

TEXAS TIMES

Fall 2017 • The Newsletter for Members of HOME of Texas

COMING TOGETHER

We live in a world that experiences natural disasters seemingly every day of the year. Here in the good old USA we are not immune to these phenomena and experience them regularly. From fires to floods to hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions, Mother Nature wreaks havoc on our lives destroying homes, businesses, infrastructure and entire communities. In 2016 the world's disasters caused approx. \$175 billion dollars in damages. According to reinsurer, Munich Re, in the first half of 2017 the U. S. was bombarded by the 2nd highest number of weather, climate and flood disasters since they've been keeping records. And the numbers continue to grow. As this article is being written, Texas is reeling from the devastating effects of hurricane Harvey and a new storm, hurricane Irma, is bearing down on the Caribbean and posing a very real threat to Puerto Rico, the



Virgin Islands, and southern Florida. Simultaneously, wildfires are ravaging the west coast.

While these catastrophic events are for the most part unpredictable and unstoppable, they all seem to generate a response that is both reassuring and heart-warming. It seems that despite our individual circumstances, politics, gender, color, nationality or religion, we all come together for the common good to help our neighbors in need. Relief workers, firemen, policemen, military personnel, businesses and men and women from all backgrounds and

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2017 Membership Drive is a Success!

By Suzanne Palkovic, VP of Sales

For the last several years, HOME and its affiliates, RWC and MHWC, have conducted an annual membership drive for that extra little "push" to bring new builder members into the fold. This year is no different and we are pleased to announce that over 230 new members joined the warranty ranks during this year's drive! Even more pleasing is that some of these builders were returning members who left us for one reason or another but then realized that HOME & Company was indeed the place to be.

To make things interesting, we also throw a sales contest into the mix. The theme of this year's contest was baseball as our sales force competed in their very own "Parmerville World Series". Breaking

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Dear Valued Texas Members,

There are no words adequate enough for what you've gone through in the path of Hurricane Harvey. The pictures of the devastation are soul-crushing but the stories of heroism on the part of so many people who risked their own lives and property in order to help other human beings in need are inspiring.

It is with heartfelt sincerity that we extend our sympathies for your trials and our encouragement for your recovery. The purpose of this note is quite simply to let you know that we here at HOME of Texas are thinking of you, of your employees, of your homeowners and all the families devastated by this storm. So many lives and businesses have been disrupted in yet another massive storm zone. What has been inspiring, in the face of so much loss, are the stories of rescue and aid being brought to those left stranded, not just by government resources, but by neighbors helping neighbors.

The company has made a donation to the hurricane relief effort. It seems like such a drop in the bucket in the face of so much need. Builders in Texas are truly a resilient group whose spirit to overcome adversity is matched only by their great generosity of heart. We hope that you will find not only the stamina to overcome these obstacles you now face but to come out on the other side of this storm stronger than ever. Our thoughts and our prayers are with you and your families.

Sincerely,
HOME of Texas

HOME of Texas is on the Road

Recently two of HOME's key employees traveled to the Lone Star State to hold a sales presentation/refresher course with long-time valued member Brookfield Residential. Suzanne Palkovic, VP of Sales and Diane Naguski, Warranty Resolution Manager (pictured below speaking), joined HOME of Texas Account Executive Mark Smiley, as the trio visited both Austin and San Marcos where they not only imparted valuable



knowledge, but also picked up few new innovative and exciting ideas for their own company's next annual sales meeting.

If you think a training seminar or refresher would benefit your team, call 800-683-6833 or email sales@homeoftexas.com.

The Remodeling Demand is Solid

While much of the country is experiencing a healthy resurgence in home building, what is also going strong is the market for additions and renovations. For many reasons, today's homeowners are still very likely to consider remodeling their home. For those handymen and women that are up to the challenge, tackling home improvement projects on



"IF YOU'VE BEEN FOCUSING SOLELY ON NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION AND HAVEN'T GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO REMODELING, PERHAPS NOW IS THE TIME TO INVESTIGATE."

their own can be a very rewarding experience. On the other hand, for many average Americans, DIY isn't an acronym on their resume. Whether it's an expanding family that needs more space or a frightfully outdated avocado green kitchen that begs for a facelift, homeowners will be scouting out professionals to get the job done.

According to economists, the current demand for home-improvement is healthy. Per the latest Remodeling Index, remodeling activity nationwide has continued to grow and is projected to keep rising. Demographics tend to play a big role in future prosperity. As baby boomers retire, the likelihood for first floor bedrooms and bathrooms or wider doorways and hallways become a reality. On the other end of the spectrum, housing affordability may sway millennials' decision to

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2017 Membership Drive is a Success!

