner of the Outstanding Council of the Year Award in the medium category, sponsored by Cornerstone Building Brands, is the **Home Builders Association of Greater New Orleans PWB Council** and its 2022 chair, **Rebecca Livaudais**. The group held its first Coffee and King Cake Breakfast that raised more than \$500 for scholarships, while promoting a ladies only Mardi Gras Krewe called the Krewe of Muses. The PWB led members and guests on a tour of the Home Builders Institute's BuildStrong Academy in Kenner, La.



Left to right: Mary Barnes, Director of Corporate Communications for Cornerstone Building Brands, Melissa Simeon, 2022 Home Builders Association of Greater New Orleans PWB Council Vice Chair and Terri Everhart, 2022 NAHB PWB Chair

The academy, funded by a \$2.5 million grant from the Drew Brees Dream Foundation, provides OSHA and HBI Carpentry Certification. The certification process, provided at no cost to students, includes more than 500 hours of hands-on training in residential carpentry. The PWB council also awarded a scholarship to a female student for tools and materials. Most recently, the council hosted

the Kick@ss Cookoff at Deutsches Haus in New Orleans, which attracted more than 150 attendees and netted more than \$6,000, including \$1,800 for scholarships.

The council's recent election featured a Taco Tuesday. The event was well attended and all senior leadership seats were filled. Council engagement is stronger than it has been in years. The group is poised to do even more in 2023.



Left to right: Mary Barnes, Director of Corporate Communications for Cornerstone Building Brands, Lori Harris and Terri Everhart, 2022 NAHB PWB Chair

The winner of the Outstanding Council of the Year Award in the large category, sponsored by Cornerstone Building Brands, is the **Wichita Area Builders Association (WABA) PWB Council** and its 2022 chair, **Ann Allaire**. WABA participated in two membership drives in 2022, and hosted mixers and meetings to recruit and retain members. The PWB booth at the WABA Home Show was used for member recruitment and education. WABA PWB also

hosted more than 250 attendees for a Wine, Whiskey and Whimsey event. The group auctioned two playhouses, one of which was built by PWB members, and other items. As a result, Court Appointed Special Advocates donated \$64,000. Over the course of 2022, the council also raised more than \$12,000 for trades scholarships.

### New PWB Councils Chartered

- Baldwin County Home Builders Association (Alabama)
- Home Builders Association of Metropolitan Mobile (Alabama)
- Huntsville Madison County Builders Association (Alabama)
- Home Builders Association of the Central Coast (California)
- The Desert Valley Builders Association (California)
- Eastern Idaho Home Builders Association (Idaho)
- Greater Iowa City Area Home Builders Association (Iowa)
- Builders and Remodelers Association of Greater Boston (Massachusetts)
- Wilmington-Cape Fear Home Builders Association (North Carolina)
- Home Builders Association of Marion & Polk Counties (Oregon)

### Meet the 2023 Board of Trustees

The 2023 NAHB PWB Board of Trustees was recognized at the PWB board meeting during the 2023 International Builders' Show.

### The 2023 PWB executive team members are:

- Chair, Meg Thompson
- Vice Chair, Luellen Smith
- Second Vice Chair, Carrie DeWeese
- Immediate Past Chair, Terri Everhart **EW**



## Events of Note

### NAHB PWB annual awards call for entries opens this summer

Visit [nahb.org/awards](http://nahb.org/awards) for more information about all NAHB awards.

### NAHB PWB Week

Sept. 11-15, 2023, [nahb.org/pwbweek](http://nahb.org/pwbweek)

### NAHB PWB meetings and events held in conjunction with NAHB's Fall Leadership Meetings

Sept. 19-21, 2023, Palm Springs, Calif.

### Women in Residential+Commercial Construction Conference

Oct. 25-27, 2023

### NAHB International Builders' Show

Feb. 27-29, 2024, [buildersshow.com](http://buildersshow.com)

Dates are subject to change.



Several of the 2023 appointed NAHB PWB Trustees



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# Minding Your Business

## How to Talk to Home Owners About Construction Challenges

*Keeping clients in the loop when unforeseen roadblocks stall progress*

By Sheila Zentz Stephens

Four “sure things” in home building:

1. Price increases
2. Supply chain delays
3. Labor shortages
4. Frustration

These challenges can affect everyone in our industry, including the home owner, builder, subcontractor and supplier.

No one is untouched by these issues.

That’s why it is key to communicate changes and challenges in a clear and timely manner.

### Establish expectations early

Meet with the home owner face-to-face to discuss their expectations. Take time to understand their needs, wants and budget.

After establishing a relationship, it’s critical to draft a detailed contract. The contract should define how changes are to be handled in the event of price increases, supply chain issues and limited labor availability.

Making this process clear in the contract can alleviate frustration regarding budget increases and project delays.

Sandra Hofmeister, owner of A&S Construction, a roofing and siding contractor in Frederick, Md., stresses the importance of face-to-face contact with customers.

