

The COUNCIL EXAMINER

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President's Message

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NCBDC certified building designers in Louisiana have had a huge "shot-in-the-arm" by the recent actions of a local building official. At least ten individuals have contacted NCBDC headquarters in California since November of last year to qualify for testing. That is more activity than has been experienced in over a decade in that state.

Who are these people and why are they so eager to take the certification exam? In March 2004 a few AIBD members in the City of Slidell, a north lake suburb of New Orleans, attended a meeting at city hall to discuss the requiring of "Professionals of Record" to sign-off on all future home plans permitted by the city. Those of us attending were assured by the Building Official there was no intention to exclude non-architects and non-engineers from preparing plans. The Permit Department was interested only in making everyone aware that plans were reviewed based on the 2000 IRC and the 2001 Wood Frame Construction Manual. Afterwards, I introduced myself to Dean Born, the building official, and offered my assistance. Later I sent a letter with a complete list of all Louisiana AIBD members, and requested that he inform us of future meetings.

Seven months later we all received certified letters from Mr. Born informing us that, effective December 1, 2004, the City of Slidell would require ALL plans submitted to the city to have either the seal of an architect or licensed engineer. Being completely contrary to before, we were all mystified at this "bombshell". I contacted Mr. Born and he explained that since our last conversation he and his staff had become "extremely frustrated" with the overall lack of quality and completeness of the plans being submitted by "draftsmen" and members of "our group", meaning AIBD.

Realizing the amount of influence Mr. Born may have with other building officials, I researched our legal options with an attorney,

packed-up the NCBDC information, a few projects that Herb Alleman and I had prepared and headed to meet with Mr. Born.

After exchanging a few pleasantries, we got right to business. I simply asked Dean what I could do to make his job easier. After reviewing the NCBDC information and our plans he asked, "Why don't all AIBD members prepare as complete and technically correct a set of plans as you do?" He went on to described, without divulging any names, the average plans they receive from some AIBD members. At this point, I was forced to decide, should I defend all designers or should I point-out the benefits of NCBDC Certified Professional Building Designers?

Seeing for myself first hand, I realized AIBD members produced various levels of construction documents, some more technically correct and complete than others. I pointed-out that both Herb and I were certified by the NCBDC and that not all AIBD members had this qualification. After more review, Mr. Born wondered if all NCBDC certified building designers adhere to the minimum plan standards. His next question, which I should have anticipated but didn't, "are all NCBDC certified building designers as proficient in producing construction documents as you and Herb?" After a deep breath, I replied, "yes, of course", realizing that I may have stuck my neck out a little further than usual.

All of us must strive to produce the most technically correct and complete construction documents possible. Our futures depend on it. In my opinion, there is a deep responsibility to ensure, not only to building officials, to the public, that NCBDC Certified Professional Building Designers are the leading residential design specialists in America. They are uniquely qualified to design homes to meet or exceed the various codes enforced today. I am also convinced this is the opportunity the National Council of Building Designer

Certification has been waiting for since it was founded over a decade ago.

What was the outcome of our meeting? Mr. Born has agreed to accept NCBDC Certified Professional Building Designer prepared plans in addition to those prepared by architects and engineers. This wonderful precedence has started the ball rolling. Let's keep it rolling!

2005 Renewal Billing Delayed

Due to the increase of fees imposed on Professional Members of the American Institute of Building Design (AIBD), the NCBDC renewal notices were delayed to March 2005. Normally delivered in January, the delay in billing allowed the Council to readdress a previously approved motion to increase the NCBDC renewal fee from seventy to one hundred dollars. This issue was addressed at the recent annual meeting held in Orlando, Florida.

Feeling that the forty percent increase would burden those Certified Professional Building Designers who are also Professional Members within AIBD, the Council approved a motion to postpone the increase until the 2006 fiscal year. Therefore, the renewal fee, established in 2004, of seventy dollars (\$70) will remain in effect for 2005. Next year (2006), the annual renewal fee will increase to one hundred dollars (\$100). The regularly established payment period, grace period, and delinquent period will be adjusted based on the new 2005 delivery dates.



