

# BUILDING SAFETY NEWS

PUBLISHED BY BUILDING SAFETY DIVISION

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**Work Load**

Permit activity increased during the month of October and it is the first month of 2008 that permit activity exceeded the same monthly period of last year (2007). In fact, the total number of permits issued approached the level of activity of October 2006. (see permit graph elsewhere in newsletter). Permit and plan review revenue for the month (\$198,718) also exceeded last year's October revenue, again approaching that of 2006 (\$203,034). Inspection activity, while still below the activity of the previous two years, continues its gradual upward trend as several major projects including the Wachovia Center progress. Residential plan review remains on track with initial reviews being conducted in less than 5 days. Commercial plan review also remains on track with reviews being conducted in less than 10 days. Inspections are all being conducted within 24 hours.

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## GREEN BUILDING IS COMING BY LYNN UNDERWOOD

*"Green Building will affect your professional world more than you expect",* said Lynn Underwood, Code Official. He continued, speaking to Division staff and guests, *"Remember when accessibility was introduced into the Building Code? Remember how much that altered the way you conducted business as a Plans Examiner? or Inspector? Take that impact and multiply it by 10 and you will have some idea of how much we will be involved with Green Building over the next 25 years".*

The following statistics from the Environmental Protection Agency illustrate the impact construction has on resources in the United States:

- 70% of all electricity consumed is in buildings
- 40% of all energy consumed is in buildings
- 12% of all potable water used in construction
- 30% of all raw materials used in construction
- 30% of all carbon dioxide emissions caused by construction
- 65% of all waste output caused by construction



Energy usage plays a very significant role of your home's efficiency and productivity over its lifetime. According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, in 2003, the average cost for energy in homes is \$1527 per year. In the year 2007, the cost of all energy used in an average home was expected to be \$2,100 according to the Department of Energy.

Green building practices have evolved to address these concerns of energy usage and detrimental effects on the environment. Building a *Green Home* can and likely will have elements of a sustainable design. But a Green Home and Sustainable Design need defining. In simple terms, green building is the thoughtful consideration of the indoor and outdoor environments during the design, construction, maintenance and use of a building.

Your commitment to building green will be marked by the degree of your participation. This depth is characterized by the abstract *Shades of Green*. The more you invest in elements or technology, the darker your shade of green will be. Some professional associations offer relative values between various *green* features to help assist you with a comparative value for different aspects or measures. These shades of green allow you to quantify or measure your participation in green building. The major elements of a green home include:

- Site Selection
- Exceeding energy efficiency standards in the Building Code
- Having a resource efficient design
- Building material choices
- Improved indoor Air Quality
- Energy Conservation
- Energy efficient appliances and lighting
- Proper waste management during construction
- Water Efficiency and Water Heater usage
- Renewable Energy Production
- Teaching homeowner operation



**International Code Council  
Code Official Institute**

**ICC Green Building Safety Institute**

March 2-4, 2009  
Orlando, FL

**Annual Conference & Code  
Development Hearings**

October, 2009  
Baltimore, MD

**ICC When Disaster Strikes**

February 12-13  
Orlando, FL

**2009 IRC Updates**

February 5, 2009  
Webinar

www.iccsafe.org



**INTERNATIONAL  
CODE COUNCIL®**

**Organization Meeting Schedule**

**VBCOA Region 8**

Regular meeting  
Mid-Year Conference  
April 26-27, 2009

**VBCOA Chapter**

Annual Conference  
Norfolk  
September 27-29, 2009

**IAEI Eastern**

Code Review Training Mtg.  
for Inspectors (Southside)  
March 3, 2009

**IAEI National**

**VPMIA**

Annual School of Instruction  
April 1-3, 2009  
Hampton Inn, 1204 Berryville Ave.  
Winchester, Va.

**VFPA**

2009 Annual Training Conference & Mtg.

**VCCA**

# HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

BY TONY ANDERSON

If you are planning your next big home improvement project over these winter months, take time to find a qualified licensed contractor if you are not doing the work yourself. Once you are satisfied with your selection, make sure the contract contains the following:

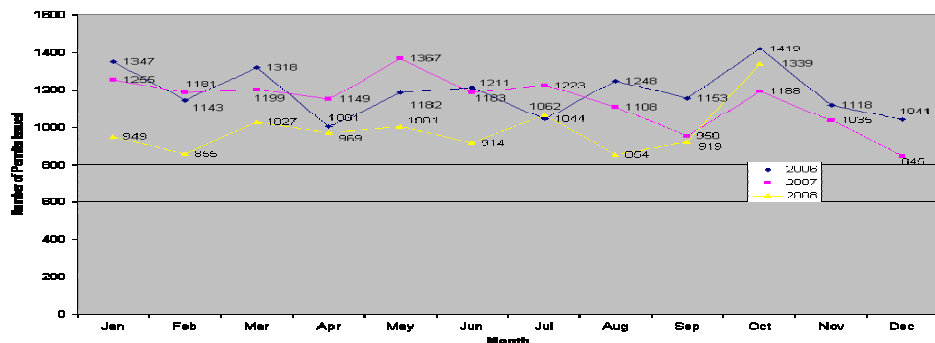
- When the work is to begin and the estimated completion date
- A statement of the cost of the contract and the amounts and schedule for progress payments including a specific statement on the down payment
- A listing of specified materials and work to be performed, which is specifically requested by the consumer
- A "plain language" exculpatory clause concerning events beyond the control of the contractor and a statement explaining that delays caused by such events do not constitute abandonment and are not included in calculating time frames for payments or performance.
- A statement of assurance that the contractor will comply with all local requirements permits, inspections and zoning.

- Disclosure of the cancellation rights of both parties
- For contracts resulting from door-to-door solicitation, a signed acknowledgment by the consumer that he/she has been provided with and the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation statement of protection available to them through the Board of Contractors
- Contractor's name, address, license number, class of license and classifications or specialty services.
- Statement providing that any modification to the contract, which changes the cost, materials, work to be performed, or estimated completion date must be in writing and signed by all parties.

Licensed contractors are required by regulation to use a legible written contract containing all the items listed above, for residential contraction. Additional terms may be added to the contract but those listed above are required.

## PERMITS SHOW INCREASE

Permits Issued by Month for Three Year Period



## MECHANICAL MOMENTS

(CONTD. ON PAGE 3)

As with gas line problems, colder weather and increased use can compound masonry chimney problems. Most of us think of masonry chimneys that are used in conjunction with a fireplace. But chimneys are also used to vent fossil fuel burning appliances such as boilers, furnaces and water heaters. A number of homes in Norfolk use masonry chimneys for venting of heating appliances, usually gas or oil fired. A good practice is to have

your masonry chimney cleaned and inspected at least annually by a qualified chimney professional. Some of the problems that occur are mortar degradation, blockages such as birds' nests and general wear and tear due to long term use. A chimney that is not working properly can be a serious safety hazard. Appliances may not vent properly and the possibility for combustion product spillage into

the home increases. Many chimneys in older homes do not have liners. Which improves performance and durability. New liners can be installed in existing chimneys. Approved corrugated metal and cast-in-place liners are two common types. A mechanical permit and inspection are required for a chimney liner installation.

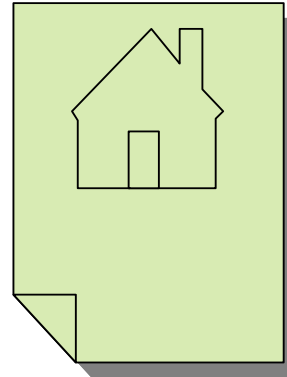
**Norfolk Zoning Regulations: Physical Survey Requirements by Bobby Tajan**

An accurate physical survey of a property is required for construction documents in order to provide zoning approval for building permits. A physical survey is required for residential and may be required for commercial submittals. All physical surveys must be sealed by a VA Registered Land Surveyor or may be sealed by a Registered Engineer or Architect with reference to the survey that was performed by a Land Surveyor and must provide all pertinent survey data. A survey is important for zoning approvals because of the need to check for distances from property lines, dis-

tances from other structures and to determine the conformity of the improvements on the property. A survey may also be required for improvements that do not go outside of existing footprints of buildings due to conformity requirement equipments. This is especially true for commercial plans with change in uses that must meet the parking standards for the new use.

Such a survey offers a wealth of information for not only the person reviewing the plans but also for the owner. In addition to existing physical improvements, surveys will often have information about flood zones, topographic features, and property

line data. It is important to have an accurate physical survey of your property, not only to receive a permit but also for your own records.



**VBCOA is a Chapter of ICC**



[www.vbcoa.org](http://www.vbcoa.org)

**ICC Mission and Vision**

**Vision:** Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of people by creating better buildings and safer communities.

**Mission:** Providing the highest quality codes, standards, products, and services for all concerned with the safety and performance of the built environment.