“As prices become volatile and unexpected, before signing anything, I talk to the customer, so we are clear,” Hofmeister said.

Communicating price increases to customers verbally and in writing, not just via email or text, ensures that customers receive the message in the tone in which you intend to convey it.

Hofmeister also notes that a pricing disclaimer in the contract is necessary. A pricing disclaimer should clearly state that the company is not responsible for increased material costs or product availability. Not only is A&S Construction covered should an increase occur, but most importantly, the customer is informed.

### Keep your options open

Directing customers to other options from manufacturers can keep the project on track and on budget.

A&S Construction is always looking at shingle availability and pricing to ensure customers are aware of changes that could cause price increases or delays. Offering alternative options has been highly successful.

### Promptly communicate price changes

Standard TV & Appliance in Portland, Ore., often gets in front of manufacturer price increases.

“When Standard receives a 60-day price increase notice, they let contractors and builders know as soon as possible,” Barbara Bradshaw, Standard TV & Appliance majority owner, said.

This helps the builder know when to order appliances to stay within budget and on schedule. As major purchasers of appliances in Oregon, Standard TV & Appliance also negotiates with manufacturers for six to 12-month price guarantees on quotes.

Standard TV & Appliance keeps a finger on the pulse of each manufacturer’s supply chain, expected lead times on appliances and product availability.

Sharing this information with home builders is critical for keeping projects on track. It also helps provide clients with realistic timelines and available product selections.

### Navigate the labor shortage

A limited workforce is another major challenge for the building industry.

Although Stephens Homes carefully schedules and monitors job progress and timelines, the process is still fraught with issues.

Finding and retaining talented employees is tough. There is a significant housing demand in the Pacific Northwest, but there are fewer workers entering the skilled trades. Labor shortages can directly affect a project’s timeline and must be addressed in the contract.



### Focus on thoughtful planning and communication

Our subcontractors, suppliers and home owners are pulled in various directions daily. Strong relationships, thoughtful scheduling and consistent communication are necessary when major challenges arise.

It’s important to be mindful of other communication styles and schedules.

Stephens Homes provides clients with a weekly project schedule. The schedule may change through the week, but weekly updates help the home owner know what to expect. Monthly face-to-face meetings can also ease home owners’ anxiety.

Communication is essential for our success. We not only build dreams for our home owners, but also for our businesses. **BW**



A graduate of Western Oregon University and fourth-generation native Oregonian, Sheila Zentz Stephens is co-owner of Stephens Homes, LLC, with her husband, Mark Stephens. Stephens Homes, LLC, is a custom home building and distinctive renovation firm with teams in Portland, Bend and Corvallis, Ore., that is dedicated to delivering a superior product and enhanced client experience. She is passionate about the construction industry and developing women in the industry through her involvement in the professional communities of PWB, NAHB and her local HBA. Zentz Stephens also serves as an NAHB PWB Trustee and Vice Chair of the Awards & Recognition Subcommittee.



## SHE DID IT HER WAY

### Jennifer Cates Peterson

Owner, Cates Fine Homes of Minnesota

Since achieving a leadership role at her family business, Jennifer has implemented new practices that have helped Cates Fine Homes grow from \$500,000 to \$6 Million. And her vision is continuing to push the industry in the right direction.

“We were meeting with a potential client, and I spoke to both the husband and wife about design process, cost, and selections. We were ultimately chosen for the job because our competitors spoke [only] to the male, not knowing his wife was the primary client and final decision-maker.”

Jennifer Cates Peterson.  
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PROFILE

# FUTURE



2023 NAHB Professional  
Women in Building  
Chair Meg Thompson

# FORWARD TOGETHER WE SOAR

*Meg Thompson brings community service spirit to PWB*

**By Leah Fellows**

Even with shelves full of awards and accolades from her career in the housing industry, Meg Thompson, the 2023 National Association of Home Builders Professional Women in Building Council chair, softly admits in her light southern drawl that she still struggles with imposter syndrome.

"I didn't experience a healthy, positive working environment as a woman in the new home industry when I was coming up," Thompson said. The lack of mentorship and support is one of the many reasons Thompson advocates for organizations like PWB.

## **Finding a home in home building**

Thompson has a long history in



Meg Thompson (left) with Meg & Co.'s Buyer's Specialist Kirsten Swanda

the building industry that helped develop her into the thoughtful leader she is today.

She was a charter member of the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association PWB chapter in 2013. She started on the leadership ladder as an executive board member and secretary/treasurer, then served as chair in 2016 and finally served as the Greater Atlanta HBA's Executive Board's associate vice president from 2017 to 2020 — one of only a handful of women in its history.

"I discovered my tribe, my fit, where I belonged with other committed, experienced, like-minded women across all areas of the industry who work in new construction and home building," Thompson said.

# PROFILE

One of her favorite quotes is from entrepreneur Jim Rohn: “You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with.” This resonated with Thompson as she fostered relationships and helped build an award-winning council.