NCBDC Adopt Continuing Education and Re-Certification Policy

At the annual meeting of the Council held in Orlando, Florida, January 15, 2005, Section VII: Continued Education and Re-Certification, which, includes Rules 701: Continued Education and 702: Re-Certification, were added to the NCBDC Book of Rules. These amendments to the Book of Rules were the product of two years of discussion and negotiation within the Council. The basic purpose for the NCBDC examination was to insure a minimum level of competency in the discipline of building design. Therefore, in order to be assured that its certified body is continually practicing to the minimum standards, certain policies and guidelines must be put into place.

Rule 701 requires that all Certified Professional Building Designers obtain a minimum of eight continuing education hours each fiscal year starting with their first renewal date of certification. Also included in Rule 701 are the nine guidelines for defining events as credible for continuing education.

Rule 702 provides for an alternative to receiving continued education by applying to be Re-Certified. More specifically, the rule states, "In lieu of submitting Continued Education hours annually, Certified Professional Building Designers may elect to apply for re-certification every third fiscal year, starting with the first renewal date of certification." Re-certification is accomplished by executing an application for re-certification, paying a re-certification fee, and submitting three sets of separate working drawings, prepared within nine months of re-certification, for projects the applicant personally prepared and that meet the minimum plan standards as established by the Council. In essence, the requirements are identical to those seeking re-instatement after having certification terminated.

Continued education is widely accepted as a means of assuring continued professionalism within an industry. However, it is not the only accepted means. According to certification experts, a practical re-certification process also holds a certified professional in high regard. As a result, rules containing both credible methods were authored. As the only testing agency for Building Designers in the United States, it is essential that code officials, state legislators and other design professionals view the NCBDC certified body professionally. These two rules accomplish that goal.



NCBDC Resolves to Support ICC

A resolution supporting the International Code Council (ICC), and their establishment of a single national code, was ratified by the NCBDC at the annual meeting, January 15, 2005 in Orlando, Florida. The resolution is consistent with the resolution adopted by the American Institute of Building Design (AIBD) in July 2005.

Past President Steven Mickley is arranging to formally present the resolution to

the ICC in Cincinnati, Ohio, during the week of the International Residential Code hearings. Once received by the ICC, the NCBDC will request to be listed on the ICC website along with other "partners" who support the single code concept.

Recent Actions Taken by the Council

The annual business meeting of the NCBDC was held in Orlando, Florida, January 15, 2005. Presided by, past president, Steven Mickley, the meeting was attended by sixteen of the twenty-seven council members and the following actions were taken.

- A revision to Article VI: Section 1 of the NCBDC By Laws adding Re-Certification as an alternative to the existing Continuing Education policy was approved.
- Two revisions to the Fee Schedule in the NCBDC Book of Rules were approved. The first revision increased the study material fee with a provision to receive a discount if the material is received electronically. The second postponed, for one year, a previously approved motion to raise the yearly renewal fee.
- The Rule dictating Prorating of Fees was revised to be more specific in amount and period.
- The Verbiage in the Book of Rules providing for a Waiver of Fees was clarified.
- The limits of Reinstatement of Certification were altered from five years grace period to three. In addition, a requirement for those seeking reinstatement to supply validated continuing education for the period of termination or meet the, newly adopted, recertification procedure was included.
- Section VII: Continued Education and Re-Certification was added to the NCBDC Book of Rules. This new section details a continuing education policy and guidelines, in addition to, an alternative of completing a Re-Certification application process in lieu of obtaining required education.
- The Council approved researching a proposal to offer an embossed seal in addition to the present stamp. Results of the research are to be presented to

the Council at the next scheduled meeting.