**Seaboard Building Opens**

**By Rick Fortner**

The Norfolk Division of Building Safety was pleased to be involved in the relocation process of the Kirn Memorial Library which is now open to the public in a limited status. The Division of Building Safety performed numerous building safety inspections including the fire alarm, elevator, mechanical and electrical inspections. The Division of Building Safety inspectors and supervisors worked closely with Public Works employees and contractors to

provide timely customer response.

The new venue for the Kirn Memorial library is now located in the Seaboard Building at 235 East Plume Street which is on the National Historical Register for Historical Buildings. Among its many other uses, The Seaboard Building was formerly used for Norfolk City Hall and the U.S. Post Office.

**Mech. Moments Contd.**

The City of Norfolk inspector may require a chimney certification which is completed by a licensed professional. A permit and inspection are required for the replacement of gas/oil fired appliances. Safety is the bottom line. A properly maintained chimney should provide years of service.

**VBCOA Announces Positions**

VBCOA announced the updated officers and Region Chair positions. They are as follows:

- President: Lynn Underwood
- 1st VP: Jim Collins
- 2nd VP: Joel Baker
- Sgt Arms: Shahriar Amiri
- Region I: Stan Masse
- Region II: Cathy Cook
- Region III: Bill Butler & Kevin Kline
- Region IV: Dave Ansell
- Region V: Sean Farrell
- Region VI: Dallas Johnson
- Region VII: Harold Stills
- Region VIII: James Pippin

New committee chairs were announced.

They are as follows:

- Awards: Edith Hampton
- BHCD: Rick Witt
- Education: Roger Robertson
- IBC: Justin Biller
- IRC: Ellis McKinney
- Legislation: Ron Clements
- Membership: Vernell Woods
- Nominations: Cheri Hainer
- Past Pres.: John Glover
- Plumbing/Mech: Mike Clift
- Property Maintenance: Sean Farrell/ Harold Roach
- Public Info: Kris Bridges
- Time/Place: Darin Clements
- Web Mgr: Richard Ritter
- DPOR: Michael Redifer
- Region 7: Rick Witt
- BCAAC: Roger Robertson

**Staff Promotions News**

Congratulations is in order for Eldridge Raynard. "EI" was promoted in November from Permit Specialist to Sr, Permit Specialist. Mr. Raynard joined Bldg. Safety in 2005 and is to be commended for a job well done.



**CHANGES IN ELEVATOR PROGRAM**

Beginning January 1, 2009, Building Safety will change the way fees are collected in the elevator program. With this new program, the owner or the agent will get permits and pay for the annual inspection or five year test in our office before the initial inspection is done. In the past, they would pay for the inspection after the test was complete. This way, ensures that the City of Norfolk receives fees before the tests are done. Also, we are going to use Hansen for scheduling and

Administering the records of the testing and inspection. Initial letters will be sent out and a lock-out letter will be sent in the event the agent had not scheduled or received a permit. This change allows the inspector to be more efficient with his time. He would know what has already been scheduled; leaving him more time to do other things. Inspector Sean Day is being cross-trained to become the next Elevator Inspector. He is to be commended for this giant step forward.

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**Policy Highlights**

The City of Norfolk has developed policies that delineate methods of conducting business or clarifies acceptable methods of meeting the intent of complex building code issues. These are on our website and available for review. This issue will focus on . This policy may be downloaded from the City's website:

[http://www.norfolk.gov/Plannin/g/Policies\\_BCS.asp](http://www.norfolk.gov/Plannin/g/Policies_BCS.asp)

Planning and Community Development Departmental Vision

To integrate the best ideas from all segments of the community with innovative planning techniques in order to create a holistic framework for a vibrant and diverse community to live, work and play.

Planning and Community Development Departmental Mission

To apply the highest quality planning and reflect regulatory principles to preserve, protect and enhance Norfolk's developed and natural environments.

Division Mission:

Building Safety

DHCD News:

Training and Certification Unit welcomes its newest staff member.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our newest member of Training and Certification unit, Elizabeth Stangl. "Liz" comes to DHCD with more than eight years of experience in the training development arena. Prior to joining DHCD Liz was employed with Qimonda North America (formerly White Oak and Infineon Technologies) and involved in various levels of training from new employee 'onboarding' to technical training. Liz brings experience in the delivery of comprehensive training programs, development and implementation of classroom and E-learning programs, as well as customer service delivery. While attending the University of Richmond, Liz earned a Bachelors Degree in Human Resource Management. Liz will utilize her expertise while working closely with instructors and others in updating existing VBCA programs and in developing a number of new specialized training offerings over the next year.

