

# Builders square off against manufacturers

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ple and hazard abatement requirements.

Bill Evans, publications manager for BOCA International, said there are more than 200 code revisions to be discussed at the annual convention — all of which will generate some controversy.

The annual meetings often become combative as both sides of each issue argue vehemently to convince building officials that their side is right, Evans said.

"I don't think we do things strictly from self-interest," Morris of NAHB said. "We're concerned about the lack of frugality of these code changes."

THE EVER-INCREASING cost of housing and the growing anti-growth

efforts are making choosing and buying homes more difficult, Morris said.

Changes can be critical to the builder who must follow the adopted building codes of a given community, Morris said.

"Many communities and states adopt BOCA changes without question,"

BECAUSE OF the importance, the NAHB is sending its members to local building inspectors to voice the builders' side on the proposed changes and also to encourage them to go to the meeting.

"We're not as well organized as we would like to be, but we're hopeful we'll be ready for the meeting."

"In the past, a small minority of BOCA members are making deci-

sions that will effect building throughout the country," Morris said. "With almost 5,500 voting members, only 300 members attended."

MORRIS SAID this is the first concentrated effort the builders have put together, but many code changes of the past have had vocal and active industry advocates.

"Without naming names or specific code changes, there may have been some cases where special interests were able to send people who would vote on their behalf."

At the very least, the NAHB has faced extremely organized opposition when it comes to BOCA changes, Morris said.

Evans of BOCA said he has seen no evidence of behind-the-scenes tam-

pering, but the group does not discourage groups from talking to individual building officials.

"These people are professionals — they're not going to be swayed by an argument unless it's a good argument."

MORRIS OF NAHB said three specific changes concern the group the most — one relating to insulation requirements and two relating to fire protection sprinklers.

The insulation code change (B171-90) would require more insulation than practical and add substantially to costs, Morris said.

"Homeowners would not recoup (the costs) in a decade of energy conservation."

Proponents, including insulation manufacturers and chemical companies, argue the changes are neces-

sary to promote energy conservation and improve insulation in above and below grade walls, according to written comments on file with BOCA.

NAHB OPPOSES a code amendment (B108-90) that would require sprinklers in townhouses with independent exit ways or units separated by two-hour fire walls.

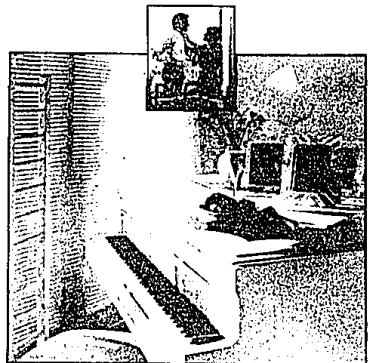
Proponents of the code change argue that townhouses are no different from apartments — there are common areas and adjoining walls — and therefore fire sprinklers should be required in townhouses, according

to written comments on file with BOCA.

NAHB supports an amendment to the BOCA code (B106-90) that would eliminate the need for fire sprinklers in apartments of two stories or less and apartments of four stories or less and a basement, Morris said.

NAHB argues these apartments are already protected by smoke detection systems and fire sprinklers are redundant. Another argument is that many areas do not have adequate public water supplies — fire sprinklers can fail from lack of pressure.

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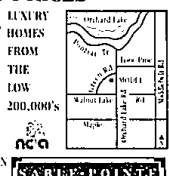
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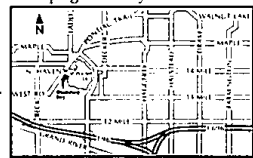
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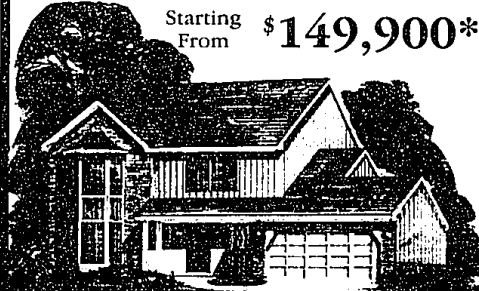


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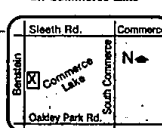
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