Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Maine

HBRAME NEWS

NOVEMBER 2026 · MEMBER NEWSLETTER

12 TOWNS, ONE NETWORK: JOIN US ACROSS MAINE IN 2027

This month: a new way to meet the builders and trade partners in your corner of Maine, free carpentry training starting in January, and what Washington and Augusta are taking up this winter. Plus a head start on your 2027 plan.

COMMUNITY
Nails & Networking

ADVOCACY · AUGUSTA
What Changed In 2026

WORKFORCE
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The Lame-Duck Window

BUSINESS
Plan A Stronger 2027

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BUILDING MAINE TOGETHER IN 2027

Every month the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Maine (HBRAME) works to bring Maine's builders, remodelers and trade partners into the same room. In 2027 we're taking that literally: **Nails & Networking** will visit a different Maine town every month.

This issue also covers a free evening training program at KVCC that our members helped design, the federal permitting bill on Congress's year-end list, the state code laws that took effect this summer, and how to introduce yourself to the new Legislature that convenes December 2.

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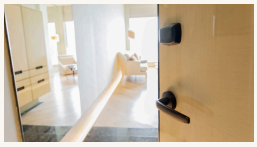

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COMMUNITY

NEW FOR 2027: NAILS & NETWORKING

One night a month, a different corner of Maine.

HBRAME's new **Nails & Networking** series brings builders and suppliers together in their own region to meet, compare notes and solve problems together. It runs on the third Thursday of every month in 2027, starting in central Maine and heading north in February.

THE FIRST TWO NIGHTS

- **Thursday, January 21 – Augusta area:** The Woodshed, Manchester
- **Thursday, February 18 – Bangor area:** Mason's, Brewer

Cost: $10 per person, per night, for members and guests. Pick your night at checkout.

THE FULL 2027 ROUTE

Jan 21	Augusta area
Feb 18	Bangor area
Mar 18	Lewiston/Auburn
Apr 15	Sanford
May 20	Brunswick
Jun 17	Windham
Jul 15	Rockland
Aug 19	Rangeley
Sep 16	York
Oct 21	Saco
Nov 18	Bar Harbor
Dec 16	Farmington

Venues for the later nights are announced closer to each date.

HOST A NIGHT

Want to host Nails & Networking at your shop, yard or showroom? It's a simple way to put your business in front of the builders and trade partners in your area.

REGISTER FOR NAILS & NETWORKING

Questions or want to host? Contact Heather Raisanen, HBRAME Executive Officer, at eo@hbrame.org.

Sources: HBRAME events portal, portal.hbrame.org/events (schedule, cost).

WORKFORCE

FREE CARPENTRY TRAINING: KVCC STARTS JANUARY 12

Know someone who wants to get into the trades? Here's a no-cost way in.

Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC) is launching **Construction Fundamentals**, a new in-person training program for people who want to build a career in residential construction and carpentry. The 135-hour program covers the foundational knowledge and hands-on skills employers look for in entry-level workers.

Dates	January 12 – April 29, 2027
Schedule	Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, 5:30–8:30 p.m.
Location	Nutter Building, KVCC Alfond Campus, 677 Skowhegan Rd., Hinckley
Cost	No cost to trainees ($2,000 value), grant funded through the Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine's Workforce
Class size	12 trainees
Requirements	High school diploma, GED or HiSET, plus OSHA 10 certification (applicants provide their name as it appears on the card and their OSHA card number)
Apply by	December 1, 2026

WHAT TRAINEES WILL LEARN

- Tool Safety
- Construction Print Reading
- Building Concepts, Leveling and Construction Math
- Building a Shed from Floor to Roof
- Roofing, Siding and Exterior Finish Work
- Stringers and Stair Basics

Please help spread the word to employees, family members, job seekers and anyone you know who's interested in the trades. Seats are limited. Questions? Email kvccworkforce@mainecc.edu or visit kvcc.me.edu/workforce.

A big thank-you to the Carpentry Action Team for helping shape the program's design and content.