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our company into teams led by their star hitters – aka our Account Executives – they competed for weekly prizes and cash bonuses. Some of you may have experienced the frenzy of that period as our reps feverishly coaxed and cajoled to get you in the door in order to secure prizes for their teams.

For the second year running, our Senior Account Executive from New Jersey, Jana Watts playing for the Stone Harbor Yankees, led the league and took top honors. Jana brought in 76 new members during the contest and earned more contest points (368) than her competitors. Runner-up out of Maryland was veteran rep, Rich McPhee and his Rockville Red Sox, with 183 contest points. Our two newest rookies were also swinging for the fences with Staci Cool from the Indianapolis Padres placing a respectable 6th overall and Laurie Scotti with the Las Vegas Phillies finishing strong as the contest progressed. See how your Account Executive matched up in the box scores in the chart to the right.

While certainly having some fun with co-workers is a goal for our contest and

membership drive, our focus really is on bringing the best warranty to as many qualifying builders as we can. Not every builder has what it takes to become a member in HOME, RWC, or MHWC and HOME is proud of its selectivity. You can rest assured that every member coming in the door after you have met the same standards in quality, stability, and professional ethics.

And not every warranty is created equal either. HOME/RWC is in its 36th year with over 3 million homes warranted and is insured by a company rated “A- (Excellent)” since 2001 by AM Best. We have more warranty options for you than anyone else and we work hard to provide you with the best customer service possible.



Parmerville World Series Box Scores

1. Jana Watts	Stone Harbor Yankees	367.5 pts	76 new members
2. Rich McPhee	Rockville Red Sox	183 pts	17 new members
3. John Felbaum	Tacoma Mariners	176 pts	18 new members
4. Pat Basom	Harrisburg Pirates	159 pts	17 new members
5. Freddy Pesqueira	Woodstock Braves	151 pts	27 new members
6. Staci Cool	Indianapolis Padres	149.5 pts	17 new members
7. Mark Smiley	San Antonio Cubs	101 pts	15 new members
8. Fred Taylor	Winston Salem Reds	76.5 pts	19 new members
9. Laurie Scotti	Las Vegas Phillies	70.5 pts	8 new members
10. Tifanee McCall	York Orioles	64 pts	19 new members

Coming Together

Continued from front cover

occupations pitch in to help wherever help is needed. While the aftermath and clean-up often seems overwhelming, if not impossible at first, ordinary people working hand-in-hand come together and get the job done. Eventually, once the clean-up is accomplished, the rebuilding commences. Contractors and tradesmen are called upon and come together to do what they do best...repairing, reconstructing and restoring.

We here at HOME salute you, our members, for what you have done, are doing and will continue to do to help your neighbors return to their homes and regain stability in their lives. The comfort, peace, and security our homes provide cannot be over-estimated. And, while you can't promise your customers that they will never experience another natural disaster, by simply placing a HOME warranty on your work product you can assure them that you have done your best to make their house a home once again.

Visit Our Booth At These Upcoming Shows



International Builders' Show
Orlando, FL • Booth W5571
January 9-11, 2018



Sunbelt Builders Show
Dallas, TX • Booth 904
August 8-9, 2018

We Need YOU!

By Staci Cool, Account Executive

Builders who left the market after the housing crisis in 2008 are witnessing a positive turnaround enabling them to regain traction in today's market. New builders entering the market for the first time are seeing encouraging results as well. The rate at which builders are entering or re-entering the market has slowly begun to increase, indicating many of them are no longer gun-shy from the economic downturn. However, we are still in a recovery phase and housing shortages are concerning for buyers across the nation. With limited inventory, plus the hiked purchase prices in this seller dominated market, would-be home buyers have found themselves in an unfortunate position. Add to this the increase in interest rates and the cycle is encouraging more potential buyers to shy away from purchasing. These hurdles support a positive environment for investors to continue to buy properties, placing more emphasis on the need for additional inventory. Without a shift in investment opportunities offering more lucrative possibilities for investors, the housing industry will continue to experience shortages due the vast number of single family homes held for rentals.

Diversified builders who are remodeling and building new homes have seen the steadiest increases in business. Partially because of the investors taking advantage of neglected uninhabitable homes which need repair work. Financial experts with Fannie Mae have echoed these findings and report that for the first time in recent history, remodeling and new home construction are trending at the same pace.

Overall, new home sales are up and many areas of the country are reporting an increase in the number of permits being granted. According to Inside Lending Snapshot, new home sales are seeing a 5.7% overall increase while existing home sales have slowed by 1.7%. This shift in buying trends is supporting the demand

for new home construction. Coming in on the heels of a strong summer buying season we are approaching the time of year when the market traditionally supports the purchase of starter homes. October to December tends to show positive inventory increases which in turn forces the lowering of listing prices with decreases averaging between 3.1% and 4.8%. The lower prices help improve the likelihood of new buyers being able to justify the impact of a slightly higher interest rate. This is good news for builders, lenders, and realtors, all of which who want to know "How do we meet the need?"

counterintuitive when they sell a home and are battling the same increased pricing concerns as they prepare to move.

