

Area homebuilders do more than just build homes

BY TIM MURPHY

North State Building Industry Association

The North State Building Industry Association is best-known for its advocacy — working with local governments throughout our eight-county region to streamline the development process, reduce onerous fees that add an average of \$109,000 to the cost of every new home and help make homeownership

possible for more area residents.

But the region's homebuilding industry is far more involved in the community. The BIA has two non-profit affiliates designed to help reduce homelessness and to give young people training to allow them to embark on well-paying careers that don't require thousands of dollars in college debt.

Our aligned logo — Building Careers, Building Communities and Building Hope — sums it up

nicely.

Our affiliate building hope is HomeAid Sacramento, which this year is marking its 30th year of collaborating with BIA members and local service providers to create a future where families and individuals can overcome homelessness and build a new life.

This month, under the leadership of Executive Director Amber Robbins, we celebrated ribbon cut-

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The Building Careers Foundation helps lead the BuildStrong Academy's pre-apprenticeship program to train people for careers in the homebuilding industry. This month marked the first all-woman graduating class.

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tings for our 125th project, the Pathways of Hope Empowerment Center in Elk Grove, and for the completion of the first two homes of our Caldor Fire Rebuild Project. This effort is rebuilding 12 single-family homes destroyed in 2021 by the massive fire in El Dorado County that devastated more than 220,000 acres and destroyed more than 1,000 structures.

Our local HomeAid chapter also has five projects in development, including expansions at a food bank and two community centers, as well as the renovation of unused buildings to create transitional housing for former foster youth.

Nationally, HomeAid operates in 17 states and the District of Columbia. It was formed in 1989 by a group of building industry professionals in Orange County who wanted to tackle homelessness. Since then, HomeAid has grown into a collaboration of local and national builders, trades, suppliers, financial institutions and community partners who have completed over 1000 developments and helped more than 500,000 people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Both locally and nationally, HomeAid serves a wide variety of populations and needs, including individuals and families experiencing chronic homelessness, youth who have aged out of foster care and people fleeing domestic violence.

Our workforce development affiliate, the Building Careers Foundation, was founded in 2007 to help provide a solution to the shortage of skilled trades workers in the region — a shortage that has only grown over time as seasoned professionals are retiring in greater numbers. The Foundation seeks to let individuals who are not on the college pathway know that they have other options for well-paying, satisfying careers, without amassing thousands of dollars in debt.

Fortunately, a growing number of young people are realizing that college is no longer the only pathway to a successful career. With the average total cost for a four-year degree now sitting around \$40,000, the number of people choosing the trades has more than doubled in recent years. It's what we call "hire education."

Led by Executive Director Jennifer Poff, the



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Dignitaries and homeowners celebrate the completion of the first two homes rebuilt in El Dorado County that were destroyed by the Caldor Fire in 2021. HomeAid is leading the project to rebuild a total of 12 single-family homes.

Foundation provides tuition-free training opportunities through a variety of programs. In 2023, these efforts were greatly expanded with the opening of the BuildStrong Academy in Sacramento, in partnership with the national Home Builders Institute.

The Academy is a nine-week pre-apprenticeship program consisting of a full-time, 40-hour per week course that teaches the basics of carpentry. The students also gain employability skills

through resume-writing workshops, mock interviews, teambuilding and more. They are ready to work at the end of nine weeks.

Since opening, the BuildStrong Academy has trained 390 individuals and placed 218 into employment. The Academy expects to train more than 140 students this year, and with a wait list of more than 40, the Foundation is seeing more people turn to the trades as a career choice than ever before.

The Foundation is also committed to increasing the number of women in the trades. This month, the first all-woman class is graduating from the Academy.

Advocating for more housing will always be a core part of the BIA's mission. But through HomeAid Sacramento and the Building Careers Foundation, our industry is also helping people who need a place to call home and preparing the next generation to build the homes our growing region

needs. In other words, we're building more than homes.

Tim Murphy is President & CEO of the North State Building Industry Association, which represents builders, developers, subcontractors, suppliers and related professionals dedicated to providing new housing opportunities in the Greater Sacramento region.