

BUILDING SCENE

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BUILDING SCENE'S NAMES & PLACES

ESD award program

ESD is accepting entries for its 1993 construction and design awards program, now in its 19th year. The award honors projects designed and built by Michigan firms, ranging from private homes to public work projects. Winners are the building teams of architects and engineers, general contractors and owners.

Buildings must have been completed after Jan. 1, 1989 to qualify. March 1 is the deadline for entries. Winners will be announced in late March and honored at ESD's 99th annual meeting June 4.

To submit an entry, call Jill Van Doornik at 995-4440.

ESD — the Engineering Society, is a multi-disciplinary engineering and scientific society.

Project management

Lawrence Technological University will hold a series of reviews starting Feb. 6 to prepare persons for the certification examination leading to the project management professional (PMP) designation.

Project management course of study is being pursued in the fields of architecture, interior design, engineering, computer services and information process, and business. The all-day reviews will be offered on four consecutive Saturdays in February.

Topics to be covered are: cost, scope, time, quality, risk, communications, human resources and contract/procurement. Participants will receive course materials approved by the Project Management Institute, a sample exam, and strategies in taking the exam. All instructors are certified PMPs. Cost is \$495 for PMI members and \$695 for non-members.

LTU is at 10 mile and Northwestern Highway in Southfield. For more information, call Karen Todd at 356-0200, ext. 4020.

Levin speaks at ESD

The future of construction infrastructure under the Clinton administration will be Sen. Carl Levin's topic when he addresses the ESD Construction Activities Committee luncheon beginning at 11:30 a.m. Jan. 12 at the Rackham Memorial Building in Detroit.

Tickets are \$22 for ESD members and \$25 for non-members. For reservations, call 995-4440. The committee was established to foster improvements in the construction industry and is comprised of members representing a balanced cross-section of the industry, including design professionals, owners/users, contractors, suppliers and support services.

ArchITECTURE at LTU

Lawrence Technological University and the Detroit chapter of American Institute of Architects will sponsor a Jan. 14th visit by David Childs, chief executive officer of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, the largest architectural firm in the country. Skidmore will be in the specialty. The speaker is scheduled to arrive by 7 p.m. for the 7:30 lecture at LTU's College of Architecture and Design auditorium at 10 Mile and Northwestern Highway, Southfield.

Landscape classes

The Bingham Farms-based Metropolitan Detroit Landscape Association will offer classes for those who want to become certified applicators or registered technicians or those wishing to recertify their certified applicator status.

The certified applicator class will be taught Jan. 26-28. Training cost is \$160.

The registered technician training will be offered Jan. 26-27. Training cost is \$100.

Recertification training will be held Jan. 28. Fee is \$50.

All attendees must pre-register. Registration is 8-8:30 a.m. Classes will run 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Wayne County Regional Educational Center, 6464 Venoy, Wayne. Additional fees may apply prior to final licensing by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and must be prepaid.

For more information, call the MDLA, 646-4992.

Estimating seminar

Bidding and estimating will be the topic of a seminar sponsored by the Metropolitan Detroit Landscape Association Feb. 8 and 9 at the Sheraton Oaks Hotel, Novi.

Estimating techniques, bidding, cost tracking, overhead factors and the role of the estimator will be discussed. The seminar is geared to landscape and irrigation contractors, estimators, landscape architects and landscape maintenance contractors.

Charles Vander Kool, a veteran of 28 years in the construction industry, will be the speaker.

Seminar hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. both days. Cost is \$250 for the first person and a company. \$200 for each additional person up to four persons. Pre-registration is a must. Call 646-4992 for more information.



New president: Fred Capaldi of Rochester Hills will serve as president of the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan this year. "You never quit learning about your business," he said. "You've got to read, attend meetings, find out what's going on."

Builder pushes continuing education

Cooperation between builders and the community on growth/no-growth issues is among items on the agenda of the newly elected president of the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan.

By DOUG FUNKE
STAFF WRITER

Fred Capaldi, a Rochester Hills builder and resident, can recall more than 25 years after the fact how he happened to join what was then known as the Builders Association of Metropolitan Detroit.

"My dad, M. Fred, had been a member many years ago but, frankly, I forgot why he dropped out," Capaldi said. "We got a call from Dick Forbush of Kimball & Russell, a supplier. He invited us to join."

"I asked my dad, 'What do you think?'"

"He asked, 'Are you going to make this a profession?'"

"I answered, 'Yes, I'm going to be a builder.'"

"Then join a professional builder's association," he said. "It gives you credibility. Attorneys, doctors have their own. It says you're a professional."

Now, Capaldi, 49, is incoming president of the Builders Association of

Southeastern Michigan, which he said is the third largest nationally with some 1,760 members.

"Going to meetings, national and state conventions, I always learn something, whether it's a legislative matter coming up or a seminar to teach you how to do something," Capaldi said. "I think it's made a better businessman out of me."

"I don't care what you're in — journalism, medicine or building — you never quit learning about your business," he said. "You've got to read, attend meetings, find out what's going on."

Annual dues — \$420 for builders, suppliers and service organizations like financial institutions and utilities, \$345 for subcontractors — provide professional staff assistance, discounts on office supplies and insurances, publications, and seminars, he said.