A significant step that we as industry leaders can take is to focus on partnering with one another. Meeting with lenders and realtors, participating in local HBA events along with building upon our networking relationships can aid in bridging the gap. Don't have time for more meetings? Online sources such as LinkedIn or other social media outlets are easy ways to reach others in our local home buying industry and



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Ultimately, the opportunities are there for builders but there are some significant concerns in the immediate path. Builders are reporting difficulty finding available land. They are also continuing to report experiencing a difficulty with finding qualified trade workers. Lenders are trying to place a higher emphasis on educating the public regarding available programs to them for purchasing. Realtors on the local levels are working to keep pricing accurate. Many sellers are realizing they have the upper hand and are pushing the prices up. This can be

trades. The adage 'you scratch my back, I scratch yours' could not be more applicable or appropriate to help all of us meet the demands of the public. We are all excellent sources of knowledge individually but as a collective unit we can help each other prosper. The highest form of flattery is a referral. Do you know anyone we can help? Do you need a reference to a lender or wish to meet a realtor to help you be more competitive? Your local HOME Account Executive is a wonderful resource! Let's chat!

Top 5 Home Renovations for the Biggest Return-On-Investment

As the saying goes, you have to spend money to make money. Of course, everyone wants the promise of a great return-on-investment (ROI) on home renovations, but not all projects will yield a lofty payout. Decisions today can make or break a sale years down the road. So how does one choose which projects to tackle? Real estate guru Homeadvisor.com states these are the top five remodeling projects that will give homeowners the best bang for their buck:

FIBERGLASS INSULATION

▷ 107.7% ROI

New insulation isn't exactly #1 on a home owner's to-do list, but those puffy sheets of energy efficiency will warm wallets with long-lasting savings. Insulation may not be pretty to look at, but it saves money and improves comfort.

ENTRY DOOR REPLACEMENT

▷ 90.7% ROI

Secure and attractive! A quality steel door is a great choice for a home upgrade, plus it provides extra security and prevents unwanted drafts.

MANUFACTURED STONE VENEER

▷ 89.4% ROI

Cheaper than natural options, engineered stone siding will give a home the revival it deserves, while keeping the budget in mind. And as a bonus, today's fabricated products look just like the real thing! Natural stone also tends to put stress on the frame and foundation, so it's a win-win for this lighter alternative.

GARAGE DOOR REPLACEMENT

▷ 85% ROI

Not only an aesthetic renovation, replacing the garage door also serves other purposes such as improved security and energy efficiency. A fresh design will surely give the home's exterior a boost in curb appeal.



MINOR KITCHEN REMODEL

▷ 80.2% ROI

Small kitchen remodels ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 boasts a favorable return. Kitchens tend to be the hub of the home, so it only makes sense to make it work in your favor. Whether simple changes or reflowing the layout -- improving the design and usability of the space will pack a punch.

Free Marketing Materials

Did you know marketing materials are available to you for *FREE* as part of your Membership with us? To see a wide array of what's available visit: rwcwarranty.com/marketing-materials/

This issue's feature item is:
IMPORTANT DOCUMENT FOLDER (Form #8514)



This pocket folder makes it easy for you to keep your paperwork together. Simply hand the filled folder to your homeowners at closing.

Quick Tip

Want an easy way for your homeowners to keep track of their warranty validation number? Simply affix one of our special stickers (form #204) on their electrical box during your final walk-through inspection. Easy access and it will never get lost!

Add Us To Your Website

By adding a link from your website to the HOME site, your prospective home buyers will be able to read valuable information about what the warranty will do for them. You can even use our logo! Link to www.homeoftexas.com/homeowners

Questions: email info@homeoftexas.com or call 800-445-8173 Ext 2149



Where Can I Find...?

Want to check the enrollment status of a certain home or order brochures? The HOME website is chock full of resources for you. We listed some of the more frequently used sections below for easy reference. Start by visiting www.homeoftexas.com.

I WONDER IF THERE'S A WARRANTY FOR THAT?

HOME has more warranty options that you may realize. Hover over **"Builders"** to see, at a glance, all the products and features available. To go to the list of warranty options available, select *"Warranty Products"*.

GET A GL INSURANCE QUOTE

The RWC Insurance Advantage can meet many of your commercial insurance needs. Get a quote by clicking on the **"RWC Insurance Advantage"** tab or go directly to www.RWCInsuranceAdvantage.com.

