


BUILDINGWOMEN

Strategies and solutions for women in the building industry

2024



**2024 NAHB PWB CHAIR
LUELLEN SMITH
BUILDING THE FUTURE**

A publication of NAHB

ALSO

Minding Your
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The Next
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Perspectives

Growing Strong and Going Strong

Meg Thompson Reflects on Her Time as the 2023 PWB National Chair

As my time as your National PWB Chair ends, I thank each of you for making this a rewarding role to fill. There's an immense need for women in the residential construction industry to have a place where they can be themselves and lift each other up. With your passion and commitment, PWB is filling that need.

We continue to inch ever closer to our goal of having a local PWB Council in each of the 50 United States. After this year, we will have only 14 states left to go. We also surpassed our 10% goal for membership growth, ending the calendar year with 19% growth.

Of course, every leader has a passion project. Mine was to support Careers in Construction Day by encouraging PWB members across the country and the dedicated local councils to join together to perform a service in their communities, while highlighting women in the construction industry.

It gives me great pleasure to share that a number of our local councils participated in Careers in Construction Day, October 20, 2023, including the Building Industry Association of the Bay Area (BIA Bay Area)'s PWB council, which met with their leadership to discuss their new EmpowHER program, which BIA Bay Area member Terri Everhart described as "a calendar of events to be filled with community services abound."

I'd like to end this reflection with a few words of advice for our 2024 National PWB Chair, Luellen Smith:

The Professional Women in Building Council is an incubator to grow effective women leaders in the housing industry. Our members are dynamic, progressive, positive in attitude and full of energy and new ideas. Together we have soared in 2023 beyond my goals.

Be prepared to pivot when new opportunities and initiatives are presented. The housing industry will always have "ebbs and flows." With the spirit of inclusive leadership, the Professional Women in Building Council will continue to grow strong and go strong.

This position has been the honor of my career. It is with a heart filled with gratitude that I pass the torch to Luellen. **BW**



Meg Thompson

2023 Chair, NAHB Professional Women in Building Council

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.

2023 NAHB Professional Women in Building Leadership

Chair

Meg Thompson, CMP, CSP, TSL Construction LLC

Vice Chair

Luellen Smith, Rhino Wine Cellars & Cooling Systems

Immediate Past Chair

Terri Everhart, HomeSite Services

Trustees

Alexandra Aitken, M&M Glass, LLC

Meghan Billings, Meg Construction

Rachel Brown, Rachel Brown Homes

Tanya Cromwell, TEC Enterprises

Vanessa de Mari Monserrate, Interlink

Carrie DeWeese, Chinowth & Cohen

Andi Dirkschneider, Brookline Homes

Laura Dwyer, DuPont Building Solutions

Andrea Eldred, Element Construction

Nancy Grace, BankPlus

Allie Jackson, Mirage Granito Ceramico

Heather Laminack, Ferrier Custom Homes

Mindy Lepp, Lepp Design

Kimberley Martin, Cyneburg Services LLC

Patrice Quishenberry, Williams Homes, Inc.

Sherry Schwab, HCS Construction Services Co.

Mitu Walia, Klein Financial Corporation

Monica Wheaton, ECI Software Solutions

Sheila Zentz Stephens, Stephens Homes LLC

Executive Officer Liaison

Dan Dunmoyer, California Building Industry Association

2023 NAHB PWB Subcommittee Chairs

Awards & Recognition

Mitu Walia, Klein Financial Corporation

Membership and Communications

Heather Laminack, Ferrier Custom Homes

Professional Development

Leah Fellows, Blue Gypsy, Inc.

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Publisher

Joseph P. McGaw
Assistant Vice President,
Customized Member Services

Managing Editor

Claudia M. Richards
Senior Director, Community
Member Support
crichards@nahb.org

Design & Production

Weswen Design
wendy@weswendesign.com

Editors

Andrea Browne Taylor
Director, Member Services
& Education Content
Julia Andretta
Content Manager
Haley Walters
Content Manager

Advertising Sales

Kimberly Friedman
Manager, Business
Development
kfriedman@nahb.org

Send address changes to: PWB@NAHB.org

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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AdvocacyCorner

Every year, NAHB members across the country – from the Leadership Council to the Board of Directors to committee and council members to executive officers – venture to Washington, D.C., to attend the Spring Leadership Meeting and Legislative Conference. The purpose of this four-day event is to make decisions and provide guidance on advocacy, membership and the future of the association.

One of the quintessential moments from the annual Legislative

Conference includes the visit to Capitol Hill, which provides members with a valuable opportunity to meet directly with lawmakers to discuss the vital housing issues impacting their constituents and the broader economy.

See highlights from the 2023 meeting where PWB members showed up in full force to advocate for the needs of the builder community in their respective housing markets:



CALIFORNIA

California Building Industry Association (CBIA)
From right (clockwise): Jeff Pemstein, Linda Hebert, Dan Beans, Will Cooper, Jr., Dan Dunmoyer, Terri Everhart (2022 NAHB PWB Chair), Dan Lloyd, Congressman Jim Costa (California's 21st Congressional District).



CALIFORNIA

California Delegation (BIA Bay Area, CBIA and Desert Valley)
Front row (from left): Linda Hebert, Congressman Jimmy Panetta (California's 19th Congressional District), Terri Everhart, Jeff Pemstein. Back row (left to right): Dan Lloyd, Nicole Feenstra, Will Cooper, Dan Dunmoyer, Tiffany George, Gretchen Gutierrez.



CALIFORNIA

California Delegation (BIA Bay Area, CBIA and Desert Valley)
From left: Lake Coulson, Dan Beans, Jeff Pemstein, Dan Dunmoyer, Congressman John Garamendi (California's 8th Congressional District), Dan Lloyd, Linda Hebert, Terri Everhart, Gretchen Gutierrez.



NEW JERSEY

Metropolitan Builders and Contractors Association of New Jersey
From left: Tammy Murray, Alan Archuleta, Geraldine Smith, Congressman Robert Menendez, Jr. (New Jersey's 8th Congressional District), Hasnain Nasar, Karen Adamsbaum, Dave Bernardino, Linda Garvey, Andrea LoMonaco.

NEW MEXICO



From left: Congresswoman Melanie Stansbury (New Mexico's 1st Congressional District), Lora Vassar, Diana Lucero

OKLAHOMA



Central Oklahoma HBA, Tulsa HBA and Oklahoma HBA

Front row: Mary Means, Ron Nance, Connie Stokes, Carrie DeWeese (2024 NAHB PWB Vice Chair), Carrie Nail. Back row: Mike Means, Jeffrey Smith, Matt Emmons, Congressman Kevin Hern (Oklahoma's 1st Congressional District), Kurt Dinnes, Craig Thurmond, Max Starkweather, Jeff Starkweather, John Nail.

TEXAS



Greater Houston Builders Association

Front row (from left): Aimee Bertrand, Vanessa Cole, Kristal Casey, Roxanne Plascencia, Renae Turnbaugh, Congressman Troy Nehls (Texas's 22nd Congressional District), Steve Sams, Kelly Dietrich, Brandi Coatsworth. Back row: Eddie Martin, Adam Aschmann, Troy Allen, Mike Dishberger, Matthew Reibenstein, Andrew Aschmann, Steve Sams, Katie Pritchard.

TEXAS



Greater San Antonio Builders Association

From left: Andi Schmid (with daughters Olivia and Abigail Schmid), Shad Schmid, Jeanne Conger, Debra Guerrero, Ed Berlanga, Kristi Sutterfield, David Harding, Truman Reed (Legislative Director for Congresswoman Monica De La Cruz (Texas's 15th Congressional District)).

PWB's Major Accomplishments



Achievements in 2023: Strengthen local councils

Professional Women in Building added nine councils, surpassing the goal of 80 councils by 2024 and reaching 87 councils nationwide. PWB hosted virtual meetings for local councils to share success stories and best practices

Giving back

PWB has given more than \$11,000 annually in scholarships and grants. This includes, the Professional Women in Building/National Housing Endowment Scholarship, which encourages individuals to further their education and training in housing industry-related programs.



Looking Ahead: Expanding PWB's impact in 2024

The key initiatives set by PWB's 2024 National Chair Luellen Smith include enhancing knowledge sharing and connectivity among members nationwide, as well as streamlining PWB-specific resources on NAHB.org.

Members can help achieve these goals by registering for and participating in the monthly PWB Shop Talk live discussions (every third Thursday at 11 a.m. ET). Go to nahb.org and search "Shop Talks."

Additionally, local councils can utilize NAHB's Programs and Events Ideas Bank to find an archive of NAHB member-submitted ideas for enriching council experiences or activities. Go to nahb.org and search "Programs and Events Idea Bank."

PWB Honors Members and Councils

The NAHB Professional Women in Building Council recognizes industry leaders, members and local councils for their dedication to effective leadership, community service and innovation every year. PWB also awards scholarships for building-related courses and training to members and students pursuing careers in construction, and council members in need. In 2024, NAHB awarded \$11,964 in scholarships to high school and college students nationwide.

