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On The Level - November 2009

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TABA Annual Christmas Mixer

The Christmas Mixer is scheduled for Thursday, December 3rd from 11am to 1pm at the TABA office. The event will include the Annual Awards Ceremony, which will be shortened from its usual format and will take place at noon during the Mixer.

As always, this is a come and go event, but we'd like for as many as possible to be in attendance at noon for the special presentations. There will be heavy hors'dourves and Christmas goodies for everyone to enjoy. The noon presentation will serve to recognize a number of individuals for their contributions to TABA and the home building industry throughout the year and to handle our 2010 Board elections.

There is no cost to attend this mixer and we encourage everyone to be present for the Awards Ceremony. Classic Catering will provide the food. Your reservation is requested so that we know how many to plan for. Please call the TABA office by Monday, November 30th (254-773-0445).

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President's Message

Chris Alexander

According to a recent news release from NAHB on October 28th the sales of *newly built single-family homes* fell 3.6 percent for the month of September. The data was released by the U.S. Commerce Department which attributed the loss in sales to the \$8,000 first-time buyer tax credit set to end in November. Let's hope that our Congress can quickly come together to extend and expand the homebuyer tax credit as is currently being discussed. As of now, the Senate has voted unanimously to continue and expand the program to include a \$6,500 credit for move-up buyers. Our industry needs every bit of assistance we can get to help survive this uncertain economy. Through the first three quarters of the year, residential building permits in Belton were down 16 percent from the same period in 2008. Temple's year over year decline during the period was about 9 percent.

I am happy to report that things are on track financially at TABA as we approach the end of 2009. With careful oversight and planning by our staff and directors we are about where we thought we would be at this time of the year. This is certainly good news. With all of our fundraising events completed for the year, there remains only one area that could impact us negatively between now and the end of the year...and that is membership.

New member recruitment and current member retention is a challenge facing all builder associations across the nation. While we regret that we have experienced our fare share of local membership losses, we are in better shape than many of the other associations across the state. Our leadership is working hard to retain current members who are continuing to experience downturns in their business making it difficult to find the funds for membership dues. If you are considering letting your membership lapse, please contact Cheryl for information that may be helpful to you. We sincerely appreciate and value each of you who have dug deep to find the funds to renew your membership.

We are pleased to welcome **Danny Coppin of Coppin Signs** and **Cody Fritz of Water Softner Services** as new members of our association. I encourage each of our builder and associate members to welcome these new members to our TABA family. We say **THANK YOU** to each one of our new 2009 members who saw the long term value of TABA membership and cared enough about our industry to join our association during tough economic times. I have said this many times before and will say it one more time "Whenever possible, do business with a fellow TABA member."

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Troy Glasson
Executive Officer

2009 Temple Storm Water Stakeholders Meet...

In keeping with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) requirement for public involvement, the City of Temple recently presented an overview detailing where they stand and what is left to be done to comply with TCEQ storm water regulation. The [TABA website presentations page](#) now includes the materials provided at the early November meeting (scroll to the very bottom), including a spreadsheet that describes selected [best management practices](#) and the time table for their implementation during the five year period the plan covers. We are currently in year three of the plan.

Temple City Engineer Michael Newman and Duane Herrera, Storm Water Management Program Tech, facilitated the meeting. They discussed the program that was created by the TCEQ with the goal of reducing pollution in creeks via the regulation of illicit discharge from industry; erosion and sedimentation control from construction sites; and post construction management practices. All of these categories are required to be regulated with individual and specific city ordinances in place by next year--year four of the compliance period.

Finally, recall that TABA has hosted two developer stakeholder meetings at which the City of Temple to discussed best management practices for construction and post construction periods. During the meetings our development community voted to recommend a selection of practices that they believe would work best in our area. Michael Newman sent me the results of the vote and they can be viewed in a document entitled "[Temple BMP Storm Water Results](#)" on the presentations page (see page 7 of 8) with the documents listed above.

The City of Belton is also required to meet certain benchmarks for storm water. I will let you know when I hear from them about how they'll proceed.