## Giving back to her community

Thompson’s office is decorated with plaques and statues that speak to a history of achievement and professionalism, but her favorite is her award for Volunteer of the Year. She earned the award for her work with HomeAid Atlanta in 2016 while she was the PWB council chair of the Greater Atlanta HBA.

“Being awarded volunteer of the year for the work we did with HomeAid really did come out of left field, but it was so appreciated because HomeAid is near and dear to my heart,” Thompson said.

Thompson’s love of volunteering was instilled in her from an early age.

The only girl and the middle child of three, she jokes that she is “well-adjusted for a middle child.” While she and her brothers couldn’t be more different, they share an interest in camping and hiking, an appreciation for the National Park System and the environment, and, of course, a love of community service passed down to them by their parents and grandparents.

The time she spent in nature growing up led her to the Girl Scouts, where she achieved the rank of First Class, the highest available rank at the time. From there she transitioned to the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls, a youth organization that teaches leadership skills with an emphasis on community service. She rose to the position of Worthy Advisor in high school and was elected Miss Service by her assembly members, “tiara and all.” She also found time to be a candy striper at her local hospital.

## An early interest in home building

In addition to her lifelong dedication to serving her community, Thompson has always been fascinated with houses. She loved architecture and landscaping and was curious about the vintage homes around the community she grew up in.

“Each home has a story, some grander than others, of the people who lived there,” she said as she recalled writing her high school senior term paper on the history of an abandoned 1870’s



Meg Thompson with her husband, sons, daughters-in-law and granddaughter. Back Row (L-R): Christian Thompson, John Thompson and Meg Thompson. Front Row (L-R): Rachel Thompson holding Emilia Thompson, Caitlin Thompson and Scott Thompson. Not pictured: Granddaughters Charlotte and Magnolia Thompson.

“I discovered my tribe, my fit, where I belonged with other committed, experienced, like-minded women across all areas of the industry.”



Meg Thompson (right) with the 55+ Housing Industry Council Chair Jennifer Landers (left) and NAHB 2022 Chairman Jerry Konter (center) at the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association Board of Directors Meeting

Second Empire Mansion in downtown Raleigh, N.C.

When she looks back at her time studying English Literature and Art at Meredith College, a private, women’s liberal arts school in Raleigh, she can see that it laid the foundation for her future in the building industry.

“I was ignited as a direct result of experiencing strong women role models in the Meredith faculty daily in my coursework,” she said. “I was challenged to think for myself and uncover what makes me strong and then build on those strengths to prepare myself for making a positive impact on the world.”

## Getting established in the industry

Thompson’s career began in on-site sales, where she taught herself aspects of home building, from construction methods and building materials to sales and contract management, eventually earning her IRM, Certified New Home Sales Professional and Certified



Meg Thompson with Mollie Elkman, author of “The House That She Built” and CEO of Group Two, at the 2021 NAHB Fall Leadership Meeting

New Home Marketing Professional designations.

“I walked my spec and contracted homes daily and discovered an affection for the energy of a building site,” she said. “There was nothing better than dodging a line of concrete mixers waiting to pour foundations, tiptoeing over lumber scraps to get inside a home being framed, the sounds of nail guns popping, the ‘beep beep’ of dump trucks backing up and music blaring.”

After mastering the on-site selling process in her 20s, Thompson transitioned to sales management to spend more time at home, especially on the weekends, with her two young sons. In 2002 she launched Meg & Co. Real Estate, which serves small home builders in the Atlanta metro area who need an on-site-educated and licensed sales representative that understands the nuances of new construction.

This experience led to her start TSL Construction, LLC, with her husband, Scott, in 2012. The company builds single family villas for the 55+ market. It has received Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association “Obie” Awards for single family new construction and remodeling.

### Looking ahead

As the 2023 NAHB PWB Council Chair, Thompson hopes to refine membership and retention while advocating for PWB councils in every state. She also wants to shine a light on NAHB PWB’s virtual opportunities like monthly Shop Talks and quarterly Local Council Meetups.

Most importantly, Thompson wants to steer professional women

“I walked my spec and contracted homes daily and discovered an affection for the energy of a building site.”



Meg Thompson at the Georgia Home Builders Association

in building toward a brighter future, which is why her mantra for the year is: “Future Forward: Together We Soar.”

“It’s a big moment for women in the industry,” Thompson said. “Alicia Huey will be the National Chairman of NAHB — only the third woman in its history — and ‘The House That She Built’ has caught on like wildfire, galvanizing women and PWB councils around the country. I believe in women and men, and in the housing industry. When the transformative power of passionate professionals working together on soul-fulfilling projects grows into a force of nature to be reckoned with... we soar.” **BW**



Leah Fellows is a national online sales counselor trainer and consultant and the founder of Blue Gypsy Inc. She works with builders to help hire, train and implement new online sales programs and evaluate and improve existing programs. She is also second vice chair of the NAHB PWB Professional Development Subcommittee.

“It’s a big moment for women in the industry. Alicia Huey will be the National Chairman of NAHB — only the third woman in its history — and ‘The House That She Built’ has caught on like wildfire, galvanizing women and PWB councils around the country.”