NAHB Woman of the Year

Monica Wheaton, vice president of customer success for residential home construction for ECI Software Solutions, was named the NAHB Woman of the Year 2023 at The Nationals during the International Builders' Show in Las Vegas. The NAHB Woman of the Year is PWB's most prestigious award. The recipient is someone who has made an extraordinary impact on the residential construction industry through their leadership and contributions.

Wheaton, who was nominated for the award by her ECI colleague Heidi Schroeder, brings a unique perspective to the field. With more than 25 years of experience working in the construction and technology industries, she is a staunch advocate for women in tech and homebuilding.

At ECI Software Solutions, a global provider of cloud-based business management software and services, Wheaton focuses on customer success and prioritizes helping the next generation of leaders in residential construction to navigate challenges related to identifying the appropriate technology solutions for their business,

as well as assisting them with securing the training and resources necessary to streamline their business operations and grow profit.

"If existing networks, materials or processes aren't working for a customer, Monica sets time aside to roll up her sleeves, consider the hurdles and create a new path to success because one size does not fit all," Schroeder said.

Wheaton's dedication to helping others extends to people from all walks of life. This includes her work with the Homes for HOPE program, which partners with the building industry in the U.S. and

in Canada to invest in underserved families by utilizing microenterprise development tools – such as business training, mentorship and savings services – to aid women and men in launching or growing businesses and, ultimately, breaking the cycle of generational poverty.

In addition, Wheaton regularly participates in and leads discussions that highlight women in technology, construction and business, and address the unique obstacles they face. Along with being active in the Professional Women in Building Council, she has helped organize small and medium-sized business (SMB) and builder roundtables for the TecHome Builder Summit, 41 Lumber, Women in Residential Construction and NAHB's International Builders' Show.

Wheaton has also been featured in several publications including being named as one of ProBuilder Magazine's "40 Under 40" in 2012 and Builder Innovator, as well as on the Women Talk Construction and Be the Builder of Choice podcasts.



Monica Wheaton, 2023 NAHB Woman of the Year

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 2023 chair, **Linda Garvey**. Chartered in 2021, this council is still relatively new, but is already making great strides in fulfilling its mission of empowering the association's women members and supporting the next generation of women in home building.

They work in constant collaboration with the larger association ("Metro" for short) to help spread the word about PWB – and are focused on growing their council's membership. Between their monthly newsletter, the council's Women of Metro article series and Linda Garvey's monthly pieces for Metro's OnSite magazine, members dedicated thousands of words to lifting women builders up and showcasing the impact a local PWB council can have.



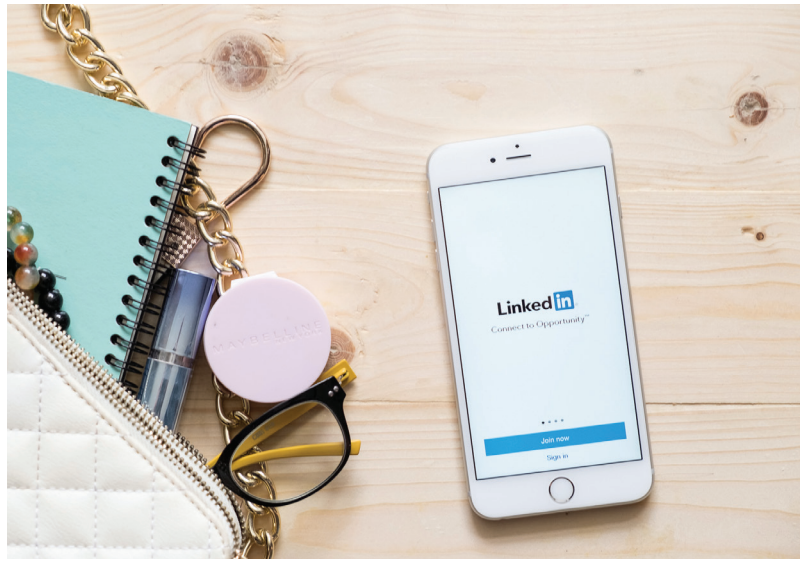
Left to right: 2023 PWB Chair Meg Thompson, Michele Leppard, Metro Building & Contractors Association of New Jersey Executive Officer, Andrea LoMonaco, Tammy Murray, Geraldine Smith, Karen Adamsbaum, Frank Coppola III.

This year's Outstanding Council of the Year in the medium category is **Bismarck-Mandan Home Builders Association's PWB Council** and its 2023 chair, **Kelli Thompson**. One of the council's biggest focuses this year was the next generation of women in building.

Not only did the council volunteer at the local home show with their annual PWB Kids Korner and host several readings of The House that She Built at their local library, they also helped 11 Girl



Left to right: 2023 PWB Chair, Meg Thompson, Vicki Moran and Kelli Thompson.



Let's Talk

With more than 2,000 members, the NAHB Professional Women in Building Network on LinkedIn continues to grow. This public group is a place for PWB members to share business tips and advice, as well as read about residential construction industry news and trends. Search for "NAHB Professional Women in Building" to find us on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1547627>).

Learn more about your fellow NAHB PWB members by sharing photos and videos of what's happening with your local council on the NAHB Professional Women in Building Facebook Group page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nahbpwb>). It boasts more than 4,000 members and is a great place to build community. Be sure to include the hashtag #PWB Proud with your posts.

Scouts earn their The House that She Built patch, making them the first troop in Bismarck, N.D., to earn this patch.

PWB members showed the scouts around a local hardware store to educate them about the materials and tools used in the home building industry before taking them to the garden area to teach them how to build a bee house. Each girl brought home one of their handmade bee houses, while the rest of the houses constructed at the event were donated to the local chapter of Pheasants Forever, a wildlife conservation organization who aims to help the ecosystem by housing thousands of bees.

This year's Outstanding Council of the Year in the large category is **Wilmington-Cape Fear Home Builders Association's PWB Council** and its 2023 chair, **Kate Eames**. One of the council's most popular events this year was a wine-pull event at the HBA's Oyster Roast to raise funds to support workforce development initiatives and provide scholarships to young women aspiring to pursue careers in

the trades. Attendees who made contributions were rewarded with the opportunity to choose from 80 random wine bottles with prices ranging from \$12 to \$100. The council ended up selling every bottle and raised more than \$700.



Left to right: 2023 PWB Chair, Meg Thompson, Colleen Wallace and Cameron Moore, Wilmington-Cape Fear Home Builders Association Executive Officer.

This year's Outstanding Council of the Year in the extra large category is **Southern Nevada Home Builders Association's PWB Council** and its 2023 chair, **Carrie Faulkner**. The council made history with its June Bloom Membership Drive, where they recruited dozens of new members who not only joined the council but participated in its marketing, event and scholarship committees.

The energy and passion that the drive generated in all the council's membership – old and new – continued throughout 2023, resulting in more than 50% member growth. By the end of the year, Southern Nevada HBA's PWB Council had more than 150 members, making it the largest group in the council's history.



Left to right: 2023 PWB Chair, Meg Thompson, Aimee English, Michelle Merrick, Annette Bubak, Kelly Kwasniewski, Shelly Ellis, Ann Salvatore and Chelsea Hamilton.

BuilderTrend Member of the Year

Michelle Merrick is the 2023 recipient of the BuilderTrend Member of the Year, an award that recognizes the achievement of a PWB member at the local and state level. Merrick is the purchasing manager for Blue Heron in Las Vegas, and a founding member of the Southern Nevada HBA PWB Council.

A passionate advocate for mentorship and education, Merrick was instrumental in bringing the Building Hope Scholarship to SNHBA. As a result, the council awarded more than \$70,000 in scholarships over the last eight years, helping more than two dozen women finish their degrees and start careers in construction.

"Michelle has been a trailblazer in creating education opportunities for women in the building industry," Carrie Faulkner, SNHBA PWB chair, said. "Her founding of our council's scholar-

ship program is a testament to her belief in educating and empowering women in this traditionally male-dominated field."

Merrick continues to contribute to her PWB council, creating a supportive environment for women to work on advancing their careers.

