

Reflection

By: Joe Rainey

As we head into the fall, I want to reflect on the Utah HBA's accomplishments this past year. The year began with the implementation of the \$6,000 "Home Run Grants." This program resulted in 1,652 grants awarded across the state for purchases of new homes in Utah. The \$10 million dollars used for the grants helped to leverage \$376,000,000 in new home sales; 7,205 jobs; \$239.9 million in wages; and, \$20 million in taxes.

On September 4th, Governor Herbert announced "Home Run 2 Grants." Governor Herbert set aside \$8 million for grants of \$4,000 each to be used for the purchase of new homes. Unlike the original grant, Home Run 2 Grants can be reserved for up to 10 months. This will allow for the construction of a new home that will use the grants.

Another large undertaking of the Utah HBA this year was to pass legislation to alter the manner the building codes are adopted in Utah. For the past 20 years, the Utah Building Code Commission decided what the building codes would be in Utah. However, in recent years they have had a tendency to simply adopt the national codes without much review. This created a lot of frustration for builders and inspectors that thought the national codes had some glaring problems. This all came to a head this last fall when the International Code Council voted to require fire sprinklers in all residences.

During the legislative session the Utah HBA pushed a bill through that required the code adoption process to be approved by the legislature. As a result, the Utah HBA was able to get the Uniform Code Commission and the entire building industry, including building officials, to look more closely at the proposed 2009 IRC and other building codes. As a result, we have been successful in working with the various groups to get virtually all of NAHB's proposed amendments into the Uniform Code Commission's recommendation to the legislature. Included in those changes is of course the elimination of fire sprinklers, and a delay of the implementation of the new energy code for residential units. The anticipated changes will save thousands of dollars on each home built in Utah.

Finally, even though Governor Huntsman was extremely popular, his resigning has left the Utah Home Builders Association in a much stronger position politically. Governor Herbert is a realtor and home builder. In fact, he is a Past President of the Utah Valley Home Builders Association. The new Lieutenant Governor, Greg Bell, is a former state legislator. Even though he is an attorney, he has made his living as a land developer for the past 15 years. Needless to say, he has been a strong ally in the Utah State Senate. To complete the trifecta,