ENROLL A HOME

In the top right corner of any page on our site, see the link to **"Warranty Express"**. Sign in to Warranty Express with your registration # and password. Select *"Warranty Express"* to begin the enrollment process.

CHECK THE ENROLLMENT STATUS OF HOMES

Once logged into **"Warranty Express"**, you will see options for things like *"Order History"* and *"Report"*. From here you can order an enrollment report or check the status of a specific home.

ORDER FREE MARKETING MATERIALS

From the main menu once you are logged into **"Warranty Express"** go to *"Order Supplies"* to request sample warranty books and marketing pieces.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

HOME provides a list of *"FAQs"* for Builders. See the link in the **"Builders"** supermenu. If you need additional information, all our contact information and helpful contact forms can be found in **"About Us"**.

FIND YOUR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE

From any page, hover over either **"Builders"** or **"About Us"** in the blurred bar at the top and click *"Find Your Account Executive"*.

ANSWER CLIENTS' QUESTIONS ON THE WARRANTY

Hover over **"Homeowners"** in the blurred bar at the top of any page and find links to *"FAQs"* for homeowners, seasonal maintenance checklists and many reasons why a HOME warranty is valuable to your buyers.

LOOKING FOR A FORM YOU NEED TO COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATION OR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL?

Check out our *"Forms Library"* from the **"Builders"** supermenu.

The Remodeling Demand is Solid

Continued from page 2

purchase older existing homes that will command renovations. And lest we forget Mother Nature. In the wake of the tragic flooding and hurricane-ravaged areas, countless homes have been com-



promised. It may be too early to tell what type of impact these storms will have on the marketplace, but rebuilding and renovating will not be a piece of cake.

How does your business fit into this niche? If you've been focusing solely on new home construction and haven't given much thought to remodeling, perhaps now is the time to investigate. Could it be that you are in a position to aid in the recovery of storm-affected areas? Several home improvement projects may be just the thing to fill in the gaps.

Ready to kick it up a notch? Why not check out the HOME of Texas Remodeler Warranty? Having a written warranty effectively reduces misunderstandings that can result from a verbal agreement and a handshake with clients. With HOME's insurance backed protection, homeowners can be confident that you are a top-notch craftsman and that their remodeling project is a worthy investment.

Number Crunch

43%

The number of potential home buyers who consider a full bath on the main floor an essential "must have" feature in a home, according to a recent NAHB study.

54%

The number of potential home buyers who consider a pet washing station as an unwanted element in today's market. Other unpopular features include a wine cellar (53%), two-story family room (43%), and a wet bar (42%).

\$10,732

The additional amount of money a home buyer is willing to pay up front in order to get a return of investment of \$1000 per year in utility costs.

2.5 MILLION

Number of bathrooms remodeled each year, according to the National Kitchen & Bath Association.

Searching for an Answer?

First and foremost, know that your Account Executive is ready, willing and able to help you with all of your warranty and insurance needs. Contact them directly and let them do the legwork for you.



Who is My Account Executive?

Mark Smiley
210-540-7891
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**All Manufacturers and
MHWC Builder/Dealers**
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tifanee.mccall@mhwcconline.com



Questions on the RWC Ins. Advantage Program? Call 866-454-2155 or Email:

- General Liability
- Builders Risk
- Contractors Equipment
- Bonds

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For questions about the Warranty Program? Call 800-445-8173 or Email:

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As always, you can also visit **www.homeoftexas.com** for additional information, forms, quotes & contact info.



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Countdown to the International Builders Show

Autumn has arrived and if you haven't already started, most folks will soon begin counting down the days to the holidays. Gathering with friends and family, planning dinners, and shopping will be on countless to-do lists. This time of year also motivates those in the industry to count down the days to the largest building show of the year, the International Builders Show (IBS). Time to fill your calendar with travel plans, connecting with industry associates, and shopping for new products.

For the second year in a row, IBS will be held in Orlando, FL, spanning from January 9 - 11. Kick off your time in Orlando with inspirational words from well known NFL broadcaster, Terry Bradshaw. Then fill your days with 565,000 square feet of pure opportunity and education. Over 1400 exhibits, 140+ educational sessions and networking events will keep your schedules stocked. Rounding out the show on Thursday, January 11 is the Spike Concert featuring the legendary band *Chicago*. Don't miss the chance to experience their hits live! For more details about the IBS show, visit www.buildersshow.com.

International Builders Show

January 9-11, 2018

Orlando, Florida

Booth #W5571



HOME of Texas and affiliates will once again be attending the show to showcase our new home warranties and risk management services. You can find us at booth #W5571. Let's chat about how we help your business shine. And while you're there, spin our prize wheel! Not only will you walk away with a fun prize.... or cold hard cash, but you'll be confident HOME of Texas and affiliates can help your business soar in 2018. See you in January!