In addition, Merrick recently teamed up with Builders and Trades to obtain more than \$150,000 in donations for the PWB's

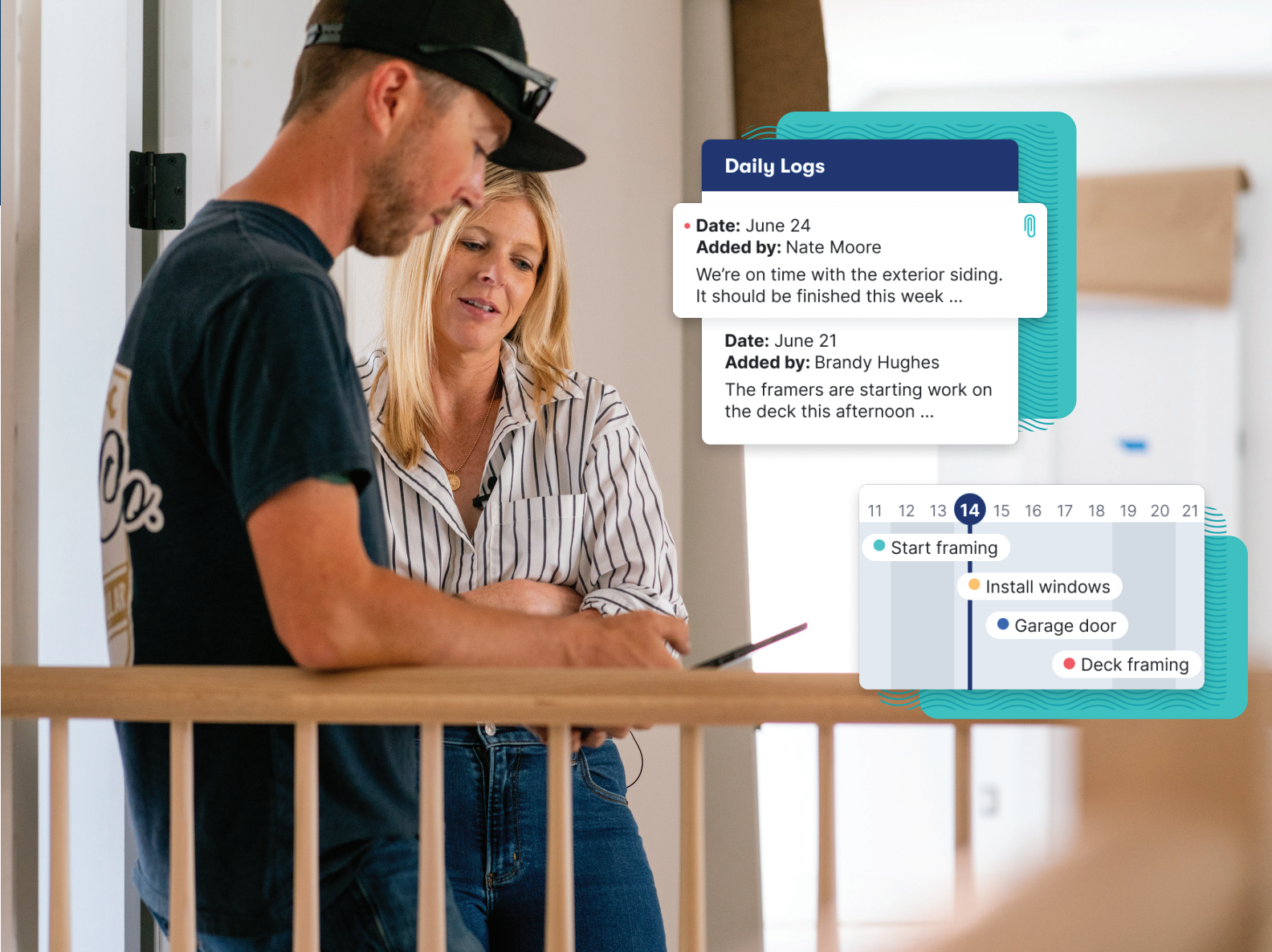
annual Wine Pull, "Uncorked for Scholarships."

"Each year, Michelle has outdone herself and the results are put right into scholarship dollars for women," Faulkner said. "This sort of passion and belief in women and education is admirable and so very needed."

"[Michelle's] founding of our council's scholarship program is a testament to her belief in educating and empowering women in this traditionally male-dominated field."



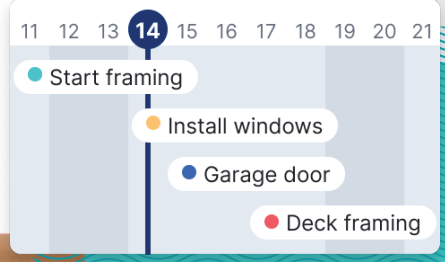
From left: 2023 PWB Chair, Meg Thompson, presenting the BuilderTrend Member of the Year Award to Michelle Merrick.



Daily Logs

• **Date:** June 24
Added by: Nate Moore
We're on time with the exterior siding. It should be finished this week ...

Date: June 21
Added by: Brandy Hughes
The framers are starting work on the deck this afternoon ...



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Minding Your Business

Tech Tools to Help Boost Your Business

PWB members share their go-to apps to help ease workflow and improve business management.

By Heather Laminack

As busy professionals, we often turn to technology to help with our workload. With millions of paid and free apps available, it can be challenging to find the ones that best fit our workflow. To help with this, we crowdsourced our PWB community for their go-to tech solutions that have become instrumental parts of their businesses. Take a look:

SnapSnapSnap

Short on time or a budget for professional real estate photos? BoxBrownie's SnapSnapSnap may be a solution. A game changer for real estate marketing, this app lets you use your iPhone to achieve professional-level photos with a simple point, shoot and send system.

SnapSnapSnap is free, does not require a subscription and does not have in-app ads — and you only pay for the photos you choose to have edited.

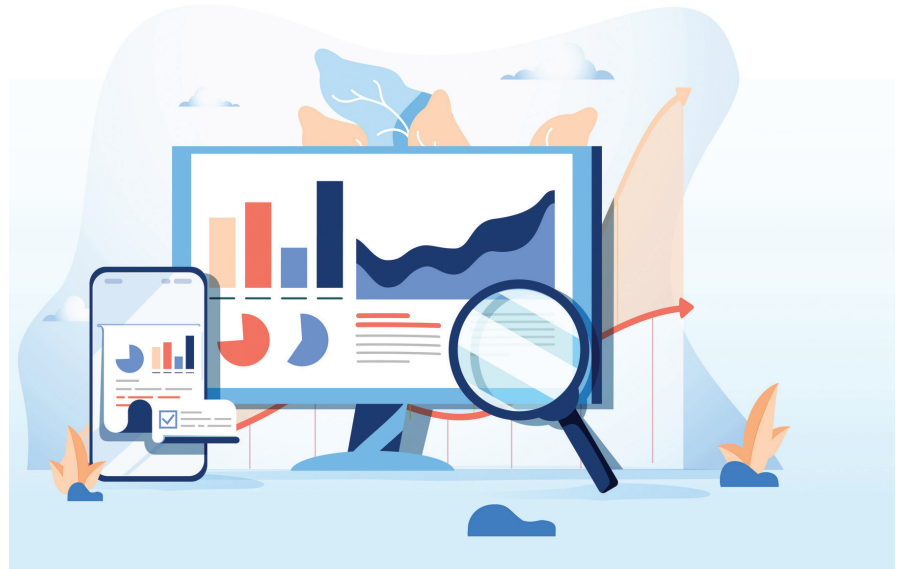
After taking a photo with your smartphone, you use the app to apply image edits at varying costs based on their complexity. For example, the basic Image Enhancement edit costs \$1.60 per image, while the more intricate Virtual Staging option costs \$24 per image.

"SnapSnapSnap is the fastest, simplest and most cost-effective way to take stunning real estate photos on an iPhone," said Meg Thompson, Licensed Real Estate Broker at Meg & Co. Real Estate, Inc. and the 2023 NAHB Professional Women in Building Chair.

Yoast SEO

Search engine optimization (SEO) is crucial to boost traffic to your website, and Yoast SEO can help make your site easier to find in search engine results.

It's a free WordPress plugin with a premium option that costs \$99 per year. There is also a subscription plan that includes Yoast SEO and four SEO plugins (Video SEO, Local SEO, News SEO and WooCommerce SEO), for \$229 per year. The free version of Yoast SEO takes care of "technical" SEO, which



makes your site easier for search engines to parse and ensures visitors to your site are always sent to the right place even if they have an old URL. While the paid versions boast more automation and a greater arsenal of tools, the free version has the necessities for ranking in search engine results.

The WordPress plugin also offers online courses via Yoast SEO Academy that cover SEO-related topics for every skill level, including best practices and ready-to-use templates. Subscribers to the free version are offered five introductory courses, while Premium subscribers get access to all Yoast SEO academy courses.

"It's a tool that I use for my clients' WordPress websites that assists in ensuring the page is properly optimized for search engines," said Mindy Lepp, the 2023 NAHB Professional Women in Building Trustee and marketing director and cofounder at LEPPDESIGN.

Morpholio Trace

When inspiration strikes, Morpholio Trace is a tool that combines the ease of sketching with the precision of computer-aided design.

This app allows you to develop ideas, options and concepts, providing the ability to effectively communicate via drawing markups. You can sketch on top of images, PDFs, maps, photos and drawing sets using a host of designer tools, brushes and pens. Trace is useful for everything from project

concept sketches to site visit markups, enabling you to create and export drawings.

