

Homebuilders' efforts will pay off for Oklahoma consumers

BY TOM FRENCH  0

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Consumers will reap rewards from state homebuilders' legislative efforts to tighten contractor registration requirements.

The first involves roofer registration legislation, where roofers will register with the state's Construction Industries Board. Roofers will provide a small fee, verify their insurance and will then be required to display their registration number on all of their trucks and signs.

This simple measure should decrease the number of out-of-state or illegitimate roofing companies that always seem to appear following one of Oklahoma's numerous weather events.

The dust has settled on the state's most recent legislative session, and consumers will benefit from the passage of several other measures, lobbied by the Oklahoma State Home Builders Association. OSHBA is a not-for-profit trade organization of more than 2,600 members serving as an advocate for the housing industry and an affiliate of the National Association of Home Builders.

OSHBA worked with several other industries in supporting passage of workers' compensation reform. This reform will provide insurance savings to homebuilder members, which can ultimately be passed on to consumers.

Homebuilders also supported a revision in pre-lien notification on remodeling work. This revision would have helped contractor-customer relations. The governor vetoed the measure, so homebuilders will revisit the issue with the Legislature next year.

No victory comes without some defeat, and the industry suffered significant setbacks on two measures.

The first — an impact fee proposal — was snuffed out shortly after making it through the House. This bill required charges on developers to pay for the construction or expansion of necessary municipal capital improvements to benefit the new development. With no mandated impact fee in place, municipalities are free to increase taxes on builders, costs that are passed on to consumers.

Homebuilders also suffered a setback with the Energy Efficient Residential Construction tax credit. As it became clear the state's budget shortfall was too large, the Legislature began looking for ways to raise revenue. One of those avenues was to

mandate a moratorium on tax credits. This tax credit, along with 31 others, was put on hold July 1 and will remain so for two more years.

These defeats are disappointing, but we are extremely proud of the efforts made by our members and the state association in helping the industry and consumer. I'm looking forward to next year and the opportunity to revisit these important issues — for everyone's benefit.

French is president of the Oklahoma State Home Builders Association.



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