

Collaborating to train homebuilding's future workforce

By Phillip B. Burum

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California's housing crisis is nearing a tipping point, with the gap between how many homes are needed and how many are being constructed widening every year. Experts disagree on specifics, but most studies suggest that current production is barely half of what is needed to keep up with growth. There are simply not enough residential units being constructed to keep up with demand.

There are many root causes for the diminished production but, if left unaddressed, it will be the lack of a skilled labor force that will prevent bridging the gap between supply and demand. The reality of the current situation



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is that there are not enough people employed in the residential construction industry to timely build the number of homes under construction today.

Building a single-family home may require as many as 60 tradesmen to complete construction. The skills and specialties of these men and women vary greatly and, unlike with typical manufacturing operations,

there is no alternative means of production available. Residential construction requires people. If double the homes are needed, the workforce pool must also double.

The Building Industry Association (BIA) has been working in collaboration with leadership in local education to find solutions to fill the void in our depleted workforce. In addition to supporting the development of the Building Industry Technology Academy, a program that is thriving in many of our local high schools and colleges, we are proud to announce the results of an 18-month collaborative effort with the San Bernardino Community College District. The BIA Baldy View Chapter and the district recently announced the inaugural year of the BIA Entry-

Level Construction Training Program.

The curriculum for this course was developed in consultation with BIA member organizations to provide the students with practical training that will enable them to enter the workforce with the skills needed to make an immediate impact for their employers. Graduating students can apply their newly acquired skills in a variety of construction industry career paths with the potential to earn starting wages of up to \$60,000 per year. The curriculum includes business skills and communication skills training that will provide many graduates with the foundation that could lead to owning their own business and training the next generation of tradesman and construction industry

entrepreneurs.

The program will draw from a variety of candidate pools, including the justice-involved population, continuation students, recent high school graduates and veterans. To date, 27 BIA member companies have pledged to offer priority interviews for those who complete the course.

It is collaborations between private and public organizations like the BIA Baldy View Chapter and San Bernardino Community College District that provide the essential tools to ensure that a skilled labor force is on the job site building housing so current and future Californians have a place to call home. We are honored to be involved in this effort because it's a win-win-win: helping individuals restart

their life, businesses find trained labor and communities build more affordable housing.

Phillip B. Burum, vice president-land for D.R. Horton, is president of the Building Industry Association (BIA) Baldy View Chapter. Representing homebuilding professionals in San Bernardino County and the eastern portion of Los Angeles County, the chapter's mission is to promote, advocate for and grow the homebuilding industry through member representation and community education at the local level. In addition, the Baldy View Chapter maintains a presence and influence on industry-related issues at regional, state and national levels.