A Unified and Effective Code
January 2004

Issue

The current system of building and fire codes in Rhode Island creates an unpredictable, costly, and time-consuming process for building construction. This environment not only stifles the existing business economy but also hampers the ability of Rhode Island to compete with other, more streamlined states for new business.

There is a growing movement across the country to adopt a single family of codes for construction. By acting now to join the trend, Rhode Island can improve its competitive edge and significantly bolster the local economy while improving public health and life safety. Codes are ineffective if they are not understood by the users and/or code enforcers, and if sufficient funds are not available for proper enforcement. It is important to emphasize that the adoption of a single set of codes would enhance protection of public health and life safety for consumers by generating more consistent code enforcement, thereby creating a higher standard of construction.

Action

“The Coalition for a Unified and Effective Code”, consisting of design professionals, building owners, contractors, and non-profit policy advocates, supports the following:

1. The creation of a single agency to administer the building and fire codes;
2. The adoption of a single set of comprehensive, coordinated, and contemporary codes;
3. The creation of clear lines of jurisdiction between the building and fire departments to eliminate redundancy and inefficiency;
4. The adoption of minimum standards and training for all plan reviewers.

The Rhode Island Division of Fire Safety and the State Fire Marshal, and the State Building Commission and the Building Commissioner are currently separate and independent from each other, with the Fire Marshal in the Executive office and the Building Commissioner within the Department of Administration. This structure creates a particularly difficult but not unique impediment to unifying and streamlining the regulatory process. Leadership at the Executive level is critical to the success of moving the two agencies together in a cooperative effort.

This issue is by no means unique to Rhode Island. In addition to our collective expertise, the coalition has already assembled a wealth of information regarding the initiatives of other states that may assist in the process. The benefit is clear: reduce the transaction cost of building construction while improving public health and life safety. If Rhode Island maintains its current two-code, two-agency status quo, it will undoubtedly fall further behind the curve on both counts.
Endorsement To the
Coalition for a Unified and Effective Code

C. U. E. C.

The mission of the Coaliton for a Unified and Effective Code is to promote:

- The creation of a single agency to administer the building and fire codes;
- The adoption of a single set of comprehensive, coordinated, and contemporary codes;
- The creation of clear lines of jurisdiction between the building and fire departments to eliminate redundancy and inefficiency;
- The adoption of minimum standards, training and continuing education requirements for all plan reviewers.

☐ _______________________________ agrees to join the Coalition for a Unified and Effective Code, C. U. E. C. The coalition has permission to identify this organization as a participant. A monetary contribution is not a condition to being a member of the coalition.

________________________________________  ______________________
(Signature)                                 (Date)

☐ _______________________________ is not able to join the Coalition for a Unified and Effective Code, C. U. E. C. at this time. Please keep me informed of the coalition’s progress.

Contact Name: _________________________________
Address:  _________________________________
Telephone:  _________________________________
Fax:  _________________________________
E Mail:  _________________________________

Please return the form by fax to: Cyndi Gerlach at (401) 273-7156