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Booking of NEW exhibitors for the 2010 Home & Garden Show is open. If you didn't participate in the show this year and would like to exhibit in 2010, please call the TABA office and have the show layout in hand when you do so. The layout can be printed from the TABA website by clicking on the [Home & Garden Show tab](#). A booth price guide can be found there as well.

With an anticipated 5,000 visitors over the course of the weekend, our vendors consistently tout this opportunity as one of the best ways to spend marketing dollars. The dates of the event are February 27th and 28th with the Preview Party on the 26th. Please don't wait to secure a booth.

For 2010, we divided the center booth to include three exhibit spaces and the Home & Garden Show Headquarters booth. We are very pleased to announce that all three exhibit spaces have been rented out and the entire Exposition Building is nearly booked. We only have 4 10x10 booth spaces left in that building. As you can see, exhibit space is going quite swiftly this year so please don't wait if you plan to exhibit.

We will continue a focus on GREEN for 2010. Green continues to be a huge industry buzz word and a growing market segment. If you have a "green" product that helps home to become more energy efficient or reduces water usage, please let us know as we will continue to denote these booths in the Expo tabloid.

If you have any questions regarding the 2010 Home & Garden Show please contact Cheryl Hunka at 254-773-0445.

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Two Great New TABA Partnerships

TABA announced last month the creation of two new affinity programs that have the potential to provide your business with additional operating resources and raise significant non-dues revenue for the Association with your participation and enrollment. TABA has entered into an agreement with American Express and BBVA Compass. Below are the details for each program. We strongly urge you to consider participating in one or both programs.

[American Express Partnership Program](#)

We are very pleased to have entered into a partnership with American Express and its Corporate Card Division. The Amex US Corporate Card Division would like the opportunity to introduce you to the features and benefits available for your business. This card could be a great tool for qualifying businesses. It is designed to remove the personal liability that most credit cards have.

The program is simple. American Express will provide an incentive award to TABA for each member who initiates and uses a new American Express business account. This includes current American Express clients who utilize a personal or "business" card and chooses to add to or replace it with a "corporate" card solution.

Simply let TABA know that you are interested in speaking with an American Express representative about their credit card programs and TABA will provide them with your contact information. You can then expect a call from an American Express representative. If you find that their programs can be a valuable tool for your business and choose to open an account, TABA will earn immediate compensation for the referral. If you choose not to go any further then there is no further obligation.

Other partners across the nation have earned thousands of dollars in incentive awards from this program. If you are interested in checking into one of the American Express programs, please contact TABA today.

Benefits include:

- ❖ **A charge-card solution which works as unsecured line of credit payables tool that does not impact your financials**
- ❖ **Improved cash flow with 30-day float**
- ❖ **Cash rebates on business spending with leading specific suppliers in their Savings @ Work program**
- ❖ **On-line management tools and data reporting**
- ❖ **Valuable rewards for business spending through the award winning Membership Rewards program**
- ❖ **Local and national implementation resources.**

BBVA Compass Program:

TABA is now a part of an affinity program that will help earn funds for our organization by simply using your BBVA Compass Visa Check Card for everyday purchases. Here's how it works:

1. When you open a new BBVA Compass checking account, our organization will earn an initial royalty of \$20.
2. Every time you use your BBVA Compass Visa Check Card for qualifying transactions, we'll also earn a royalty equal to 0.25% of the amount of each purchase.
3. You can even personalize your Check Card with an image that we've chosen, so you can show your support for the Temple Area Builders Association every time you use your card.

It's that easy and the funds can quickly add up. In addition, existing BBVA Compass customers may also designate their existing BBVA Compass account to be tied to our organization to take full advantage of the Visa Check Card qualifying transactions royalties.

To either open up a new BBVA Compass account or to tie your existing BBVA Compass account to our organization, stop by any area BBVA Compass branch and tell them you want **Bonus Banking Code 75170** added to your account.

For more information about this program, contact BBVA Compass and speak with Jackie Basilla at 254-770-5135 or 254-770-5140.

