

CHBA NL Annual Report 2012

CHBA NL closed 2012 with a celebration of success and a focus on the future.

In early 2012, the Board of Directors completed and adopted a three-year strategic plan for 2012-2015. From this strategic planning process evolved a new vision and mission for the CHBA NL which will result in new programming and services for members, a superior focus on advocacy and the development of new communication strategies.

In addition, the Association's organizational and committee structures have been upgraded to ensure goals and objectives are achievable. With an approved planning process for the next three years, an operational plan for each year has been created for evaluation purposes, so that CHBA NL activities are focused and communicated.

Some of the key successes for 2012 are as follows:

Goal #1 - To influence a positive direction and acceptance within the industry

Public profile

A communications strategy was designed to identify key ways to communicate with three primary audiences – members, consumers and industry professionals. The Association undertook to balance cost-effectiveness with targeting critical areas for improvement.

By taking into account its budgetary constraints and maximizing its human resources the Association has successfully implemented the following strategies: increased and effective use of electronic communication tools such as website and social media networks; enhanced use of public relations for the purposes of brand awareness; improved use of media and paid advertisements to market and conduct outreach; development of a crisis management plan to improve responsiveness to industry issues in the media; and development of an internal marketing position for the Association.

These actions have resulted in the development of:

- New website: www.chbanl.ca;
- A monthly electronic newsletter;
- Active social media accounts with Facebook and Twitter;
- Increased news releases and press statements to the media;

- An increase in media requests for interviews and comments;
- Appearances in print and TV news stories related to the industry; and
- More focused advertising and marketing initiatives.

CHBA NL initiated focused industry information to consumers by working with media (print and radio) and providing up-to-date consumer information relevant for the NL market.

April New Homes Month: CHBA NL was featured in the Telegram's "My Home" special publication. The story "Stakeholders discuss buyers' wish lists, communication and satisfactory end results" and highlighted members Eileen Skinner, co-owner of Pro-Tec Construction and Paul Loveless, owner, Clover Construction.

October Renovation Month: CHBA NL negotiated a radio ad package for our members with Steele Communications. As a non-profit organization we were able to negotiate an ad package that allowed our members to get in on the deal for half of the regular price.

In addition, the Association purchased four pages of The Telegram's bi-annual supplement "My Home", in order to populate it with Renovation Month literature and to sell advertising to our members. A membership list was provided in a half-page advertisement and a PDF of the supplement was made available on the website.

Professionalism of builder members

In 2012 CHBA NL launched two key professional programs for builder and renovator members: Master Builder and RenoMark.

Over the past year, CHBA NL staff conducted a jurisdictional scan of similar Master Builder programs in other provinces, reviewed education and training courses and recommended criteria for Board approval. Pilot Communications was engaged to develop the branding, logo and brochure for the Master Builder program with the goal to begin receiving applications for certification as of January 2013.

In addition, CHBA NL will also be offering the RenoMark program to members in January 2013. Member training for R2000 took place during the 11th Annual Housing Forum in February - R-2000 Training Update and Energy Efficient New Home Construction Workshop. National Trainer, Tex McLeod facilitated the training sessions and was also the guest speaker at the forum. The training took place in the CHBA NL training facility.

Advocating industry issues

The CHBA NL Strategic Plan 2012-15 identified a need to advocate more actively on key issues facing the industry.

Through an integrated communications strategy, the CHBA NL initiated a stronger partnership with media outlets so as to advocate on behalf of the industry particularly in the areas of housing affordability, government imposed costs and the underground economy. This initiative resulted in significant media exposure in print media (The Telegram), radio (VOCM and CBC talk shows) and on TV (news interviews). As a consequence, CHBA NL is reaching a wider audience and receiving very positive responses from members, industry stakeholders and the public.

Issues brought forward in the media in 2012:

- Law Society Levy
- Labour Relations Act amendments
- Town of Paradise and City of St. John's - increase in development fees
- Support for Budget 2012 for apprenticeship and skill development funding
- Fire Safety Issue – Home building practices are safe

The CHBA-NL CEO appeared on TV (live on NTV), radio (VOCM; CBC call-in talk shows), and in print via provincial newspapers, where she has been quoted as weighing in on stories and new items directly related to the industry. Media attention has resulted in a change in attitude and perception about the industry within government and the public.

In addition to the media coverage of key issues, CHBA NL is seeking stronger partnerships with government representatives (politicians and staff). In doing so, CHBA NL is able to elevate industry issues in policy discussions resulting in better policy for the housing sector.

Some of the recent initiatives include:

- The Executive Director of Municipalities NL addressed members at the January luncheon on challenges and issues facing municipalities in the areas of financing and development;
- Builder Breakfast: Building Municipal Relations (February);
- 2012 MP Summer Campaign: The President, Vice President and CEO met with Jack Harris (NDP) in August and Labrador MP, Peter Penashue (Regional Minister);
- CHBA-NL's partnership with the City of St. John's on the Not In My Back Yard (NIMBY) Project;
- City of St. John's Municipal Plan Submission (November); and

- Municipal representation on the Technical Research Committee.

As a result of these initiatives, CHBA NL is creating and facilitating an environment for strengthening relationships between municipal representatives and builders in order to develop long term strategic partnerships. Pivotal achievements, beyond raising awareness, include more in-depth and detailed discussions with municipalities and a stronger, more unified voice when speaking on issues.