CLICK TO APPLY

Program details on KVCC's website →

Sources: KVCC program flyer and website; WorkSource Maine (Maine DOL) listing, updated Oct 13, 2026.

Share KVCC's flyer with anyone who might be interested.

ADVOCACY · WASHINGTON

PERMITTING REFORM: THE LAME-DUCK WINDOW

After the November 3 election, Congress returns for a short lame-duck session. A bipartisan permitting bill NAHB has backed all year is near the top of the list.

S. 5653 · BAAJA

NOV 9

FIRST PROCEDURAL VOTE AS THE LAME DUCK OPENS

WHERE THINGS STAND

On September 30, the Republican and Democratic leaders of the Senate's energy and environment committees (Sens. Mike Lee, R-Utah; Shelley Moore Capito, R-W.Va.; Martin Heinrich, D-N.M.; and Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I.) introduced **S. 5653, the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act (BAAJA)**. The bill reforms federal environmental review and permitting. Much of it deals with energy and infrastructure, and it also carries housing provisions NAHB pushed for. NAHB Chairman Bill Owens called it the most meaningful reform in decades to several key federal permitting programs.

The Senate left Washington without a vote. A first procedural vote is scheduled for **November 9**, the day the lame-duck session begins, and Sen. Capito has said negotiators want it to be among the first votes when the Senate returns. To become law, the bill still has to pass the Senate and the House and be signed by the president. Some House members have raised objections, so the details could still shift.

WHY THE TIMING MATTERS

The lame-duck session is short: a few legislative weeks before the holidays, wrapping up the current (119th) Congress. A new Congress starts in January with new leadership arrangements, which could change the path for any deal still on the table. NAHB has told its members it views this session as the window: if the bill doesn't pass by year's end, NAHB does not expect a comparable package next year.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR BUILDERS (AS SUMMARIZED BY NAHB)

- **NEPA (Sec. 1102):** Using federal funding alone, such as HUD loans or HOME/CDBG grants, would no longer trigger a NEPA review and the related federal reviews that come with it. Projects still in the NEPA process would get firm review deadlines.
- **Clean Water Act Section 404 (Sec. 1204):** Raises acreage thresholds for streamlined Nationwide Permits. NAHB estimates this saves $425,000 in permit preparation costs and a year of delay compared with an Individual Permit, and permit terms would extend from five years to ten.
- **Other wins:** continuity for the streamlined CWA permit program under the Endangered Species Act; letting states with enough resources handle ESA permitting for species found only within their borders; and stretching stormwater permit cycles from five years to ten.

PART OF A BIGGER FEDERAL PICTURE

Federal permitting has been a front-burner housing issue all year. The House passed Clean Water Act Section 404 changes NAHB supported, in the PERMIT Act, in December 2025. In February, NAHB joined a broad business coalition urging the Senate to pass comprehensive permitting reform. And this summer the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, a broad bipartisan housing package that includes streamlined permitting, became law. BAAJA would be the next major step.

HOW TO STAY ENGAGED

- **Reach your senators and representative.** The U.S. Capitol switchboard (202-224-3121) can connect you to any member's office. Builders' own examples of permitting delays and costs carry the most weight.
- **Meet locally.** NAHB's guide to meeting lawmakers in their home districts walks through how to set up and prepare for a visit.
- **Follow the bill.** NAHB posts advocacy updates as the lame-duck session unfolds.

RESOURCES

NAHB statement on BAAJA (Oct 1, 2026)