These are the new tools that we can utilize to raise non-dues revenue for this Association. If you are interested in either one or both, please call TABA today at 254-773-0445 or email us Cheryl@tahb.org. As always, we appreciate your consideration and support as we strive to improve our resources to continue serving you.

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Need A Meeting Place - Consider TABA



We have had great success this year in using our fantastic new TABA Conference Room as a non-dues revenue generator and consistently receive rave reviews about the room and its amenities. If you are needing space for a small gathering - either a meeting or small party, please consider us when looking for that place. The room seats 75 people comfortably in a seminar setting and can seat 40 people at tables. We are equipped with the latest technologies with Wolfvision overhead projection and a projector with computer already in place. No need to bring your laptop just bring your USB stick and plug it in - you'll be good to go!

There is a kitchen with three warming drawers to keep your food warm and a refrigerator to keep your drinks cool as well as an ice machine to ice down your beverages. The kitchen has a pull down divider to keep kitchen noise from interfering with your event in the conference room.

Several members have used this room over the year and the "price is right" when it comes to a rental fee--only \$100 for up to three hours if you are a member of TABA! So if you are in need of a meeting place anytime, please consider TABA and give us a call at 254-773-0445 for more information and availabilities.

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NEW HOME STARTS

	Oct '09	Oct. '08	'09 YTD	'08 YTD
Temple	46	27	379	391
Belton	2	5	58	66
Morgan's Point	0	1	7	17
Totals	48	33	444	474

Note: this data represents a compilation of the statistics that are reported by the Temple Daily Telegram every Sunday.

ALL HOME CLOSINGS

Oct. '09	143	'09 YTD	1,614
Oct. '08	148	'08 YTD	1,721

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EO's Comments

Cheryl Hunka
Executive Officer

I'm always amazed when the holidays roll around how quickly they come. It just seems like yesterday we were installing Chris Alexander as President and already we are getting ready to install our new 2010 President - Jason Carothers! I hope everyone can stop by the TABA office for the Annual Christmas Mixer. The details are on the front page of this issue but I encourage you to show up for our awards ceremony and Board elections. The short program will begin at noon and we hope many of our members come out to show appreciation of those who will be receiving recognition for everything they have contributed to TABA and the building industry this year. It is always exciting to see who will receive the three Presidential Awards so I hope you won't miss it.

TABA Holiday Schedule

To give our membership a heads up, the TABA office will be closed on November 26th and 27th, December 24th, 25th and 31st, and January 1st. I personally will be out of the office from December 16th through December 23rd so if you need anything from me please contact me prior to these dates.

Happy Thanksgiving to all, we hope to see many of you at the final membership event of the year!

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Picture yourself a TABA member 3...

TABA leadership works hard to determine ways that we can tell the TABA story. We want everyone to know who we are and what we do, and everyone has heard that a picture is worth a thousand words.

In that vein, we have decided to continue to reach out to our members and ask you to provide a group photo of you, our TABA member, and your employees. Please get this to us by November 24th for incorporation into a presentation that is being prepared for use at Christmas gathering and many other events through 2010.

Please send your photo to Cheryl Copeland or Troy Glasson (preferably in digital format) so that they can add it to the presentation that shine a light on the faces behind TABA.

TABA members play an important and influential role in this community, and we want everyone to understand that our members represent thousands of employees in our local area.

Though the presentation will only represent a sampling of our membership, it should provide folks with a reminder that TABA members are the people this community send their kids to school with, go to church with, play local sports with, sell their wares to, buy their homes from, receive professional advisement from, and often see regularly in venues across the area on a day to day basis.

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The November election period has come to an end. Unfortunately, voter turn-out was low, as is traditionally the case in constitutional elections. HomePAC reports that the \$29 million Belton ISD bond election in favor of a new middle school passed along with all of the constitutional amendments that were presented by the Texas Legislature.

For a rundown of the vote tally for each ballot item, please see the Bell County Clerks Elections website. For those viewing this on line, [click here](#) for a direct link to that site.

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