

LETTERS

Mad Code Disease

Although the deck industry is just now barely settling in to the provisions introduced in the 2009 IRC, the 2012 edition has been published and is available for state and local governments to consider adopting. And that's a problem.

As far as I am professionally concerned, the 2012 code provisions I discuss in this issue's *Structure* (see page 24) are just short of madness. They are not feasible to employ or inspect. They will drive an era of fully engineered decks and a whole lot more hardscape patios. You still have time to talk to your local and state building departments about when they are planning to adopt the 2012 IRC, and explain to them the ramifications of the ledger-bolting prescription it contains. If enough deck builders do so, perhaps some jurisdictions will strike that provision from the 2012 IRC as they adopt their version of the code.

In only a year from now, by May 2013, arguments will be well underway for what will be in the 2015 IRC. The deadline for proposals for the 2015 IRC is January 2013, just eight months away. I hope that after you see what's become of the code for 2012 and what you can expect to be enforced upon you in the coming years, you will join others in the industry and speak up eight months from now. Without the voices of professional deck builders, the voices of the past two code

cycles will likely be the ones speaking again. Do you like what they've decided for you?

The code modification process is open to anyone, but it's not an easy task to see through. It takes teamwork and organization. ICC's website, iccsafe.org, provides details of the process if you want to go at it yourself. Industry associations, like NADRA, can also work on behalf of their collective members. At the very least, tell me your opinions on these matters. I intend to be involved.

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Don't Downsize; Get Creative

I take exception to the article "Competing In The New Economy" in the March/April 2012 issue.

While the author does introduce a couple of valid money-saving strategies (I cancelled my \$50-per-month fax line last week and pulled my Yellow Pages ads two years ago), it nonetheless seems ironic that a guy who got rid of his entire work force, after admittedly having ignored his bottom line during better economic times, should be writing business advice.

Surviving in a down economy does not mean bagging lunch and huffing around 2x12s by yourself. It means opening up a can of creative, expanding your geographical reach, working a little harder, and driving a little farther. It means honing your sales skills and asking your past clients for online testimonials. It means finding new markets and jumping in. It means buying in bulk and completing projects professionally, promptly.

Laying off your workforce means sacrificing the time necessary to put together complicated project proposals. It means your clients will be hearing your power tools for weeks instead of days. And it means if you get sick or hurt, you are out of business and your projects are left unfinished.

At its worst, this type of self-preservationist approach is what is stifling our economy today. If we all laid off our people and bagged lunch, the economy would never recover. Deck building is a niche that can thrive in any market: When new homes are banging, all those new homes need new decks. When the economy slows and new-home sales lag, homeowners are looking in their backyards and thinking about how they can improve their lot with a resurfaced or rebuilt deck. There is still money out there, despite the economists' wails of woe. Think outside the box, go get some, and spread it around. I am.

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Unlike most of the people you know, we want your two cents.

While it's nice to hear about what we're doing right, it's more interesting to hear about what we're doing wrong. If you saw something you loved or hated, or if you've got a tip that could help out other readers, we want to know.

E-mail us at prodeck@hanleywood.com or mail letters to: Professional Deck Builder, 186 Allen Brook Lane, Williston, VT 05495

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May 2011
What do you think about the new band-joint bolting limitations in the 2012 code?

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