NAHB advocacy: top priorities

NAHB: How to advocate for housing in your home district

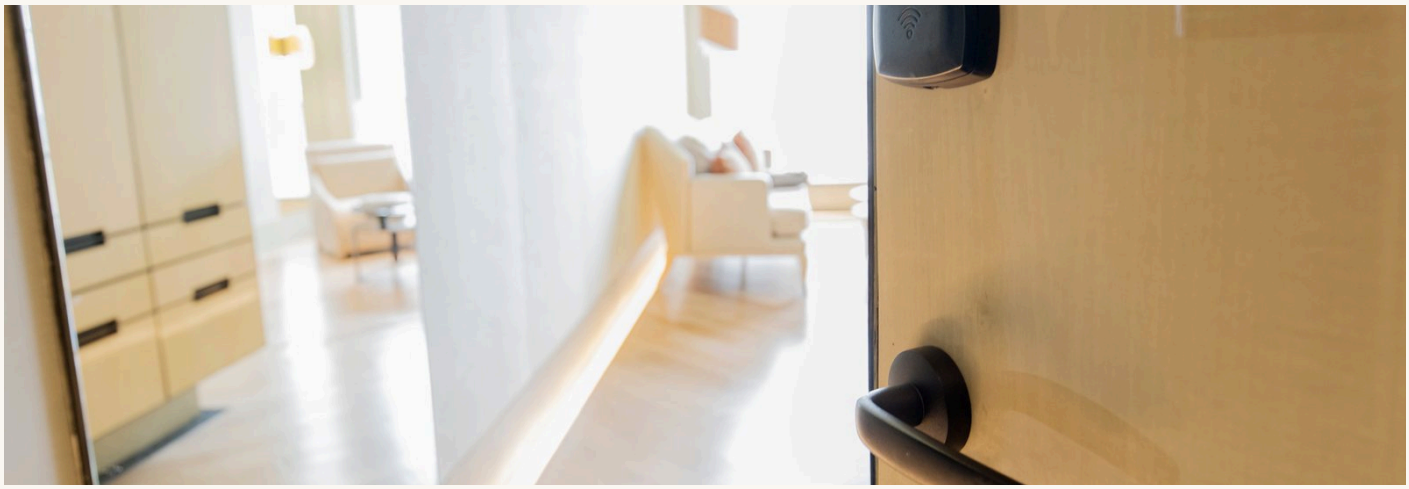
Holland & Knight: plain-language summary of the bill

Holland & Knight: Congress's year-end deadlines

NACo: BAAJA advocacy hub (county perspective)

Questions about HBRAME's advocacy? Contact Heather Raisanen at eo@hbrame.org.

Sources: NAHB press release, Oct 1, 2026; NAHB member talking points on S. 5653; Holland & Knight (Oct 2026); The Hill (Sept 30, 2026); Harbinger Strategies (Oct 16, 2026); The Washington Sun; Pro Builder; U.S. Chamber coalition letter (Feb 22, 2026); Independent Electrical Contractors.



ADVOCACY · AUGUSTA

NEW MAINE CODE LAWS: WHAT CHANGED IN 2026

Two new laws from Augusta are already reshaping how Maine's building code is written and enforced.

LD 2224 · LD 2225

JAN 15

SPRINKLER & ELEVATOR REPORT DUE TO THE LEGISLATURE

This spring the Legislature passed and the Governor signed two bills that grew out of the State's work on regulatory barriers to housing. Both took effect July 29, 2026, the general effective date for the session's non-emergency laws.

LD 2224: REDUCING CERTAIN RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION COSTS

- Directs the Technical Building Codes and Standards Board (the MUBEC board) to begin rulemaking to remove certain elevator-related requirements that add cost to residential construction.
- Has the Office of the State Fire Marshal convene a working group to study the cost and life-safety impacts of residential fire sprinkler systems, and the role of limited-use/limited-application (LULA) elevators.
- The working group reports its findings and any proposed changes to the Legislature by **January 15, 2027**.

LD 2225: SUPPORTING MUNICIPAL CODE ENFORCEMENT

- Adds the ICC/Modular Building Institute 1200-2021 Standard for Off-site Construction to the codes that make up MUBEC, giving local officials a statewide standard for reviewing modular and other off-site homes.
- Strengthens training for local code enforcement officers, including training on modular and industrialized construction.
- Creates a three-year pilot program to help communities explore regional approaches to code enforcement, backed by $1 million in one-time funding in the supplemental budget.

WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU

- **Watch for the board's rulemaking.** Rule changes come with public comment periods, and builders' real-world cost examples carry weight.
- **Modular and off-site builders** should see more consistent review from town to town as the new standard and officer training take hold. HBRAME's Modular Build Maine Council is the place to compare notes.
- **The sprinkler working group's report lands in January,** just as the new Legislature gets to work, so expect this topic to come back in 2027.

Questions or want to get involved? Contact Heather Raisanen, HBRAME Executive Officer, at eo@hbrame.org.

Sources: Maine Senate releases on LD 2224 and LD 2225 (2026); Maine Climate Council Buildings Working Group summary, June 3, 2026; testimony to the Housing and Economic Development Committee, March 2026; Maine Legislature (effective date).

133RD LEGISLATURE

DEC 2

MAINE'S NEW LEGISLATURE CONVENES IN AUGUSTA

ADVOCACY · AUGUSTA

A NEW LEGISLATURE: BUILDERS AT THE TABLE

Every two years, Maine starts fresh in December. Here's how to make sure builders have a seat at the table.

Maine's Legislature convenes its first regular session on the first Wednesday of December after the general election. This year that's **Wednesday, December 2**. On the first day, members are sworn in and each chamber elects its leadership; committee assignments follow soon after.

The first session of a two-year Legislature is the long one. The last one ran from December into June, followed by a shorter second session the next winter and spring. Most housing and building bills go to the **Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development**, the committee that heard LD 2224 and LD 2225 this year.

WHAT'S ALREADY ON DECK FOR HOUSING

- The State Fire Marshal's residential sprinkler and elevator working group report is due **January 15, 2027**.
- Some 2026 housing proposals stalled but are expected back, including a bill to help towns convert vacant school buildings into housing.
- Town-meeting municipalities face a July 1, 2027 deadline to update local ordinances under Maine's housing density and zoning law.

HOW YOU CAN HELP SHAPE 2027

- **Introduce yourself** to your state senator and representative, whether they're new or returning. A short note about your business and the homes you build in their district goes a long way.
- **Invite them to a jobsite.** Seeing a project in person is the fastest way for a legislator to understand permitting, code and workforce challenges.
- **Testify or submit written comments.** Every bill gets a public hearing, and testimony from working builders and trade partners is heard.
- **Work through HBRAME.** HBRAME speaks for the industry in Augusta on behalf of everyone working in Maine's residential construction. Tell us what issues are hitting your business so we can bring them forward.

Find your legislators, bills and hearings at legislature.maine.gov →

To share an issue or get involved in HBRAME's advocacy, contact Heather Raisanen at eo@hbrame.org.

Sources: Maine House Clerk; League of Women Voters of Maine; Maine Clean Elections; Mainebiz; HBRAME July 2026 newsletter (July 1, 2027 deadline).

BUSINESS

CLOSE OUT 2026: PLAN A STRONGER 2027

The quiet weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's are the best time to set next year's numbers.

YEAR-END PLANNING

33%

MORE PROFIT FOR FIRMS WITH A FINANCIAL PLAN

Buildertrend points to a Construction Financial Management Association study finding that companies with financial plans earn 33% more profit than those without targets. With margins tight, a written plan is one of the few levers fully in your control.

START WITH BUILDERTREND'S FREE PLANNING GUIDE

- A checklist of what to include in your financial plan
- Four steps to build your annual plan
- The top five year-end accounting to-dos for construction teams
- Strategies to grow revenue

THEN TURN THE PLAN INTO ACTION

In a Buildertrend article on annual planning, custom builder Tom Cummings of SevernWoods Fine Homes shared the system he used to grow from $4 million to more than $11 million in annual revenue. A few of the habits that stood out:

- **Know your "why" before the numbers.** Goals stick when they're tied to what you want the business to do for you.
- **Build a one-page workback plan** covering hiring, cash flow and sales, so the whole year fits on one sheet.
- **Break big goals into weekly actions** and check progress every week, not just at quarter's end.
- **Treat sales as a system,** with a planned pipeline instead of waiting for the phone to ring.
- **Review and adjust every quarter,** and bring your team into the plan so they own it too.