Goal #2 - To provide value to members through targeted programs and services

Since the strategic planning process began, the CHBA NL has conducted a review of benefits and services to its membership. It was determined that there was a need to focus on initiatives that have been on the Association's agenda for the past couple of years, such as the development of a local Master Builder Program.

Other programs and services identified in the strategic planning process included the RenoMark Program, Members' Advantage Program, training opportunities for improving business capacity and R2000 upgrading.

In addition, the Association reviewed the need to look closer at the industry labour market needs. Some of the areas explored were:

- Several meetings with the Department of Advanced Education and Skills to identify key areas that can be addressed through apprenticeship retention (wage subsidies) and the trade qualifier program (Red Seal).
- Builder Breakfast Sessions – professional development opportunities for builder members (January with Municipalities “Building Municipal Relations” (Feb 2) and more recently in October with the RNC on site security).
- CHBA NL has established a Members' Advantage Program (MAP) with the purpose of encouraging members to do business with each other, and to help our members broadcast their services and the value they offer to our members.

CHBA NL events

The **29th Annual Home Show** took place at Mile One Stadium on May 5 and May 6, 2012. This Home Show had a reduced schedule due to the Ice Caps Hockey team's success and its placement in the finals. Fortunately, it was a sold-out show with record numbers in attendance for the two day event. Designer, Ambrose Price, was the headliner and was featured in 4 demonstration shows.

The **11th Annual Housing Forum** took place on March 28th with the theme of Energy Efficiency in the Residential Construction Industry. There were 70 individuals registered for the one-day event that included 6 guest speakers featuring Tex McLeod, a leading expert in Energy Efficiency and R2000.

Other speakers included representatives from CMHC, Natural Resources, Office of Climate Change and the City of St. John's. The Rural Secretariat assisted by facilitating the afternoon discussions and conducting a polling session. Innovation Business and Rural Development was a major sponsor of the event.

For the lunchtime session, CHBA NL partnered with the Harris Centre of MUN to co-host a synergy session that included over 100 people for lunch with guest speaker Bruce Pearce.

The **12th Annual Jerome Walters Memorial Golf Classic** was held at Terra Nova on July 26th. Despite the rainy start, over one hundred golfers teed off and enjoyed a great day on the course.

The **4th Annual BERG Awards Gala** took place on Saturday, November 17, 2012 at the Sheraton Hotel. This was a record event with over 280 guests. The silent auction was a huge success, in aid of Habitat for Humanity raising over \$7000.

CHBA NL holds **monthly membership meetings** with members that attract between 80 to 100 individuals. The attendance for these meetings has been steadily rising over the last 18 months. The format includes a formal agenda, guest speaker, and reports from the President and CEO.

Topics covered in 2012 were related to industry, government relations, economy and business. Some of our guest speakers were from Municipalities NL, the Workplace Health and Safety Compensation Commission, BDC (Entrepreneurs First: Financing for small and medium-sized business in the residential construction industry), St. John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness, and CMHC Overview, Economic Overview and its implications for the housing sector (W. Locke Economist with Memorial University).

Goal #3 – To ensure the long-term growth of the Association

Strengthen administrative functions of the Association

Policies and Procedures and By-laws have been reviewed by the Association, however these are not documents that can be developed and changed overnight. They are important documents for our organizational growth. These two items will be the focus of our plan for 2013.

The organizational review was conducted last Spring and presented to the Board in June. There have been some changes to the administrative staff with the creation of a Membership Services Coordinator, which will provide significant value to the membership.

Our governance manual was reviewed last fall and we continue to build on our Board members' binder. Our new board will receive a new and revised binder in January.

Financial sustainability of CHBA NL

We have reviewed our sponsorship model and have developed a package that contains a variety of options for members and non-members. It is our goal to have annual agreements with our members and non-member sponsors, so that we avoid chasing stakeholders multiple times of the year. This communication will be sent out in January. We anticipate that it will take time for people to manage this type of sponsorship process but it will be more effective and less cumbersome for our staff and you.

We are also offering corporate sponsorship to those who are looking for a high level of exposure with the CHBA NL.

A user fee model will be incorporated into the majority of CHBA NL services such as training and certification in our Master Builder and RenoMark Programs.

Review dues and non-dues revenue

At the Annual Meeting of Members on November 6, 2012, the membership approved the membership fee increase for 2013. This membership fee increase is a result of several months of research and discussion. Over the past 18 months, CHBA-NL has conducted a thorough analysis of services and finances for the past decade. In addition, throughout a strategic planning process with the Board of Directors, it was discovered that members are expecting more advocacy and services than they currently receive from the organization today.

Considerable research has been conducted to review advocacy, membership services, and revenue sources, in other jurisdictions across the country. This analysis not only revealed new models of membership services but also a variety of membership fee structures. It was discovered through this research that CHBA members in Newfoundland and Labrador were paying the lowest membership fees in Canada. It was determined that Newfoundland and

Labrador fees would need to increase to meet the standards of service CHBA-NL members expect.

Conclusion

As evidenced by the above, the changes initiated by CHBA NL in 2012 are all positive and comprehensive, with a paramount focus on members. Our goal to strengthen the capacities of the membership in order to effectively respond to the rapid changes within the industry are well underway and significant successes have already been demonstrated.

CHBA NL has implemented a long-term strategy that places the Association on solid footing and in such a manner that we are recognized nationally. It is our expectation and objective that by 2015 CHBA NL will have a more united and thriving membership that has the cohesion, capabilities and responsiveness to build sustainable communities.