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Panasonic's new WhisperAir Repair™ advanced spot air purifier is a compact ceiling-mount device that is maintenance free and easy to install with no ductwork required. It features patented nanoe™ X technology that generates reactive molecules that help purify contaminated air while helping to inhibit odors, pollutants, allergens and more. WhisperAir Repair is an ideal value-added solution for kitchen and bath professionals when replacing existing ventilation in the course of remodeling or new construction projects.

As the smart home automation movement continues to expand, Panasonic has partnered with smart control device manufacturer, Swidget Corp., to create an end-to-end smart home ventilation solution. The product lineup

includes outlets, switches and dimmers that can be customized with a variety of Wi-Fi-enabled inserts including motion, temperature/humidity and IAQ sensors. When suboptimal conditions are detected, Swidget automatically activates Panasonic ventilation devices which remove unhealthy air from the home. So, if you forget to turn on the fan before getting in the shower, the Swidget humidity sensor will automatically activate it, keeping bathroom moisture under control and inhibiting damage-causing mold and mildew. Swidget devices are compatible with Panasonic ventilation fans and energy recovery ventilators.

Panasonic also offers whole-house healthy air solutions with a complete lineup of energy recovery ventilators ranging from 10 to 200 CFM that provide a constant supply of fresh air throughout the day. Panasonic ERVs provide balanced ventilation for single-family homes and multifamily units.

Panasonic Whisper-series ventilation fans have a long history of quietly and efficiently expelling contaminated air from the home. WhisperGreen® Select is a perfect example of a whole-house ventilation solution, ideal for use in a bathroom, laundry room, sunroom, basement or garage.

Panasonic developed Breathe Well to ensure the spaces their customers occupy are always fresh, clean and comfortable while instilling confidence that the air they're breathing is healthy and safe. Breathe Well's suite of fresh air product solutions can be customized for any space. Ask an exclusive Panasonic Breathe Well Partner about installation and the right combination for your bathroom and other indoor spaces.

Learn more at [Panasonic.BreatheWell.com](https://Panasonic.BreatheWell.com)



# LESSONS FROM LEADERS

## Q&A: WHY WOMEN ARE STARTING CONSTRUCTION BUSINESSES

Two women open up about getting into the trades

BY KIMBERLEY MARTIN

**W**hy are we seeing more U.S. construction businesses owned or co-owned by women? The reasons may be surprising.

Starting a business can be risky – about 65% fail by their tenth year in business, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Despite high demand, the construction industry has one of the worst success rates for new businesses in the nation, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

So why are women starting construction businesses?

Some naturally transition from working in the trades to starting their own companies. Some join their partners if their skill sets complement each other's. Others may simply want to be their own boss in the booming construction industry.

Here are two successful women in construction discussing their journey in the industry: Amy Ecklund, owner of AmyWorks, Inc., and Tanya Cromwell, president of Idaho Home Design.

**KM: What got you into the trades?**

**AE:** "It really wasn't a conscious effort. My dad taught me as a kid how to work with my hands and he showed me that home repair wasn't rocket science. I went from being a chemist in an environmental lab to owning a handyman services franchise and later starting AmyWorks. I love helping people with their home repairs, and when I started I was amazed that they would actually pay me to do it!"

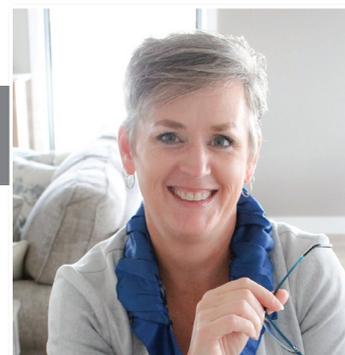
**TC:** "In 1995 we wanted to build our own home and I could not find a plan that I liked, so I decided to just draw up my own. We built that home and then others would ask if I would draw up their plans, so I did. It became my passion, so I studied and learned everything I could learn and turned my design business into a full-time career. As I evolved, I also became a contractor because my design clients kept asking if I could just build their house for them. It was a natural

fit and I was always out on the job sites anyway, I loved seeing the projects from ideas, to design, to a home."

**KM: One of the biggest challenges of being a new business owner is understanding how to run a company. What advice would you give to a woman looking to start her own construction business?**

**TC:** "Find a mentor! I had so many incredible people that let me work beside them to learn (no, I didn't ask to get paid — it was an investment in education). If you are going to be a solopreneur, then you still need a great accountant, financial advisor and a business mentor to help you along the way. If you are looking to move up in someone else's company, be willing to do the crappy jobs until something great comes along."

**AE:** "Find a mentor, find business workshops, read everything you can find on running a successful business. If you retain and use 10% of what you read, you'll be well on your way to running a successful business." **BW**



Tanya Cromwell



Amy Ecklund



Kimberley Martin is the owner of Cyneburg Services Inc., a remodeling company that specializes in exterior decks and landscape. Martin has been a member of NAHB and PWB for more than 15 years. Martin also serves as an NAHB PWB Trustee and PWB BUILD-PAC Liaison.