Over the next several months, many of you will have an opportunity to meet Liz at upcoming Virginia Building Code Academy courses and at various regional and organization meetings. So please join me and the Training and Certification Unit in welcoming Liz Stangl.

Sandi Morris, Manager

Code Corner:

**Q: If I get a permit to repair my deck does it have to meet the current code requirements?**

**Answer: Section 103.5 Reconstruction, alteration or repair.** The following criteria is applicable to reconstruction, alteration or repair of buildings or structures:

1. Any reconstruction, alteration or repair shall not adversely affect the performance of the building or structure, or cause the building or structure to become unsafe or lower existing levels of health and safety.
2. Parts of the building or structure not being reconstructed, altered or repaired shall not be required to comply with the requirements of this code applicable to newly constructed buildings or structures.
3. The installation of material or equipment, or both, that is neither required nor prohibited shall only be required to comply with the provisions of this code relating to the safe installation of such material or equipment.
4. Material or equipment, or both, may be replaced in the same location with material or equipment of a similar kind or capacity.

**Exceptions:**

1. This section shall not be construed to permit noncompliance with any applicable flood load or flood-resistant construction requirements of this code.
2. Reconstructed decks, balconies, porches and similar structures located 30 inches (762 mm) or more above grade shall meet the current code provisions for structural loading capacity, connections and structural attachment. This requirement excludes handrails and guardrails.

**2009 CODE ADOPTION PROCESS BEGINS IN VIRGINIA**

The 2009 Regulatory Work Groups will commence the necessary reviews of the 2009 ICC model codes and their significant changes and review legislative and carry over issues from the 2006 regulations that were effective May 1, 2009. There are a significant number of new code requirements approved for all 10 model codes that are referenced through Virginia's regulations. These include mandatory sprinklers for one and two family dwellings as well as townhomes. In addition, numerous increases in energy efficiency have been added to the Energy Code and provisions of the IRC. Carbon Monoxide detectors are mandatory for single family dwellings with fuel fired appliance or attached garage. Revised wall

bracing requirements are added. A prescriptive sprinkler system for residences is added to the plumbing section of the IRC. Further, numerous administrative changes that affect Chapter One in the USBC.

To obtain the feedback from all our stakeholders, code officials, advisory committees, state agencies and the Fire Services Board, the DHCD will commence their inclusive vetting and consensus process much earlier than in past regulatory cycles. The ICC 2009 model codes are expected to all be published individually starting in January and be completed by the end of February. It will be available for purchase in March 2009. Code Associations such as VBCOA, VFOA and VPMIA will

have a list of approved code commence their reviews since they changes and the Virginia Code Officials have attended the last two code hearings so they are aware of the significant code changes. There will be Work Group meetings in March and April and other meetings will be scheduled for April-June as necessary. At the beginning of 2009, DHCD will send out a list of code issues/agendas for the March and April meetings so you can select those Work Groups and meetings you might want to attend.

By then, we should have a 2009 regulatory time frame ready for the BHCD to approve that will include the tentative time frames for publication of the proposed regulations, BHCD's Code and Standards Committee reviews, public hearings, public comment periods, code change cut-off date and effective date.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to email Emory Rodgers at [emory.rodgers@dhcd.virginia.gov](mailto:emory.rodgers@dhcd.virginia.gov) or call at 804-371-7151.

**Plumbing Insp. Contd.**

for the plumbing inspectors to expand their expertise from sanitary plumbing systems to the basic sprinkler systems. I stated previously that the residential sprinkler design is not as complicated as the NFPA 13 ( commercial ) system but a lot of the basic information such as sprinkler head coverage per head, the temperature rating of the sprinkler head, the proper calculations for water flow required to flow 2 or 3 sprinkler heads, placement of sprinkler heads to avoid obstructions, are just a few of the many new technical items that will be a part of the training involved with this expanded responsibility. The single family dwelling that has a sprinkler system installed will be a enormous life safety enhancement to our future housing stock.

**PLUMBING INSPECTIONS BY LEON YODER**

Sanitary plumbing systems and fire suppression system have traditionally been viewed as separate trades as they are both water systems but they have different design and installation criteria and serve different functions. The proposed 2009 International Residential Code is going to make fire sprinkler systems mandatory in single family dwellings. This requirement is now placed in the plumbing section of the code therefore making these sprinkler inspections the responsibility of the plumbing inspector. The residential sprinkler design is modeled after the NFPA 13D system which is not as complex as the NFPA 13 system which the sprinkler systems that we see installed in commercial buildings. This will provide a great opportunity