

# Nation's Building News

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## Education

### Local New Jersey Association's Commitment to Education Benefits Members, Consumers



Award-winning instructor Bill Asdal, standing, of Asdal Builders teaches many courses for the Community Builders & Remodelers Association of New Jersey.

While many home builders associations have focused almost exclusively on advocacy, the [Community Builders & Remodelers Association of New Jersey](#) in Whippany has strived for more balance by making education one of the cornerstones of service it provides its members.

Operating under the motto, “The More You Learn, the More You Earn!” the HBA provides its members opportunities to earn NAHB’s professional designations by offering a wide range of classes.

“We want to give members a reason to join our association by being a place where they can go for education,” said Andrea Selinski, executive vice president of the HBA. “We encourage our members to pursue designations in order to separate themselves from their competition.”

“Plus, the education benefits consumers because they know they can hire educated builders and remodelers in our area who are at the top of their profession,” she said.

According to Selinski, the education-oriented consumer awareness has benefited HBA members in several ways.

“It’s hard to measure in dollars, but I know for a fact that it’s brought them business,” Selinski said. “Builders and remodelers have told me that some of their customers hired them because they had a designation.”

The designations have also brought several of the members added recognition.

For example, [Certified Graduate Builder](#) (CGB) and [Certified Green Professional](#) (CGP) designation holder Matthew Wendorff of [RPI Design Build LLC](#) in Morris Plains, N.J., has been a featured contractor on “[George to the Rescue](#),” a weekly television show on home renovation that appears on the New York area’s NBC affiliate.

Wendorff, who serves on the HBA’s board of directors, credits the opportunity to be featured regularly on the show to his involvement with the association and his designations and strong interest in education.

“The fact that I’m a CGB and a CGP has given me extra credibility,” Wendorff said. “Anybody can swing a hammer, but having professional designations separates me from the pack. It shows that I understand this industry and that I am committed to quality construction.”

Wendorff is one of the many builders and industry professionals who have earned designations through the HBA, which ramped up its education offerings in 2008 and now hosts more than 20 classes a year.

### **Meeting Market Demand, Cooperating With Other HBAs**

Sharon Barkauskas, the HBA’s administrative assistant and education coordinator, said the association focuses primarily on offering CGB, CGP and [Certified Graduate Remodeler](#) (CGR) courses, which are held in nearby Califon, N.J., because that’s what members want.

“There are other HBAs in New Jersey that offer [Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist \(CAPS\)](#) courses, so we try not to compete with them,” Barkauskas said. “We’re all in this together, so we try to work together.”

Barkauskas said that members from other New Jersey HBAs can enroll in her association’s education courses and, in turn, each participating HBA will receive a percent of the net profits for each student who takes the classes.

“At a time when there are fewer HBAs holding courses, we want to give as many people as possible access to our courses,” Barkauskas said, while noting that students from Connecticut, New York and elsewhere in the country take classes offered by the HBA.

She also said the HBA seldom cancels courses that have been scheduled, even when enrollment is low.

“We’ll hold the class even if it we only have one or two students,” Barkauskas said. “It’s all about trust. We want students to know that, if it’s on the schedule, it’s going to happen. We take our commitment to education very seriously.”

It’s also about expertise.

Selinski said the HBA is fortunate to have award-winning instructor Bill Asdal of [Asdal Builders](#) in Chester, N.J., available to teach many of its courses. His involvement has helped make education profitable for the HBA, while many other associations have struggled to break even with their programs.

“It’s possible to hold education courses, even in today’s economy, if you think outside the box,” Selinski said, while noting that the HBA lists its courses on its website under the axiom, “America’s most student-friendly education provider.”

“We’ve been able to develop a program that works for our association,” Selinski said. “In the end, everyone benefits from education — the HBA, our members, builders, remodelers and their customers.”

For more information on NAHB’s professional designations or scheduling courses, email [Andrea Raggambi](#) of NAHB Education, or call her at 800-368-5242 x8153.

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