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# Energized, Empowered and Engaged

Women in the industry describe what PWB means to them

By Jill Waash

National Home Association of Home Builders Professional Women in Building Council members welcome you to a diverse community that's dedicated to promoting professionalism and supporting members at the local, state and national level. We are the voice of women in the building industry. This voice advances careers, invigorating members' professional and personal growth.



Lisa Campfield

We at PWB build together... but what does PWB membership mean to you?

"The PWB member network has a vast wealth of experts whose knowledge is invaluable," Lisa Campfield, Homeworks of Alabama co-owner and design leader, said.

Campfield's career in home building began when she started her interior design business and worked with her husband to buy and flip properties. She often tapped into her PWB network, which helped her with everything from land entitlement to determining lumber costs.

Perhaps the thing that Campfield appreciates most about PWB, however, is that their support is not limited to business ventures. PWB is a family. If a member is in need, the other members will help in any way they can, even if all they can do is listen.



Stephanie Sharp

After serving as Utah Home Builder's Association's PWB council president in 2021, Stephanie Sharp of Steven Dailey Construction now serves as the council's vice president. The council boasts an impressive 150 members since it formed three years ago. Those members cherish Sharp's dynamic energy for home building and trades, as well as her passion for mentoring.

Sharp is often a guest speaker at Brigham

Young University in Utah, mentoring the University's Construction Management students. Her experiences as a licensed real estate agent, contractor and architect have proven to her that women can and should seek careers in the construction industry.

"Women bring a distinct perspective and professionalism to the job site," she said.

She also encouraged women in building to "answer the call to mentorship."

The Utah HBA PWB council answered this call by designing and constructing *The House That She Built*. Sharp's woodworking produced the trim, doors and shelves in the home. Projects like *The House That She Built*, made possible by the PWB network and councils, contribute to scholarships and raise awareness of careers in construction.



Erin Hurley

Erin Hurley, director of business development at Lita Dirks & Co, is grateful to NAHB PWB for helping her build deep relationships over the years.

"We're here rooting each other on, encouraging and helping provide a place to get engaged," she said.

As the 2022 PWB chair for the HBA of Metro Denver, Colo., her goals are to advocate for the benefits of in-person meetings, mentoring programs, educational lunches, local charitable outreach and inclusion.

Hurley met her current mentor, Lita Dirks & Co's CEO and principal, at a PWB event. She now hopes to give other women in the industry opportunities to connect with people who will inspire them. Her hope is to leave council members feeling "a little more energized, a little more empowered and a lot more engaged." **BW**



Jill Waash is an online sales specialist with Brookfield Residential. She also serves on the PWB Bay Area educational outreach committee.



### NAHB Professional Women in Building Week

celebrates the achievements of women in residential construction and encourages women to join and enrich the home building profession. All NAHB members can **promote and support women in the industry** by bringing awareness to the opportunities and successes careers in construction provide.

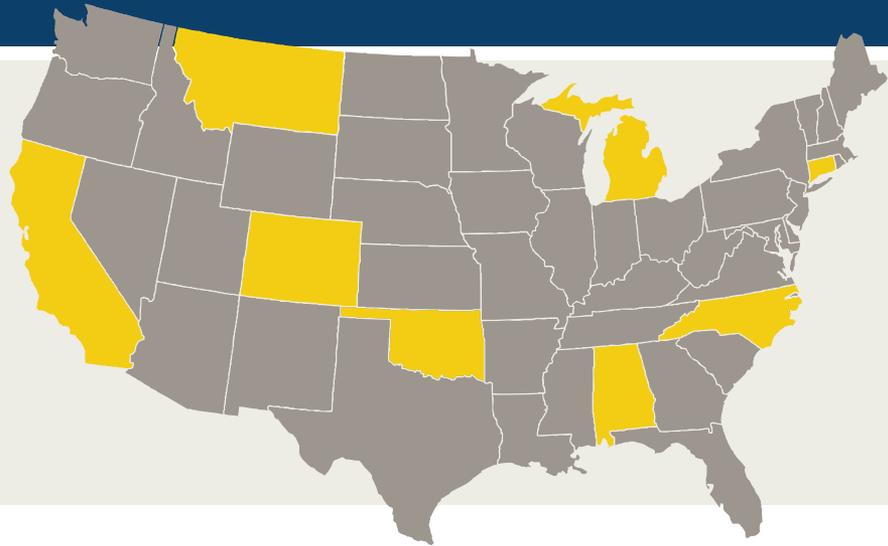
# NAHB Professional Women in Building Week

*September 11 – 15, 2023*



Find marketing resources,  
articles and ideas to celebrate at  
**[nahb.org/pwbweek](http://nahb.org/pwbweek)**

## Coast to Coast



### Greater Birmingham Association of Home Builders

Greater Birmingham's Professional Women in Building Council hosted a service day at Build UP, the nation's first and only early college workforce development high school. Build UP works with students from low-income households, teaching them career skills through paid apprenticeships with industry-aligned secondary and postsecondary academic coursework.