The free version of the app allows you to save up to five projects — more than enough to get a feel for the interface and decide if it works for you. The TracePlus subscription includes up to 20 saved projects, and TracePro offers unlimited projects as well as bonus features that let you sketch over 3D models and "walk through" them using augmented reality.

"I absolutely love Morpholio Trace," said Meg Billings, owner and general contractor at MEG Construction & Design. "It's an architecture drawing app, but I use it for everything from noodling on plans late at night to editing documents. It's super easy to use, really powerful and crazy cheap."

The app works on iPhones and iPads with an Apple Pencil. Billings also recommends a Paperlike brand screen protector to give your phone or tablet the feel of writing and drawing on paper. **BW**



Heather Ferrier Laminack is the general manager of Ferrier Custom Homes, a custom home building company located in Fort Worth, Texas. In her role, she manages the company's workflow pipeline and client partnerships. Laminack is also a member of the Greater Fort Worth Builders Association and 2023 NAHB PWB Membership & Communications Subcommittee Chair and PWB Trustee.



LEADERS BUILD A BETTER WORLD

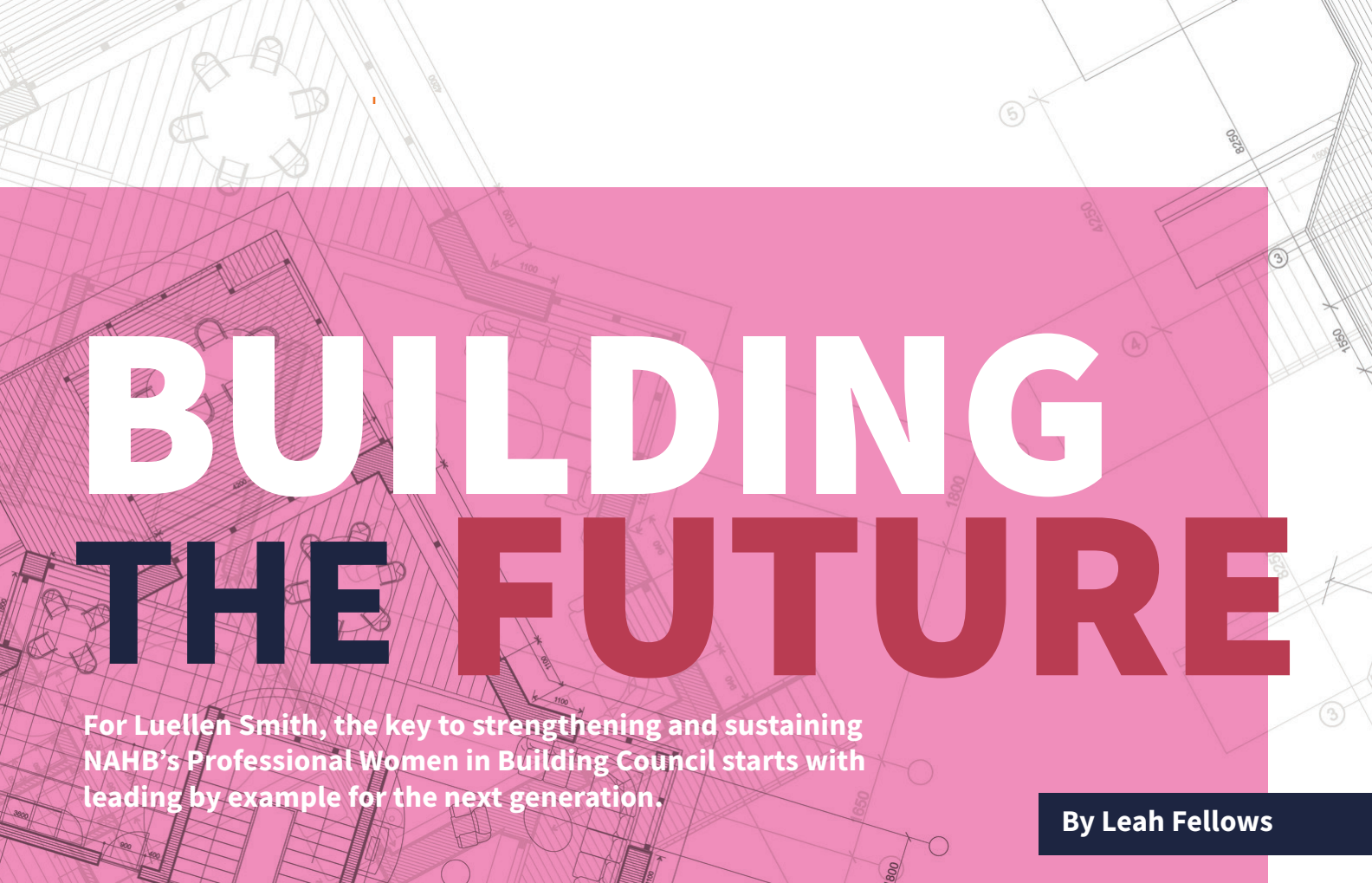
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BUILDING THE FUTURE

For Luellen Smith, the key to strengthening and sustaining NAHB's Professional Women in Building Council starts with leading by example for the next generation.

By Leah Fellows

There are people in the world who put their heart and soul into what they do — and you can feel it in who they are. For Luellen Smith, co-founder and owner of Rhino Wine Cellars & Cooling Systems in Issaquah, Wash., and the NAHB Professional Women in Building Council's (PWB) 2024 National Chair, her dedication to service is palpable.

With more than 30 years of experience as an entrepreneur serving clients around the world, Smith's leadership skills are time-tested. She joined her local PWB council (Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties or MBAKS) in 2014 and hit the ground running. One year later, she joined MBAKS's PWB Executive Committee.

Some of her standout achievements at the local and national level in the following years include:

- Being named the MBAKS's PWB Sandy McAdams Woman of the Year in 2016
- Becoming the NAHB Remodelers Council's Outstanding Associate Member (2017), the NAHB PWB Member of the Year (2018) and winning the Building Industry Association of Washington's (BIAW) Top Spike Award (2016 – 2019)
- Serving as MBAKS's PWB Chair in 2018 and currently serving as NAHB PWB Chair
- Taking on the role of BIAW's Second Vice President in 2023

“WHEN REFLECTING ON MY TIME IN THE HOME BUILDING INDUSTRY, I CHERISH THE FRIENDSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS MADE. WITHIN PWB, I HAVE FOUND WOMEN THAT SHARE MY PASSION FOR CREATING A MORE DIVERSE WORKFORCE, WHILE MAKING HOUSING ATTAINABLE FOR ALL.”

Prioritizing Mentorship and Growth

Smith's theme as the 2024 NAHB PWB Chair is “Building the Future With PWB.”

During PWB's Board of Trustees meeting at the International Builders' Show (IBS) in Las Vegas, she highlighted her key initiatives. This included enhancing knowledge sharing and connectivity among council members nationwide, as well as streamlining PWB-specific resources on NAHB.org.

She also wants to ramp up efforts for local council support and encourage more women to engage in mentorship. Smith plans to do this by leveraging NAHB's MentorMatch program, an online database that pairs mentees and mentors to support members' business improvement needs. She also wants to enhance council engagement in Careers and Construction Month by encouraging PWB councils to organize diverse outreach efforts nationwide.

Another top priority for Smith is establishing a local PWB council in every state.

At IBS 2024, she told members, “Our goal is to expand our reach by an additional 14%, ultimately reaching 102 councils. I'm confident we can achieve this milestone. I'm excited about the future of PWB as our councils continue to flourish and extend their influence.”

Dedicated to Helping Others

Smith's strong work ethic has helped her reach new heights

PROFILE

professionally, but perhaps equally vital is her dedication to volunteerism.

“I volunteer my time because I find joy in mentoring future leaders and advocating for diversity within our industry,” she said.

For a deeper look into what sparked her passion for volunteer work, her college years are a good place to start. She became a member of her sorority, Pi Beta Phi Fraternity for Women, while attending the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Wash.

“Most of my adult life, I’ve been actively engaged in my sorority, locally and nationally. Guiding younger members as they develop leadership skills is immensely fulfilling—a journey of growth and mentorship I enjoy,” she said.

Her appreciation for the women who helped pave the way for her is apparent. That’s why mentorship is an area of focus for her as 2024 NAHB PWB Chair.

Determined to Succeed

Smith’s tenacity stems from navigating two worlds at a young age: growing up on a farm and being among the first in her family to attend college.

“I learned early on the value of determination and hard work from growing up on a farm. Despite financial challenges, I pursued a college education with relentless determination, driven by a focus to achieve my goals,” she recalled.

Farm life helped shape her outlook on doing the hard work.

“Growing up, I developed a strong work ethic from tending to farm chores before and after school. Rain or shine, I learned the value of responsibility, whether milking goats at dawn, collecting eggs or shoveling stalls in extreme weather,” she said.

Smith’s college years solidified her go-getter attitude. She was hired at Nordstrom while in high school and quickly became a high performing salesperson, working up to 30 hours a week while she was in college. This helped develop her drive and focus—all of which were essential when starting her own business later.