BRING YOUR PLAN TO THE TABLE

Planning is easier with peers. Our first Nails & Networking nights in January are a great place to compare notes with other builders and trade partners on what's working.

Buildertrend annual financial planning guide (free download)

The annual planning system that scaled a builder from $4M to $11M+

Questions? Contact Heather Raisanen at eo@hbrame.org.

Sources: Buildertrend, annual financial planning guide; Buildertrend, "From $4M to $11M+" (Feb 6, 2026).

CALENDAR

EVENTS & SAVE THE DATES

Thu, Nov 19 · 5:30 p.m.	**Builders, Beer & Business: Wood Science** Cowbell, 185 US-1, Scarborough. $10 members and guests, food included. Register →
Tue, Dec 1	**KVCC Construction Fundamentals applications close** Classes run Jan 12 – Apr 29, 2027 in Hinckley. Apply →
December · date coming soon	**Holiday Mingle & Axe Throwing** The Axe Pit, 333 Clarks Pond Pkwy, South Portland.
Thu, Jan 21 · Thu, Feb 18	**Nails & Networking** The Woodshed, Manchester, then Mason's, Brewer. Third Thursday of every month in 2027. $10. Register →
Feb 2–4, 2027	**NAHB International Builders' Show (IBS)** Las Vegas Convention Center. Las Vegas becomes IBS's permanent home starting in 2027. buildersshow.com →
Thu, July 22, 2027 · 4:00 p.m.	**Annual Meeting & Lobster Bake** Kennebunkport Conservation Trust. Tickets on sale January 2027.
Thu, Sept 23, 2027	**Tee Up for Maine Golf Tournament** Nonesuch River Golf Club, Scarborough. Foursome and sponsor registration open now. Register a team →

Want to sponsor an event, host a Nails & Networking night or bring your team? Contact Heather Raisanen, HBRAME Executive Officer, at eo@hbrame.org.

PLAN AHEAD

2027 AT A GLANCE: A YEAR OF CONNECTIONS

Nails & Networking visits a new Maine town on the third Thursday of every month. Register at portal.hbrame.org/events.

JAN

Nails & Networking: The Woodshed, Manchester (Jan 21)

KVCC Construction Fundamentals begins (Jan 12)

FEB

Nails & Networking: Mason's, Brewer (Feb 18)

NAHB International Builders' Show, Las Vegas (Feb 2–4)

MAR

Nails & Networking: Lewiston/Auburn (Mar 18)

APR

Nails & Networking: Sanford (Apr 15)

KVCC program wraps (Apr 29)

MAY

Nails & Networking: Brunswick (May 20)

JUN

Nails & Networking: Windham (Jun 17)

JUL

Nails & Networking: Rockland (Jul 15)

Annual Meeting & Lobster Bake, Kennebunkport (Jul 22)

AUG

Nails & Networking: Rangeley (Aug 19)

SEP

Nails & Networking: York (Sep 16)

Tee Up for Maine Golf Tournament, Scarborough (Sep 23)

OCT

Nails & Networking: Saco (Oct 21)

NOV

Nails & Networking: Bar Harbor (Nov 18)

DEC

Nails & Networking: Farmington (Dec 16)

Schedule from the HBRAME events portal; venues after February are announced closer to each date. KVCC dates from KVCC; IBS dates from NAHB.

SUPPORT MAINE'S FUTURE.
SUPPORT HBRAME.

84,000 HOMES BY 2030

Maine needs to build 84,000 new housing units by 2030 (State of Maine Housing Production Needs Study, 2023). HBRAME brings together the builders, remodelers and trade partners who build them, and speaks for the industry in Augusta. Sponsor a 2027 event or join today at portal.hbrame.org/sponsor.

Questions about anything in this issue? Contact Heather Raisanen, HBRAME Executive Officer, at eo@hbrame.org or 207-200-6542.

Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Maine

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Photos: HBRAME archive and Kennebec Valley Community College.