- The Council approved a resolution supporting the International Code Council and the "Single Building Code Concept".
 - Due to the number of exam inquiries and the size of the geographical area, a third examiner, Donald Gore (Louisiana) was nominated and approved to be an examiner in the South Central District.
 - Ed Myers (Georgia) stepped down from his position as Examiner in the South East District. Leonard Vogel (North Carolina) was nominated and approved to replace him.
 - Examiner Steven Mickley (Florida) stepped down from all of his present Council positions. John Fought (Florida) was nominated and approved to replace Steven as the Florida representative to the Council and as an Examiner in the South East District.
- The 2005 NCBDC officers were nominated and approved. Donald Gore (Louisiana) was elected President, Leonard Vogel (North Carolina) was elected Vice President, and John Fought (Florida) was elected Secretary.



NCBDC Proposes New ICC Member Classification

Steven Mickley, past NCBDC President, recently met with the International Code Council's (ICC) Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Dominic Sims. The President of the American Institute of Building Design (AIBD), Lyle Breeze, and Construction Codes and Standards Committee Chairs, Georgia Toney and Mike Studer also attended the meeting, held in Birmingham, Alabama, December 8, 2004. The primary agenda included the proposal of a new ICC membership classification that would recognize all certified professionals exclusively. Presently, ICC membership classification provide for Professional Members, those who are licensed design professionals, and Cooperative Members, all others who are affiliated in the building sciences and product industries. The NCBDC requested the ICC membership committee investigate the addition of an Accredited Member category.

Based on various state laws, many professionals do not require licensing to do business in their states. For example, landscaping designers, interior designers,

(Continued on page 4)

kitchen and bath designers, and Certified Professional Building Designers, among others, have the right to practice under certain limitations. Therefore, to better represent this class of professionals, the NCBDC has requested that a specific membership category is established.

As with any proposal to the staff of a national organization, much discussion and deliberation is required by the ICC membership committee, executive committee, national board members and staff. As of nearly ninety days from the initial request, there has been no response from the ICC staff. This can be interpreted as positive.

A major change in the membership structure of any organization will take a substantial period to investigate and act on. The influence to approve this request ultimately falls on the shoulders of the ICC national board members. The national board is mostly comprised of local building officials from every corner of the United States. The same building officials that review and approve the working drawings prepared by a CPBD are possibly the ones who have the influence of adopting a new membership category within ICC. In order for the initial efforts of the NCBDC to not be wasted, each CPBD must take every opportunity available to address this opportunity with each of their local building officials.



New Web Site Unveiled

The start of 2005 not only marked the beginning of a new calendar year, it also was the commencement of a new NCBDC web site design. Though most of the information has remained the same, the format has been changed substantially. It is intended to be more user friendly, easier to navigate and attractive to the more technically oriented generations.

Some of the new, or soon to be added, features include an interactive sample exam, certified designer directory and NCBDC news

page. The sample exam is now presented in a format that allows guests to personally answer test questions and be given a final scoring tally. This will encourage visitors to spend more time at our site and influence their desire to become a Certified Professional Building Designer.

To soon be included in the site is a membership directory that will list each CPBD, their address, phone numbers and email addresses. This new addition will be sure to increase your exposure as the NCBDC continues to market the web site nationally. Please check regularly for the enhancement and verify with our national office the accuracy of your information when it is presented.

Finally, with the completion of this newsletter, it will become the initial item to begin the News and Events page. Once established, the News and Events page will be a compilation of all NCBDC newsletters, events and notable accomplishments.



NCBDC Hires new administrator

The institute has hired Bob Juengert AIBD, AIA, FISP, to administrate the every day matters of the running of things. Bob has practiced Architecture and planning for forty years. He is still working with the company he founded in New Jersey as a consultant.



Study Materials Now Available Electronically

The NCBDC Exam study material, including the Structural Study Guide and the History of Architecture, has received a face-lift. Each guide is published in professionally printed three ring binders with section dividers. The study materials are available for \$45.



All study material is available in electronic format. (PDF) The full guide is delivered via email for the reduced price of \$35.