“At Nordstrom, I learned the importance of customer service and catering to someone’s unique style and preferences,” she said.

Building a Career

After graduating college, she continued working in management at Nordstrom. During that time, she met her future husband, Doug, who worked in the leisure industry. They married in 1987 and three years later became entrepreneurs. In 1990, they founded Apex Wine Cellars and Saunas, which specialized in manufacturing, designing and installing wine cellars, wine cellar cooling systems and saunas.

Over the next 20 years, the company completed more than 20,000 installations across 18 locations. However, when the Great Recession hit, they decided to sell Apex. They remained in the industry by becoming consultants and created a new



Luellen Smith and her husband, Doug, own and operate Rhino Wine Cellars & Cooling Systems, which is based in Issaquah, Wash.

wine cellar cooling division for a prominent cooling manufacturer. In 2012, the couple was driven by their passion for designing and installing distinctive custom wine cellars to start Rhino Wine Cellars and Cooling Systems.

Retail sales taught Smith a valuable business lesson: You have a limited amount of time to build trust and execute with confidence. This resonates with her today.

“At Rhino Wine Cellars, we are talking with customers to tailor their wine cellar storage to their needs and desires. By understanding the scope of their wine collection and preferences, we ensure the details meet expectations. Our goal is to deliver exceptional quality and satisfaction,” she mentioned.



Luellen Smith pictured with NAHB’s 2024 Third Vice Chair Bob Peterson at the 2023 Fall Leadership Meeting in Palm Springs, Calif.

When divvying up day-to-day business operations, Smith and her husband have taken a “divide and conquer” approach. His main focus is on the design-build work, while she thrives in office operations. This has helped the company continue to grow and build a loyal clientele and strong referrals.

These days, what really excites her is the couple’s son, Trevor, joining the family business. “He



From left: Doug (husband), Luellen, Kelsey (daughter-in-law), Finnegan (grandson), Trevor (son).

intends to build the business long after our retirement,” Smith said. Some of her fellow NAHB builders have even complimented her on how well Trevor is doing.

Speaking about her family brings up many emotions. The past few years have been a roller coaster ride. They experienced the heartbreaking loss of her seven-month-old grandson, Luke, Cassie’s son. A tragedy softened only by the unwavering support of family and friends during difficult times.

Having a strong support system has helped Smith navigate those uncertain times. “At times, life throws us a few curve balls. During the difficult times, we need to let others know. I’m grateful for the emotional support given by friends and family. I have become stronger through adversity,” Smith said. Her faith and family serve as constant motivation and resilience during life’s challenges.

Prepared to Lead

PWB has provided Smith with a network of like-minded colleagues who want women to thrive, succeed and lead in the construction industry.



From left: Doug (husband), Luellen, Cassie (daughter), Hallie (granddaughter) and Jake (son-in-law).

As she steps into her role as the 2024 NAHB PWB Chair, Smith credits everything leading up to this point for preparing her to seize the moment.

“I truly believe that together we can create endless opportunities to build the future,” she said.

However, Smith emphasizes the importance of maintaining momentum, “Creating a welcoming and diverse workforce needs to stay a top priority for future industry growth.”

With mentorship top of mind, Smith is proud to working alongside a talented and dynamic group of women who generously share their knowledge, expertise and support with newcomers in the industry.

“I’m confident that women will play pivotal roles in building the future of the construction industry,” she said. **BW**



Leah Fellows is a national online sales counselor trainer and consultant, as well as the founder of Blue Gypsy, Inc. She works with builders to help hire, train and implement new online sales programs and evaluate and improve their existing programs. Fellows also served as 2023 NAHB PWB Professional Development Subcommittee Chair.



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LESSONS FROM LEADERS



Q&A: A MENTOR'S GUIDANCE CAN HELP PUSH YOUR CAREER FORWARD

Three women share how having a mentor has impacted their professional paths.

BY HEATHER LAMINACK

For novice professionals entering the residential construction field, no two paths are identical. Some start their journey with home building as the ultimate goal, while others take a more indirect path before landing there.

What has proven true for Meg Billings, owner of MEG Construction, Sheila Zentz Stephens, co-owner of Stephens Homes, LLC, and Diana Pauro, founder of Rebel Builders, is that despite how they started in the industry, having a mentor to help guide them along the way has played an integral role in their career growth and success.

Here, they share what led them to the field and how having a mentor influenced the trajectory of their careers.

How did you get your start in the residential construction industry?

MB: I've always loved architecture, but never thought of becoming a home builder. I got my bachelor's degree in manufacturing engineering and love product development. One of the big draws for me was learning programs like Revit and Archicad, because I've always been drawn to beautiful architecture.

Years later when [my husband, Tyler, and I] were building our dream home, our builder had a medical emergency that left him unavailable when our house was to begin framing. It was a tough process [that included] trying to learn what the next steps were and how to get trades to the home without being a general contractor they were familiar with. Once it was finished, I'd fallen head over heels with building homes and knew I couldn't stop.

SZS: My dad was a superintendent for a family-owned commercial firm. I spent many hours driving around with him looking at job sites on the weekends. My husband, Mark, has spent his entire career in residential construction. When we formed Stephens Homes,



Meg Billings



Sheila Zentz Stephens



Diana Pauro

LLC in 2014, I decided to quit the insurance industry, which I'd worked in since graduating college, to support our business with my organizational skills.

DP: I started when I was in high school. I loved art and science and lived in a tiny rural town in North Argentina. I had the opportunity to become a drafter for an architect that let me do site supervision. It was a lot of fun.

Did a mentor play a role in your career journey?

MB: I've had many mentors in my career journey. My husband is one. His savvy business mind and quick-start mentality pushed me to do things that I would've preferred to belabor to death. I've also had many trade partners that were so kind through all my mistakes and helped me learn the ropes of the industry. Weighing on their expertise has helped me grow and learn so much more than I ever would have on my own.

SZS: I've had several mentors. Their belief in me is what has pushed me forward to accomplish things I did not see myself doing. One of these was starting with leadership in my local PWB council [Home Builders Association of Metro Portland]. These ladies were very strong leaders in very male-dominated industries.

DP: I've always sought out advice from professionals in my community. There have been several people in key moments that have

given me great advice and support, but you must be looking and asking for it. One was my partner in Argentina, Paula Garelo.

Another was my boss, Pipo Ferrero, when I was on the teaching staff at my university [Universidad Nacional de Cordoba] in Cordoba, Spain. Pipo would always remind me to keep it macro. Sometimes I love getting into rabbit holes and try to solve intricate problems, but he taught me to see the whole picture to be able to service people better.

Any advice for women considering entering the residential construction industry?

MB: What are you waiting for? You can control your hours, you can be creative, meet amazing people and watch someone's dream come together. There is so much support for women through the PWB. It really is an incredible career.

SZS: Do it! Women can shine in this business, regardless of the role. We are naturally intuitive and know how to regroup, if necessary, to get things done. It is a great place for women to earn good money and have a very rewarding career. You do not have to "fit into a man's world." Be yourself, be respectful and be responsible.

DP: Take the leap. There is so much room for all of us. Collaboration over competition — and just reach out if you need a pep talk or support. **BW**



Heather Ferrier Laminack is the general manager of Ferrier Custom Homes, a custom home building company located in Fort Worth, Texas. In her role, she manages the company's workflow pipeline and client partnerships. Laminack is also a member of the Greater Fort Worth Builders Association and served as 2023 NAHB PWB Membership & Communications Subcommittee Chair and PWB Trustee.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is an excerpt of Q&A interviews. It has been edited for clarity and length.



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THE NEXT GENERATION: Younger Women Entering the Residential Construction Field Blaze New Trails

BY LUELLEN SMITH

Younger women are becoming drawn to careers in the home building industry. That's largely due to changing mindsets about the value of job opportunities in the trades.

Trade schools cost far less than traditional colleges and allow students, including those interested in pursuing construction management, to enter the workforce after just two years.



Consider this: The average cost of undergraduate tuition and fees at a four-year public institution is \$9,700 compared to just \$4,000 at a two-year school, according to recent data from the National Center for Educational Statistics. That could be the difference between having significant student loan debt after graduation that takes a decade or more to pay off — or being able to clear your debt with Uncle Sam within a few years of graduating.

For Emma Wilson, Crystal Moore and Ashley Medina, the call to enter the construction industry was clear. Here, they share their journeys and highlight how the NAHB Professional Women in Building Council has helped them take their careers to the next level.

Emma Wilson: Following Her Passion

Joining the construction workforce was a natural fit for Wilson, who's a foreman and head of custom cabinet design, construction, assembly and delivery for Marathon Craftsmen LLC in Valparaiso, Ind. As a child, her parents had to hide the power tools because she'd use them for unsupervised projects around the house.