Led by two HBA builder members, the students built a tiny library and three park benches, which will stay on the campus. The group chose "The House That She Built" as the first book for the tiny library.

This project taught students about opportunities in the home building industry. The builders also shared statistics on job opportunities and salary averages with the students. More than 40 people volunteered for the service project, and it inspired two people to join PWB.



### Building Industry Association of the Bay Area

To celebrate International Women's Day, BIA Bay Area held free, five-minute morning sessions via Zoom on March 7-10, that centered around the 2022 International Women's Day theme: #BreakTheBias. Topics included navigating the "tightrope" between femininity and masculinity in the industry, overcoming biases working mothers often face and patterns of gender bias that shape today's workplaces. Attendees said the short programs were inspiring and provided useful advice on how to #BreakTheBias.

### Home Builders Association of the Central Coast

The Home Builders Association of the Central Coast (HBACC) in San Luis Obispo, Calif., chartered its PWB council at the June 2022 NAHB PWB Board meeting, but some group members had been preparing for its first event for nearly two years. Lindy Hatcher, HBACC executive director, and Stacy Kolegraff, an assistant professor at California Polytechnic State University's College of Architecture and Environmental Design, teamed up with an NAHB Student Chapter to hold the inaugural Girls Build Summer Academy. The Academy is a hands-on camp for high school girls to learn about career opportunities in construction.

Support for the Girls Building Summer Academy included Homebuilding Education Leadership Program, a National Housing Endowment grant, donations from Cal Poly's Construction Management Advisory Council and volunteer-donated lunches. Several HBACC PWB members, including PWB council co-chair Patrice Quishenberry, along with Cal Poly's Michelle Chariton and Scott Kelting and Cal Poly alum Lauren Janowsky were all instrumental in launching the program. Cal Poly students Mason Heinse, Ashley Isla, Claire Gress and Itzell Ruiz helped develop the camp as their senior project.



# CALIFORNIA



**Housing & Building Association of Western Colorado**

To end PWB Week, the HBA of Western Colorado PWB Council braved rainy morning weather to donate time to their community by helping frame a house for Habitat for Humanity of Mesa County Colorado.



**Home Builders Association of Greater Grand Rapids**

The HBA of Greater Grand Rapids PWB supported West Michigan Construction Institute (WMC) by participating in the Built by Women West Michigan event. Hosted by Stephanie Snowden of Snowden Builders and Jenny Waugh of Fishbeck, the inspiring event raised \$13,500 for the institute.



**Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Fairfield County**

The Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Fairfield County's PWB Council partnered with local Children's Connection Giving. Members donated diapers, clothes, gift cards, wipes, coloring books, crayons and other holiday goodies.



**Southwest Montana Building Industry Association**

The Southwest Montana BIA celebrated PWB Week by joining the Bozeman Sunrise Rotary Club's Fix-Up Festival. The PWB group helped with some essential home repairs around their community. Members were particularly happy to help one local family with new windows and a new dishwasher. No more icicles from failing windows!



**Home Builders Association of Greater Tulsa**

The HBA of Greater Tulsa's PWB Council attended a Girl Scouts of Eastern Oklahoma activity. They organized building activities, games and let the kids use and play with tools from their toolboxes. The group read "The House That She Built" to the girls. At the end of the evening, each girl received a copy of the book and a small gift from the PWB council.



## Coast to Coast



## NORTH CAROLINA

### Home Builders Association of Durham, Orange & Chatham Counties

The HBA of Durham, Orange & Chatham Counties hosted their first fundraiser and recruiting event called Jewels & Tools. They offered limited, exclusive sponsorships and organized a silent auction of donated jewelry. Attendees could purchase “Gold Digger” tickets for a chance to “dig” for a fine piece of jewelry — donated by a local jeweler, and hidden in a large, metal toolbox filled with boxes of inexpensive costume jewelry.

Between silent auction winnings and “dig” ticket sales, the group raised \$2,500 for PWB of the Triangle, plus three new members joined PWB after the event.

### Home Builders Association of Greater Charlotte

HBA of Greater Charlotte’s PWB leaders partnered with city officials, HBA members and trade partners to launch the Construction Camp for Girls in July 2022. As part of the all-day camp, experts

led the group of middle and high school girls through discussions about city planning and permitting, engineering, landscape architecture, construction safety and building.

Students built doghouses during a guided, hands-on learning experience. Working in groups, students chose between two plans, selected their design and even planned green roof plantings for their outstanding custom doghouses. From working with planning concepts to learning how to use power tools, camp participants came away from the day with a deeper understanding of on-the-job skills they’d use in construction.



## PENNSYLVANIA

### Home Builders Association of Bucks & Montgomery Counties

Careers in Construction Month in October kicked off at the PWB Expo, where vendors showcased their products and services for the building industry and raised money for student scholarships.

