

Good morning, my name is Ashley Richards and for the last 30 years I have had the good fortune to be a part of the construction industry in the State of Maine. First, as a custom homebuilder and remodeler with Richards & Company and more recently as an energy auditor and insulation contractor with WarmTech Solutions.

I currently serve as president of the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Maine and serve on the Executive Board of the National Association of Homebuilders, a federation of more than 800 state and local building associations with over 235,000 members across the country. I'm also a member of the United States Green Building Council and a founding member of the Maine Chapter. And as member of the Hickory Consortium, I along with the other consortium members have done extensive research in developing energy efficient and affordable housing.

Through my work and my involvement in NAHB and USGBC I can assure you that the Green Building Revolution is here, As a matter of fact the train has left the station. Those of us that are involved know that we are on the cutting edge of great changes in the building industry. Good government programs and policies can make a big difference in the economy, for example the Energy Star Program and the Building America Program. So why not implement a Green Economic Recovery Program to help grow and accelerate economic activity?

Here are a few examples of what's already happening nationally and locally. In the homebuilding sector NAHB has 190 local green building programs that have certified over 115,000 green homes. USGBC started with their LEED certification program in the commercial sector and has expanded to residential construction. While the NAHB green building program is market driven and is designed to make green affordable for home buyers and the USGBC LEED program covers a broader spectrum of the built environment, both of these programs along with others serve an important role in pushing the envelope. I get emails every day informing me of new green building initiatives and green products.

Locally through my participation in the Maine Home Performance program as a Certified Maine Energy Auditor and a Certified Building Professional Analyst, I can assure you that the hand full of us that are certified are swamped with work. Did you know that 85% of the new homes built in Maine do not meet the current nationally recognized energy code and that over 450,000 older homes in Maine are either not insulated or under insulated. It seems like that is an economic opportunity waiting to happen. All building projects funded by the State of Maine must meet a green building standard. This includes state office buildings, university buildings and Maine Housing Authority funded projects, just another example of an economic opportunity.

When I started my insulation business with my partner, Matt Delaney, just over 5 years ago I came to realize that there are very few people in Maine that know how to air seal and insulate a building. We have spent a tremendous amount of energy training our employees and educating, home owners, architects and builders to look at the thermal envelope from a very different perspective.

Recently I've met with Maine Housing Authority and the Maine Department of Labor to develop a program to train folks to insulate and air seal buildings. The kickoff training session for this program will be on September 22nd. The other day, I got a call from the local Youth Build

Program interested in developing a green building certification program for their students. In another week when I attend the NAHB Board of Directors Meeting in San Diego, I will be petitioning the Home Builders Institute, the workforce educational arm of NAHB, to develop a curriculum for training insulation installers. These programs can train the thermal envelope engineers of the future. These programs and others can play an important role in a Green Economic Recovery Program.

I've spent the last 30 years building and insulating energy efficient homes for Maine families, but I don't think, "Hey, I've got a green job." I do know that the work that I do puts families into healthy homes, saves them money and is good for the environment. The current energy problem affects our economy, our environment and our security. Our work can make a difference.