That passion for building continued through middle and high school. Unfortunately, some of her teachers weren't so supportive. They advised Wilson to pursue a medical or science career because of her stellar grade point average.

"None of my teachers were willing to give me advice on how to get into my dream career. They all tried to convince me that I was making a mistake."

Thankfully, her parents connected her with a local carpenter named Joe Drew in 2021. He took Wilson under his wing and eventually hired her at Marathon Craftsmen. She's extremely appreciative of his patience and guidance as she's navigated the industry. "He teaches me a lot about how a business is run and how to manage employees and coworkers," Wilson said.

She also praises the strong women in the field who've played a key role in her professional development. Lisa Aldred, builder and owner of Aldred Homes, has advised her on how to maintain respect from the men she supervises. Dannelle Gora, co-founder of DG2, has provided sage advice on the importance of continued education and training.

Wilson, who spoke about her career journey at the PWB HQ during the 2023 International Builders' Show, says finding a professional network like PWB has reaffirmed that following her passion was the right move. "The next generation needs to see there's a place for them in this line of work," she noted. "Hopefully, that will make them less scared of chasing the career that calls to them."

Crystal Moore: Finding Her Way

For many women who enter a male-dominated industry, feelings of self-doubt on the job can creep up. One of the biggest challenges early on for Moore, a Journeyman carpenter based in Seattle, Wash., was coping with anxiety that stemmed from being the only woman pursuing construction in her college courses.

Nearly a decade ago, she chose to return to school and enrolled in community college. When selecting a career path, she knew she wanted to do something hands-on and chose carpentry despite having no experience.

In 2022, she was awarded a scholarship by the local PWB Council at the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties. Gaining exposure to PWB while in school was the motivation she needed to push forward despite those feelings of uncertainty.

When she attended the ceremony to accept the scholarship, it was her first experience being around other women in construction. She walked away inspired and the scholarship helped her pay for classes and school supplies. "I just took that leap and completed the two-year program," Moore said. She quickly discovered that she loved carpentry.

After graduating school, Moore dealt with discrimination, harassment and gender bias. This caused her to second guess her job choice. At the time, her male colleagues weren't eager to help or partner with her on projects. She would be assigned tasks like sweeping and cleaning, instead of being able to develop her trade.

Moore eventually joined JTM Construction, where she worked as a carpenter for nearly eight years. The company has provided the equitable work environment she's always craved. She says her employer is willing to educate staff on diversity and treating colleagues with respect. There's even a mentorship program that includes monthly check-ins.

It's important to create a positive workplace culture for women in the industry. Having worked for a company and being part of a professional network, such as PWB, that encourages skill growth, diversity and equity has been a game-changer for Moore and her career.

Ashley Medina: Creating Her Own Lane

As a first generation Mexican-American, Medina's can-do attitude has influenced her career choices. Her parents, who immigrated to the United States, didn't graduate high school. "As far as higher education, I kind of had to pave my own way," she said.

Carving your own path with little experience can be challenging. Being proactive by reaching out to people for guidance who've faced similar issues has helped her navigate those situations.

Medina, who received a Master of Architecture degree at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas in May 2024, works at Dustland Studio as a job captain. She started out at the firm as an architectural intern in 2023. "The vision is to really grow and be a part of the team there and help Las Vegas build better buildings for the community." For her, this means progressing to working on commercial projects, libraries and government buildings.

She hopes to one day become a principal at an architecture firm. Observing women in leadership roles along the way has been a big motivator. Last summer, she worked at Klai Juba Wald Architecture + Interiors and saw women in leading positions firsthand.

Within the local building community, she credits Michelle El Britaga of Carpenter Cellars Del Gatto as being a role model.

In 2022, she was awarded the NAHB PWB Building Hope Scholarship. The money she received aided in her educational pursuits. "Without it, I don't know if I could have paid for my [bachelor's] degree or continued to pay for my second degree."

Medina recognizes the significance of organizations that provide women with growth opportunities. "Organizations like PWB [offer] a support system to lean on when we need help. If ever we fall into a place where we're struggling, those organizations are a good place to turn to and say 'Hey, is there anyone who can help me?,' she said.

Just as vital to Medina is building a professional network that forces you to push yourself. To this day, she remains in close contact with her high school and college mentors who continue to support her. "It's important to build a community of people around you that supports you . . . and has goals that are bigger than yours," she said. **.bw**



Luellen Smith is the co-founder and owner of Rhino Wine Cellars & Cooling Systems, a custom wine cellar and sauna design/build company, based in the Seattle area. She is also 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.

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TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Clothing for the Jobsite

BY TANYA CROMWELL

In 30 years of working in the home building industry – both in the office and building homes in the field – I’ve worn all sorts of clothing that doesn’t fit or isn’t safe. I’ve found that it’s a challenge to find durable, functional clothing that fits and makes me feel like a woman. The ongoing workforce shortage is spurring many employers to

reach out to women to fill construction jobs. While most tools are gender neutral, there is now a growing need for women’s clothing and safety gear.

Luckily, there are a few great companies filling that need.

Iron Elk

Iron Elk is a woman-owned business that Laura Biggerstaff started because she kept hearing that there was no clothing that fit women working in the construction industry. She went full-time with her product line in 2018.

When you order from Iron Elk, you can expect great customer service. When I called the company, Laura was the one who answered the phone.

She provides properly fitting safety apparel and PPE for both men and women because “one size does not fit all.” Iron Elk carries everything from flame resistant clothing to safety boots, pants, vests and shirts.

Visit: www.ironelk.com



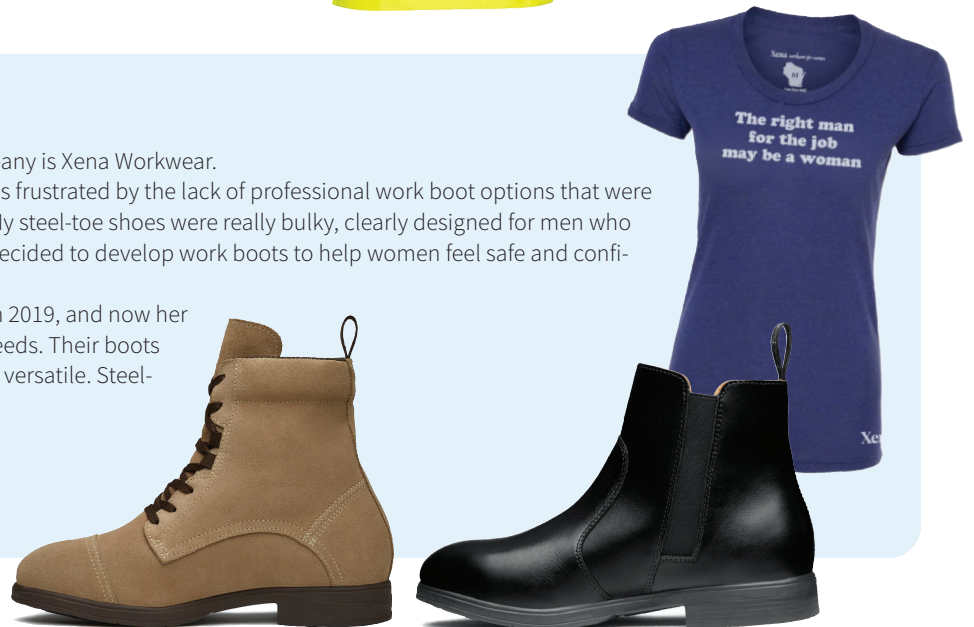
Xena Workwear

Another great woman-owned company is Xena Workwear.

“Working as a project engineer, I was frustrated by the lack of professional work boot options that were available to women,” Ana Kraft said. “My steel-toe shoes were really bulky, clearly designed for men who have anatomically different feet. So I decided to develop work boots to help women feel safe and confident.”

She developed her first prototype in 2019, and now her company offers boots for all sorts of needs. Their boots are certified, non-slip, light, comfy and versatile. Steel-toe shoes never looked this good.

Visit: xenaworkwear.com



Dovetail Workwear

Founded in 2018, Dovetail Workwear makes top-to-toe, all-season, all-reason utility workwear for women.

Their mission is to “encourage women to enter and succeed in non-traditional occupations. We envision the future as all women fulfilling their personal potential, thriving in their work, and strengthening their communities.”

Dovetail Workwear offers a wide variety clothing and their website displays their products on women of all sizes There are even videos of women moving in their workwear to show it in action. One of my favorite pieces is the drop seat overalls — what a genius idea!

Visit: dovetailworkwear.com



Final Thoughts

It is great to see that companies are serving the clothing needs of women who work in construction. Work clothing that is not only durable and protective but is designed expressly for women can make a big difference in comfort and fit, while helping us feel like ourselves on the job.

Ana from Xena Workwear summed it up perfectly when she said, “It’s already an uphill battle for women to fit into certain industries

and a lack of confidence caused by awful workwear is an unnecessary barrier. Professional women deserve to feel their best when they’re on the job.” **BW**



Tanya Cromwell is a designer, builder, and founder of Idaho Home Design and Caddis Builders LLC and has over 30 years of expertise in the building industry. Also, Cromwell served as a 2023 NAHB PWB Trustee.