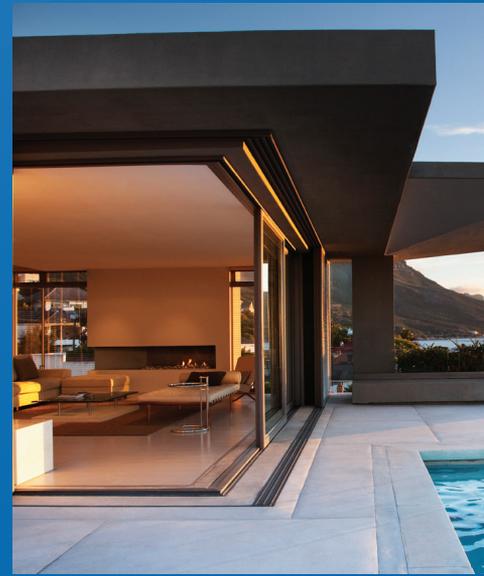
## NORTH DAKOTA

### Bismarck-Mandan Home Builders Association

Bismarck-Mandan HBA PWB Council packed 1,336 bags for the United Way Backpack Program. With the help of HBA board members, they delivered backpacks to 33 Bismarck and Mandan area schools.



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### Greater Houston Builders Association

More than 300 members strong, Greater Houston Builders Association's PWB is off to a remarkable start as the largest PWB council in the country. They love trucks in Texas and can't build without them, so the PWB headed to the Truck Yard in Houston for their April Networking Event. The event attracted 90 people and allowed members to continue building and nurturing relationships with other members.



### Utah Home Builders Association

The Utah HBA's PWB Council came together to remodel and bring two homes up to code for LifeStart Village.

Supported by local builder Hamlet Homes, volunteers remodeled the two homes for single parents and their children who are experiencing homelessness. These homes offer safe, stable housing while parents develop skills they need to get back on their feet. Women from PWB also worked together to collect donated materials for the remodel.

They strapped their tool belts on again the following month to help Habitat for Humanity complete two homes in the Park City area.



### Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties

Through their 2022 partnership with Domestic Violence Services of Snohomish County, PWB members gave back to their most vulnerable community members with unique activities, programs and events throughout the year while recruiting new members and engaging current members in tangible ways.



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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 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## How to Give

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





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## 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 Leadership Meetings
- Career development expenses
- Other building-related program costs

For more information on these scholarships and grants visit [apply.nationalhousingendowment.org](https://apply.nationalhousingendowment.org)

Application period : January to April

## Building Strength from Within

*HBA Executive Officers discuss the ways starting a PWB council made their HBAs stronger*

By Erin LeCorgne

Professional Women in Building Councils attract members to home building associations across the country, and behind every successful council is a supportive Executive Officer (EO).

Here are three EOs discussing the paths they took to establish thriving PWB councils at their local associations and what the groups have accomplished so far.



### Angela White

Angela White, the Olympia Master Builders EO, has a contagious passion for PWB.

When establishing a PWB council, White says it's crucial to ensure that the council's mission and vision complements the association.

Olympia Master Builders PWB started with a group of motivated women who came together in late 2019. After hours of

planning and legwork, the group presented White and the association's Board with a mission and vision, which she believes contributed to their success.

The new council already had good momentum when COVID-19 reached the U.S. and spurred shutdowns. PWB began hosting

Zoom Lunch and Learns to keep the energy going and help members stay in touch.

"Bringing people together and keeping them connected not only to each other, but to the industry, especially during a pandemic, was incredible," White said. "Members would often stay on the calls longer just to catch up and avoid some of the loneliness everyone was experiencing."

White is excited for the future of her PWB and has enjoyed watching those Zoom Lunch and Learns become in-person events. For example,

Food for Thought Breakfasts feature speakers, networking opportunities and career fairs.

Her council is also looking forward to focusing on workforce development and working with local schools.

**"Bringing people together and keeping them connected not only to each other, but to the industry, especially during a pandemic, was incredible."**

Interested in starting a local PWB council?

Email [ewilson@nahb.org](mailto:ewilson@nahb.org) to receive materials and to set up a call to get started.

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White has seen PWB be an effective recruitment tool, especially for younger generations, and she looks forward to more opportunities to engage new and future PWB members as her council continues to thrive.



### Cameron Moore

Cameron Moore, Wilmington-Cape Fear Home Builders Association's EO, is a strong advocate for PWB councils and the value they bring to associations.

"Professional Women in Building councils are not only raising the platform for women to have a voice in the association, but it's also an opportunity for membership growth and more diverse sponsorship opportunities,"

Moore said. "Not only will you grow in numbers, but also in leadership and passion."

Moore's PWB council was chartered in June 2022 and already has more than 70 members.

**"Professional Women in Building councils are not only raising the platform for women to have a voice in the association, but it's also an opportunity for membership growth and more diverse sponsorship opportunities."**

Moore attributes the council's rapid growth to networking events, such as the association's annual oyster roast and wine pull. Those events provided additional exposure and more opportunities to raise revenue.

