

## BUILDING &amp; BUSINESS

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ECCENTRIC  
STARS

This column highlights promotions, transfers, hirings and other key personnel moves within the suburban business community. Send a brief biographical summary - including the towns of residency and employment and a black-and-white photo, if desired - to: Stars, Building & Business, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. Our fax number is (313) 591-7279.

Ray E. Landberg Jr. was elected an associate of Ellis/Nasgaard/Genheimer Associates Inc. in Troy. Landberg, who has 22 years of mechanical engineering experience, will be responsible for quality management and design services as related to HVAC and fire protection.



Landberg

Charlotte "Charlie" Mahoney of Livonia was named regional manager in Wayne County with Detroit Edison. Mahoney serves several Downriver communities. Mahoney became a staff assistant in systems engineering when she joined Detroit Edison in 1977.



Mahoney

Jeffrey A. Schultz of Farmington Hills was promoted to senior account executive for Marx Layne & Co. in Farmington Hills. Schultz joined the public relations firm as an account executive in March 1994. He had been an account supervisor for PR Associates in Detroit.



Schultz

Bruce Sanders of Livonia was appointed a vice president in the commercial insurance division of Cambridge Underwriters Ltd. in Livonia. Before joining Cambridge Underwriters in 1990 as an account executive, he was affiliated with Baker-Hopp & Associates.



Sanders

Mark Holakowski of Bloomfield Hills was promoted to manager in the computer assurance services department in the Detroit office of Deloitte & Touche. Holakowski joined the company earlier this year. He specializes in information protection consulting.



Kolakowski

Good times  
harry  
builders

Builders here generally have enjoyed good economic times the past couple of years. Good times, however, have contributed to a labor shortage with potentially bad consequences for some builders and their customers.

By DOUG FUNK  
STAFF WRITER



A sustained residential construction boom in southeastern Michigan has come around to bite some builders on the bottom in the form of labor shortages.

Roughing carpenters, who frame structural skeletons over foundations and basements, are especially in short supply, several builders report.

The consequences aren't pleasant for builders or their customers.

"In terms of construction financing, if it takes longer to build, overhead and cost for supervision increases," said Gerry Brody, president of Brody & Halan, residential builders in Bloomfield Hills.

"Very succinctly, (for consumers) it means higher prices to pay for a home, longer delivery time to get a home and being very selective in choosing a builder to get quality product and value for money," Brody added.

Fred I. Capaldi, a custom builder/remodeler in Rochester Hills, said he's turned down jobs rather than risk stringing prospective clients along with delays.

"If you can find me carpenters, I have 20 basements sitting now," said Scott Jacobson, president of S.R. Jacobson Development in Bingham Farms.

"We use four or five crews at a time. We could use a couple more," said Mark Frick, vice president of operations for the Herman Frankel Organization in West Bloomfield.



JOHN STORME/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The builders concede that they've been hurt to some degree by their own success.

"There's been a tremendous upsurge in residential construction," Brody said. "There's not enough manpower."

Housing starts increased by 31 percent in Oakland County through October of this year - 5,866 units compared to 4,473 during the first 10 months of 1993.

The Michigan Association of Home Builders also reports that some 2,400 housing units were started in Wayne County and 3,800 in Macomb through September.

"Everybody is in demand. It's not any one particular trade but all trades," said Dean Hyde, marketing director for Pulte Homes of Michigan.

"I wouldn't say we're experiencing shortages so much as keeping people all lined up to meet goals," she said. "We build throughout the year so we like to retain a lot of our subcontractors."

Pulte, the volume leader in Michigan, expects to erect some 400 houses this year, Hyde said.

Other builders have their eyes getting more offers, but we're retaining them because we offer 12 months of employment."

Jacobson and Frick offered another reason for the labor shortage from the supply side of the equation.

"With the strength of the auto business, a lot of trades are going back and working in the shop. It's probably a more secure situation," Jacobson said.

"With every downturn, I think people get out of the business," said Frick. "People leave the state or get out of the trade."

"I don't think people are picking up the trades for a career," he added. "Why? I don't know. It's something we as an industry need to take a look at."

"I think what has to be done is more promotion through unions or trade associations to try to sell professional carpentry," Jacobson said. "It is a good business, it is enjoyable."

Carpenters can make \$18 to \$25 per hour in wages and benefits, Jacobson said.

Going up: Some builders here report shortages in the construction trades, especially roughing carpenters. The bottom line for buyers could be higher prices.

Quality of work is a major concern, too, especially for high-end, luxury builders.

"We're not willing to sacrifice our reputation for trades we don't have confidence in," Frick said.

Brody suspects that the labor shortage could last until the middle of next year due to current backlog of orders. Rising mortgage interest rates could bring about a softening sooner, he said.

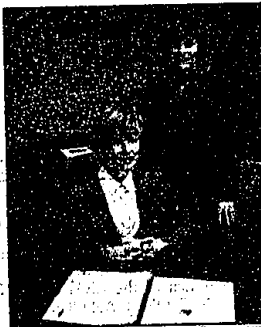
But interest rates can be a two-edged sword. Too much of a surge could send the pendulum swinging the other way - no work.

Buyers generally are protected from additional expenses incurred by builders due to construction delays and materials price increases.

A contract is a contract, said Gary Shapiro, president of Ivanhoe in West Bloomfield. "It comes out of a builder's pocket if he has to pay more for trades. It decreases the (profit) margin."

But labor shortages that cost builders money usually don't bode well for future buyers. Price increases are a likely result, Shapiro said.

**Trailblazers:** Sue Ferlin (left) and Linda Hubbard, partners in a certified public accounting firm, have been instrumental in forging family-friendly policies for the firm.



JOEY ZOLTOWITZ/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

'Family-friendly'  
helps all workers

By MARY RODRIGUE  
STAFF WRITER

By the year 2000, as many as 60 percent of school-aged children and 70 percent of preschoolers will have mothers in the work force, according to one study.

At "Plants & Moran," the Southfield-based public accounting and management consulting firm, commitment to family issues is a long standing tradition. Four of five accountants re-



cently elevated to the level of partner there are women, including Mary Rodrigue.

See FAMILY, 27



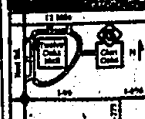
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