BOSCH

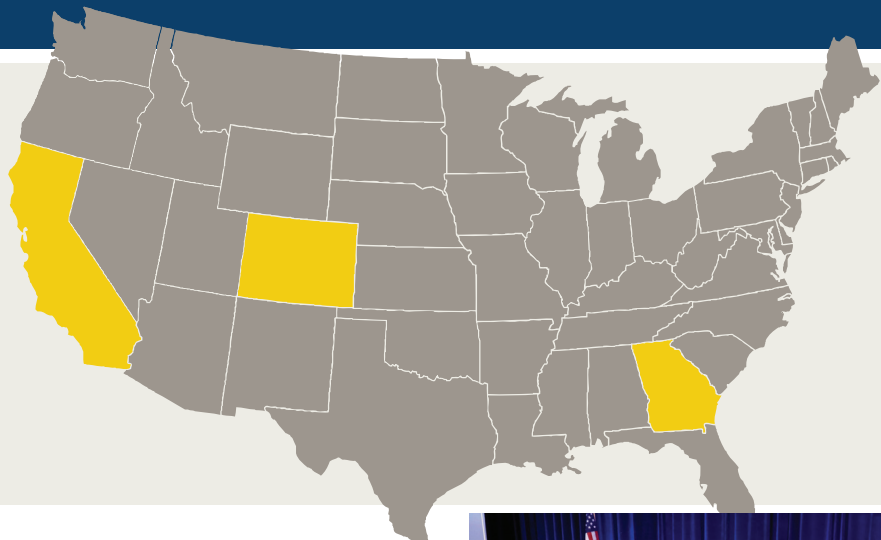
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Coast to Coast



California Building Industry Association

CBIA PWB Council hosted its first booth during the Pacific Coast Builders Conference (PCBC). The booth was staffed by members and served as a great way to educate conference attendees about who CBIA PWB is, highlight key initiatives and recruit new members.

This event provided the PWB members in attendance with an opportunity to network, as well as gave the council a place to distribute membership and scholarship applications, and support essential workforce development programs, answer questions about the importance of joining NAHB, CBIA and local PWBs. It was also a great space to hold a book signing event for speaker Liz Forkin Bohannon after the CBIA PWB brunch event.



Home Builders Association of Central Coast

HBACC PWB Council held a fundraiser during the HBA's annual golf tournament. PWB Chair Lindy Hatcher set up a golf professional to offer a hole-in-two fundraiser. A professional golfer attended and drove the ball at least 400 yards and players had the opportunity to give a pay-to-play donation. If the player got a hole-in-two on their first shot from the professional drive spot, they could win a trip to Pebble Beach and three rounds of golf for two.

HBACC raised more than \$3,000 with part of the proceeds (\$2,000) being donated to Cal Poly's Student Chapter for their trip to the International Builders' Show. Another \$500 went to the Paso Robles High School Student Chapter to participate in their Design Build competition, purchase PPE and other needed items.

Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association

PWB Atlanta focused heavily on creating an atmosphere conducive to maintaining and increasing its membership. The Membership Committee created a new membership application that focuses on the "why?" of PWB membership. The document features a bulleted list of member benefits including: the inclusion of National PWB membership with a local membership, the ability to build lasting professional and personal relationships, as well as opportunities to network and learn with other members. The application includes a unique QR code with access to the online application so potential members can quickly and easily join. Some of the tactics the Membership Committee used to grow the council include:



- Hosted a membership call-a-thon to reach out to lapsed or soon-to-lapse members.
- At every board meeting, asking if anyone has a personal relationship with recently lapsed or soon-to-lapse members to initiate contact and ask for renewal.
- Offering gift cards to any non-member who joins while attending an in-person event.
- Committee members are automatically notified when a new member joins online. All members are welcomed with a personal email from a committee member. During this process change, Atlanta PWB started with 94 members and completed the year with 127 active members – a 35% increase.

Housing and Building Association of Western Colorado

To end PWB Week, the HBA of Western Colorado PWB Council members braved the rainy morning weather to donate their time to their local Habitat for Humanity of Mesa County Colorado and assist framing a house.

COLORADO



Metro Denver Home Builders Association

Metro Denver gained momentum with their second annual women's conference. They welcomed three nationally recognized speakers including Terri Everhart, 2022 NAHB PWB Chair and 2020 NAHB's Woman of the Year; Arezou Zarafsha CEO of Call Emmy and Simone Ross, CEO of the Colorado Women's Chamber of Commerce. Each addressed one of the three "Es" from PWB's mission statement: Engage, Empower and Energize.

Set up in TEDx fashion, each speaker hosted a session followed by a breakout activity. This conference reached more than 100 attendees – equal to 64% of our membership at the time and netted \$2,050 towards their local HBA.



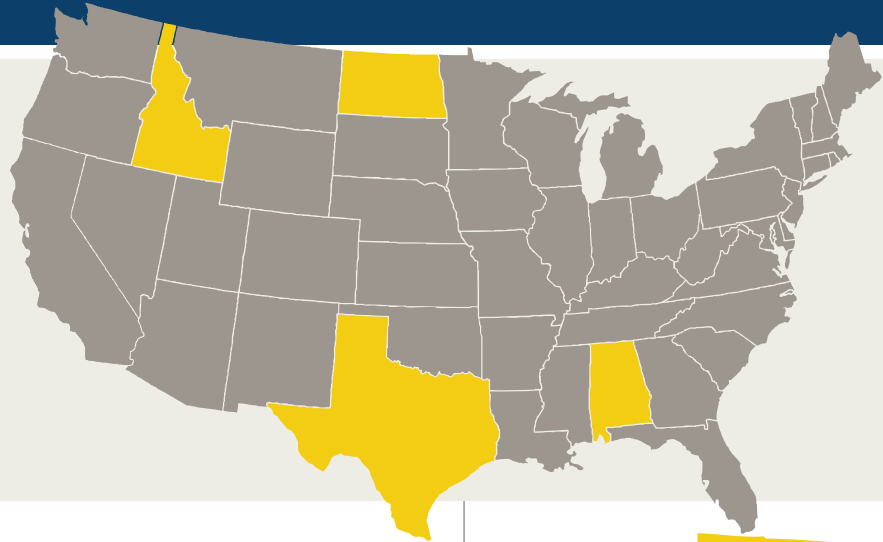
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Coast to Coast



Building Contractors Association of Southwest Idaho

(BCASWI) PWB Council in conjunction with the West Ada School District's Career Technical Education (CTE) Program conducted its second annual Parade of Homes - Pet Edition. This event, which was held at The Village at Meridian, showcased 15 original pet homes designed and built by the Construction 1 course students in West Ada's CTE program.

There were also raffle tickets for sale for a chance to win one of the pet-friendly structures. Sponsorships of the event

and the sale of raffle tickets benefited the Professional Women in Building Council of SWI's Construction Trade Education Scholarship Fund.

After their inaugural event in 2022, the PWB council was able to award nine scholarships to graduating 2023 seniors who pursued further education in a construction trade program or construction-related focus at a two- or four-year educational institution. This currently underserved industry offers incredible opportunity and the PWB and West Ada's CTE Education program are dedicated to supporting students to further their education towards a fulfilling career.



NORTH DAKOTA

Bismarck-Mandan Home Builders Association

Bismarck-Mandan HBA showed their commitment to workforce development by partnering with the Girl Scouts and a local Career Academy. This PWB council was engaged in the first The House That She Built Girl Scout patch in North Dakota and gave the local Girl Scout troop a tour of a home under construction. They also built bee houses at a Lowe's home improvement store with the troop.

It was a great experience resulting in 42 houses constructed by 11 girls who received a The House that She Built patch. There were five volunteers from PWB Bismarck-Mandan ranging from a recent graduate to business owners. The pine boards were cut and pre-drilled by the Bismarck School Career Academy High School Interior Carpentry class.



Greater Fort Worth Builders Association

The GFWBA PWB Council's commitment to mental health and well-being was showcased through a successful event that prioritized mental health, raising awareness and offering support to our community. This council has actively

contributed to the local community by organizing and participating in a fundraiser for the local charity Safe Haven. These efforts have not only helped raise much-needed funds, but have also strengthened their bond with the community they serve. These achievements reflect their dedication to making a positive impact and enhancing the well-being of those in the community.



Greater Birmingham Association of Home Builders

GBAHB PWB and Young Professionals (YP) embarked on a transformative partnership exemplifying their commitment to community empowerment. Together, the groups constructed a tiny library and three park benches at Build UP Birmingham, a program focused on providing low-income youth with career-ready skills through apprenticeships and academic coursework.

This initiative helped contribute to the physical enhancement of the Build UP Birmingham campus and opened doors for the young adults involved.

