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# Benchmark Builders' Fred Fortunato to head Home Builders Association of Delaware



Fred Fortunato, Vice President of Project Management for Benchmark Builders, was elected president of the Home Builders Association of Delaware (HBA/DE) for 2012. A long-time member of the organization, Mr. Fortunato currently serves on both the organization's Government and Affairs Committee and the Membership Committee.

Leading the HBA/DE is not something new to the Fortunato family. In 1970 his father, Steven L. Fortunato, held the position of president. Fred plans to continue his father's commitment to promoting the objectives of the housing industry.

"Our industry is a major driver in the economy," stated Fortunato in his acceptance speech, "I am amazed that there are so many legislative and regulatory initiatives still being introduced that will drive up the costs of housing, threatening home ownership," he continued.

Mr. Fortunato outlined three threats that will likely stall any recovery of the housing industry by making home ownership even more difficult for Americans. He cited burdensome state and county regulations, 20% down-payment requirement for

qualified buyers, and difficulties homebuilders will encounter in getting ADC loans. He went on to say that while the housing industry has done a great job in the past making their concerns heard by legislators and regulatory agencies, "we need to push even harder in the years to come." To that end, his agenda for the coming year will focus on strengthening the "voice" of the Home Builders Association of Delaware among regulators and legislators.

Because more members will give added clout to the HBA/DE, he stressed the need to expand the membership base. "If your livelihood depends on the home building industry, then you can't afford not to be a member," he stressed, then issued three challenges to the members: renew your membership, get

others to join, participate in the organization.

Since its inception in 1948, three representatives from Benchmark Builders have led HBA/DE. Fred Fortunato joins the list that includes Francis R. Julian, who served as president from 2003 to 2005, and Steven Bomberger, who served from 2007 to 2009.

Locally owned and operated, Benchmark Builders has been building homes throughout Delaware since 1988 for a broad range of homebuyers. The company is currently marketing seven communities including townhomes, 55+ communities, and traditional single-family-home communities in the Wilmington, Newark, Bear and Smyrna areas of New Castle and Kent Counties, Delaware.