Capaldi said he annually builds about 10 custom houses ranging from \$175,000 to \$600,000 on scattered lots. Remodeling and restoration

projects now account for about 40 percent of his work, he said.

At one time, Capaldi thought that he might want to be a doctor. But he found himself attracted to the Wall Street Journal and real estate publications more than biology and chemistry texts and eventually earned a degree in economics from the University of Detroit.

"I started working when I was 12 and I've done everything on a job site — plumbing, electrical, roofing — except excavating," Capaldi said. "And I will do that, too. At the same time, I've done everything in the office."

"I like to do things with my hands," he said. "As a teenager, I had a good buddy and we were always building things like cars with lawnmower engines. I was always building something."

"I'd spend hours playing with an Erector set. I had a summer job all the time, a weekend job. We talked about building at the dinner table. I guess I was drawn in and never knew it was happening."

Capaldi's goals as BASM president are straightforward.

"I still think we're facing issues like wetlands and woodlands. We'd like to add our input to communities when they're writing ordinances . . .

so others can see what our problems are and we can write ordinances that are fair and equitable to everybody.

"One of the main things I'd like to see happen is cooperation between builders and the community on growth where everyone is happy. I think we've made some real strides and I'd like to carry that further."

"Good growth, instead of explosive, is steady, something that blends in with the community," he said. "It's cooperative and tries to meet demands of people moving into the community."

Capaldi also wants to provide more professional enhancement opportunities for builders and expand the membership rolls.

Capaldi's wife, Barbara, is office manager for the family-owned building company, Son, Tim, a student at Lawrence Technological University, has expressed interest in joining the business. Daughters Maria, Angela and Crista have other interests.

When not building or participating in BASM activities Capaldi likes to play tennis and golf and linker.

"Any time spent in this association is an education," he said. "You don't have to put in a lot if you don't want to, but the more you put in, the more you get out."

Architect welcomes industry upturn

By R.J. KING
SPECIAL WRITER

The lamps are beginning to glow in greater numbers over drafting tables and in design studios as the architectural profession slowly recovers from one of the industry's worst downturns.

As the economy fell into a recession, and a glut of office space outpaced demand, the trauma of pink

slips and red ink forced many architects to rethink the way they did business, or whether to stay in business at all.

"We see some signs that we're coming out of the downturn. There are more proposals out there, and health care still remains a viable market," said Gary Skog, vice president and principal with Harley Ellington Pierce Yee Associates in Southfield.

Skog, who was recently selected president of the metro Detroit chapter of the American Institute of Architects for a one-year term, said firms in business today have survived due to diversification and a demand for educational and large corporate facilities.

But other markets — industrial, office, residential and retail — are slow, as many firms continue to

downsize and banks hold fast on lending, though the banking industry recently reported 1992 would be its most profitable year, lending some to project more favorable credit opportunities.

It is estimated that as many as 25 percent of architects are out of work, due in large part to more stringent

See ARCHITECT, 2F

Government revises home sales methodology

(AP) — Sales of new homes in November dropped sharply for the second consecutive month, but economists said the number probably was depressed by a fluke in government statistical methods.

Sales fell 8.3 percent, the worst since March, the departments of Commerce and Housing and Urban Development said Wednesday. That came on top of an 8.2 percent drop in October, originally reported as a 10.3 percent decline.

Economists complain that the department's statistical methods were doing an inadequate job of estimating the number of new homes that are "pre-sold" before construction begins. That type of sale is becoming increasingly more common because banks and savings institutions in recent years have become reluctant to

make construction loans unless builders line up buyers in advance.

For the past 14 months, the government has underreported the number of new home sales and has increased its estimate every time. It said Wednesday it was changing its methods, starting with next month's report.

"There's little doubt that the November figure will get revised up," said economist David Seiders of the National Association of Home Builders. "Hopefully, starting next month the pattern of errors won't be as systematic."

Sales in November totaled a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 565,000, the lowest in six months and down from a rate of 616,000 in October. The latest drop in new home sales stands in contrast to a 5.8-per-

cent increase in sales of existing homes in November to the highest level since 1986.

Economist Leonard Mills of the Federal National Mortgage Association said he expects 1993 will be the best year for existing home sales since 1979. New home sales also should be up, but not as strongly.

"What we need to get that, and we've started to see a little bit of it already, is some job growth," he said.

He said the expected continuation of low mortgage rates should contribute to healthy sales. Interest charged on 30-year, fixed-rate mortgages, as reported by the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp., hit a 19-year low of 7.84 percent in mid-September. It rose to 8.32 percent by late November but has since declined to 8.13 percent.

At the end of November, the seasonally adjusted estimate of new homes for sale was 257,000, representing a 5.9 months supply at the current sales pace, the biggest supply since May.

Sales for the first 11 months of the year were 15 percent above the same period of 1991.

The median price of a new home in November, meaning half sold for more and half for less, was \$128,800, up 4.9 percent from October and 8.7 percent from a year ago.

Regionally, sales dropped 18.5 percent in the South to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 223,000. They fell 9.1 percent in the West to a rate of 150,000 units. They were unchanged in the Midwest at 113,000 units and rose 28 percent in the Northeast to 73,000 units.