Their support extended beyond the construction work. GBAHB PWB and YP ensured that the students' experience was memorable by providing them with t-shirts, construction tool-shaped cookies and fostering a sense of camaraderie and pride in their achievements.

Additionally, Alicia Huey, NAHB Immediate Past Chair, was an active participant in the project and praised their efforts. Notably, the tiny library they constructed received its inaugural book, *The House That She Built*, symbolizing their dedication to education and empowerment. By providing access to literature, they have taken a step towards fostering a culture of knowledge and growth within the community.



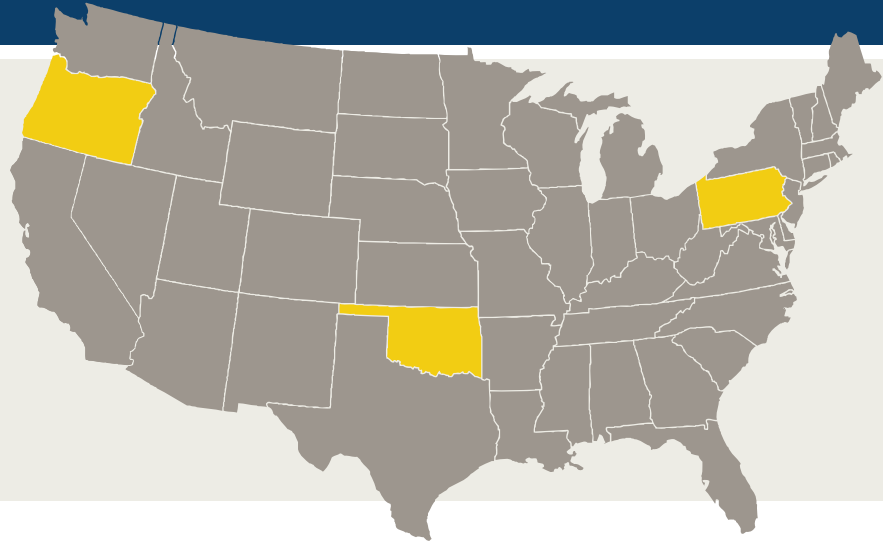
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Power of PWB

Coast to Coast



Home Builders Association of Marion and Polk Counties

This newer council has been on the move in the community. They coordinated an all-female crew of members to refurbish the living room at Simonka's Place, which is local a women's shelter.

This PWB council has also helped facilitate outreach to their local career technical high school's residential construction program. Council members taught financial skills to the students, participated in mock interviews and spoke with the students. Also, council members applied for and received a grant from the National Housing Endowment's Skilled Labor Fund for materials to be used at career fairs while raising awareness about the career opportunities in the building industry.

OREGON



OKLAHOMA

Home Builders Association of Greater Tulsa

Greater Tulsa PWB Council has actively contributed to workforce development through Union Public Schools' Union Innovation Lab and Construction Program, involving member donations and advisory roles. Additionally, this PWB council facilitated a cookie construction competition for local Girl Scouts that focused on design creativity and construction quality. Also, in collaboration with their HBA, the Greater Tulsa PWB Council organized an obstacle course build event for the annual Build My Future program, which exposed more than 1,000 local high school students to skilled trades.

Building Association of Metro Pittsburgh

For a relatively new council, one of the Building Association of Metro Pittsburgh's biggest events includes its Nite at the Races event, which raised more than \$19,000 for scholarships for women in the trades. This included: a year-long paid scholarship to the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence class of 2024 (\$5,500 value), two full memberships for the Builders Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh (BAMP) and their PWB council, six \$500 scholarships to women from their local high schools going into trade schools, six \$500 scholarships to women enrolled in higher education schools for a certificate or career in building. The PWB council hopes their donations of scholarships bring more attention to the building trades and helps women pursue their professional endeavors.

PENNSYLVANIA



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.

- 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.

I am honored to have been selected for the Professional Women in Building Strategies for Success Scholarship. Coming from a family of four, the demands of meeting college tuition and living expenses during such economic times are severe. Your organization's recognition and financial award greatly assists me in reaching my goals. I convey my sincerest gratitude and inspiration to share your example of confidence and financial support with future students in the construction field. Thank you!

Alex Platt
University of Cincinnati
BS Construction Management | Min Real Estate | Cert Planning
Class of 2024

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.

How to Give

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



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.

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 10, 2025.

[apply.nationalhousingendowment.org](https://www.nahb.org/education)

The Strategies for Success Scholarship has allowed me to focus my time and energy on my educational and career goals compared to worrying about how I was going to financially afford to further my education at Kent State University and a semester in Florence, Italy. I am beyond thankful for the opportunities the National Housing (Endowment) has provided for me!

Melina Carna
Kent State University
BA Interior Design
Class of 2024



Events of Note

PWB launches the “Leading With Impact” video series (sponsored by Lowe’s Pro)

Women experts from diverse industries share best practices on various aspects of leadership development. Go to nahb.org/education to register for the series.

The International Builders’ Show (Feb. 25-27, 2025)

The largest annual light construction show in the world. For more details and to register, go to buildersshow.com.

The Nationals

Purchase tickets for the 2025 awards ceremony taking place during the International Builders’ Show. Learn more at thenationals.com.

NAHB PWB Week (Sept. 15-19, 2025)

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

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.

Women in Residential+Commercial Construction Conference (annually in the Fall 2025)

Women working in construction gather to participate in education sessions, roundtable discussions and networking events with top female leaders. Go to womensconstructionconference.com for more details.

NAHB Professional Women in Building Council 70th anniversary (2025)

Recognizing the significant impact that PWB has had on helping increase the number of women entering the residential construction industry since its inception in 1955 as the NAHB Women’s Auxiliary.



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 15-19, 2025



PWB Week Sponsor



Find marketing resources,
articles and ideas to celebrate at
nahb.org/pwbweek

It Takes Dedication and Commitment to Build a Strong Local PWB

Terri Schelm

Terri Schelm, EO for the Home Builders Association of Greater Siouxland (Iowa), is grateful for the immense positive impact their local PWB Council has had on their HBA.

“The group was established to strengthen our organization, particularly by supporting the Siouxland Home Show, which has a 68-year history,” Schelm said. Since its formation as the Sioux City Home Builder Auxiliary in 1980, the council has managed the vendors’ lounge during the show, which provides refreshments for all exhibitors.

Now, the PWB Council plays a huge role in the HBA’s yearly programming by spearheading its philanthropic efforts. Throughout the year, they raise money for numerous charities, as well as donate and decorate a Christmas



Terri Schelm

“The group was established to strengthen our organization, particularly by supporting the Siouxland Home Show, which has a 68-year history.”

tree for the local Festival of Trees. They’ve also participated in the Blitz Build for Habitat for Humanity.

During the HBA’s annual banquet, the council hosts a silent auction to raise money for the HBA’s High School Trades Scholarship Program. This year, they were able to award \$9,000 in high school scholarships thanks to these efforts.

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“One key to our success is the sense of community among our members, who make the organization feel like a group of caring friends and family,” Schelm said. She is constantly inspired by the women of Siouxland’s PWB, who love the building industry, care for their local community and act as leaders and role models for the entire organization.

Jim Eichenlaub

Chartered in 2023, the Builders Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh (BAMP)’s PWB Council has grown to nearly 100 members in less than two years. What has been key to their success? Having a core group of HBA members who were enthusiastic and motivated to start a local council, says Jim Eichenlaub, BAMP’s Executive Director. “The success of our council was made possible by members who saw the benefits of a local PWB.”

With founding members who were willing to go the extra mile, Eichenlaub provided the resources and support they needed with guidance from NAHB PWB, as well as executive officers from other local councils.

For BAMP, having a local council allowed them to provide a safe space for members who were looking to network in a particular environment that didn’t previously exist. An added bonus: Having a local council has not only motivated their volunteers to serve on PWB committees, but also on other committees within the HBA.

When speaking about the value of having a local council, Eichenlaub says, “Having a PWB [has] served as a catalyst to recruiting new members to the association who then joined the



“Having a PWB [has] served as a catalyst to recruiting new members to the association who then joined the PWB.”

PWB.” He also highlights how BAMP PWB’s enthusiastic volunteers have reenergized initiatives that had previously fallen short, such as raising funds for scholarships.

As for the council’s recruitment efforts, Eichenlaub works to ensure it has the staffing and administrative support that’s needed without standing in the way of their success. They target non-traditional prospective members and women business owners who may have felt the association wasn’t a place for them, because they viewed it as male-dominated and not welcoming to everyone in the industry.

For any EOs on the fence about starting a local PWB council, Eichenlaub admits to initially being skeptical. He thought BAMP was already serving its women members and that starting one would create “another administrative burden to an already stretched staff.” He quickly changed course thanks to the numerous volunteers and PWB leadership that organized and took ownership of the endeavor.

“It provides an invaluable service to a growing segment of our industry and has infused enthusiasm within [our] membership.” **BW**

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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