"Don't look at it as a challenge, but as an incredible opportunity," Moore said. "Watching them as a group, you want to be involved."



### Cindy Kosloski

Cindy Kosloski, chief executive officer of the Home Builders Association of Greater Lansing, chartered her PWB in 2014 and has watched it grow to more than 55 members. She believes establishing a PWB council is an often-overlooked recruiting opportunity for associations.

"I can't say enough about PWB — both personally and professionally," Kosloski

said. "Make sure you're all in, find two enthusiastic and committed women, and build it."

Which is exactly what she did.

After leaving an NAHB Leadership Meeting, a member from her

local association, Karen Schroeder, sent her a message at 10:30 p.m. saying, "We NEED this!"

Two weeks later, more than 50 people gathered for an informal interest luncheon and later chartered the PWB council in 2014.

Kosloski provides a variety of networking and philanthropic activities, most recently hosting a "Top Gun" watch party and working together on Safe Haven House renovations. Members are also strong

advocates for mentoring programs in local high schools and colleges.

Kosloski advises not to get caught up in attendance numbers. Instead, leave events asking yourself, "What did you give to others and what did you gain from being there?"

She acknowledges everyone is looking for something different

from an association. Without PWB, you're missing a strong group of members that want to get involved.

PWB has paved the way for new connections, sponsorships and even memberships since its inception. People are joining to be a member of PWB first and the association second. Members who previously were inactive are becoming involved and excited.

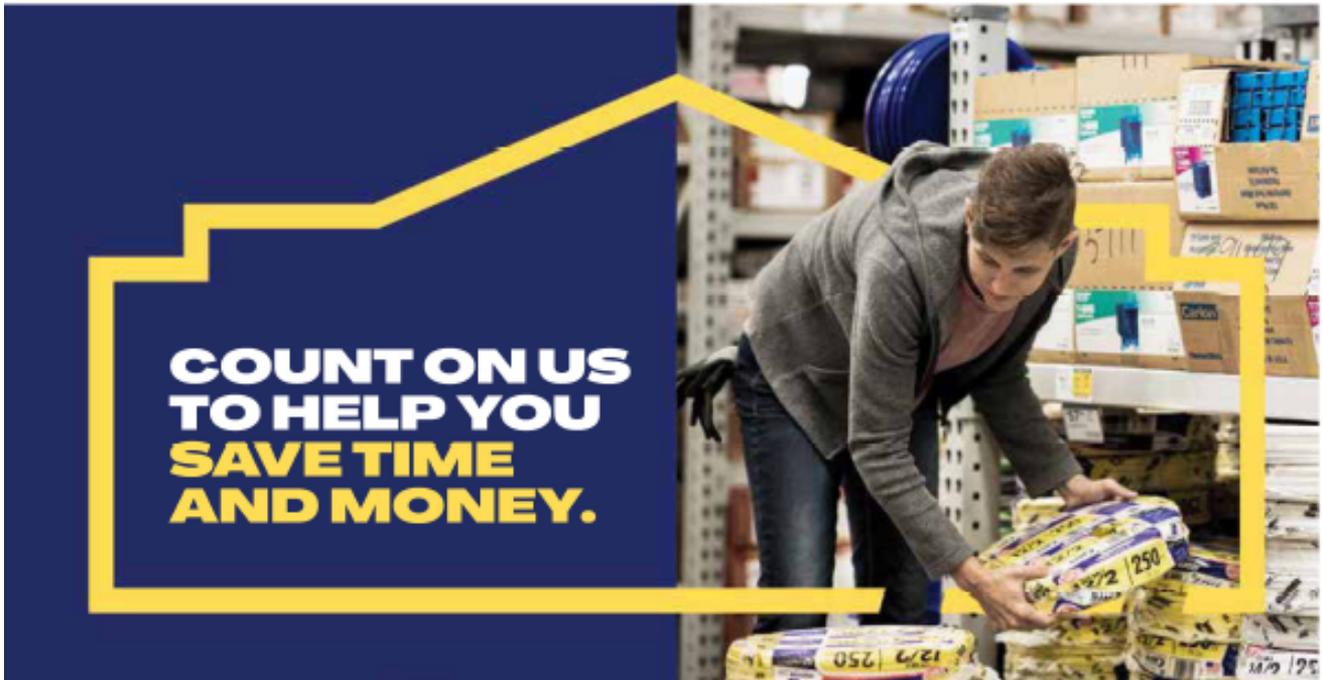
PWB doesn't slow down — it's just getting bigger and better with more involvement, dynamic speakers and community service projects.

"As an EO, instead of looking at this as more work, look at it as an opportunity to grow more professionally and personally," Kosloski said. "Have fun. It's so rewarding, especially seeing the positive impact it's made on our members' camaraderie, business relationships and general friendships." **BW**

**"As an EO, instead of looking at this as more work, look at it as an opportunity to grow more professionally and personally"**

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