

Tom Farasy' s Acceptance Speech, MNCBIA
January 29, 2009

Good evening. Thank you.

Thank you Lt. Governor Brown. I want to say one more thing about our Lt. Governor, in addition to being a long-standing public servant, the Lt. Governor also served a tour in Iraq and for that, we say Thank You for your service to our country.

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I am pleased honored and humbled to serve as your President in 2009.

I want to introduce my wife of 42 years, Kathleen; and thank her publicly for her support and participation with me over the years while serving the BIA. Thank you, Kathleen.... I love you.

I also want to introduce my son Brian and his new bride, Tracy, are also here to share this moment. Thank you Brian and Tracy.

Our industry, your business, my business face many challenges this year. All of us in our businesses have been under duress and there clearly does not seem to be an end in sight. Most of us have all gone through recessions and downturns; but we have not experienced what we are going through right now. We are in the 8th straight quarter of turmoil.

We are all seeking ways to protect our business and our projects, where possible. As I look at the 2009 economic landscape, I am excited about being in a situation where there are opportunities. To go places and ask for things that have not been done before in the magnitude of our discussions. The Leadership started a relief effort in 2008, under the direction of Rick Sullivan, and we will continue this effort in 2009. Our relief effort is focused on -

1. Going to our government leaders and asking them to toll the expiration dates for plans and permits;

2. Asking them for waivers, reductions, deferrals of impact fees and other surcharges;
3. We need to ask our government leaders to take time now to re-think the many policies that have been implemented over the years as add ons. Now with the lower real estate values, the current economics will not allow many projects to go forward or continue on this basis.
4. We need to better preserve our precious resources. Projects that conserve/better utilize our existing infrastructure and transit facilities should be encouraged and not burdened with the same surcharges, fees, buffers, etc.

I know that the stakeholders for these relief requests will be diverse and adverse in their opinions and they will question our motives. Our counties need to deal with the building industry; we are clearly linked to their financial viability. We are making these requests so that when recovery does come, our industry and its members will be able to move with the market and not waste any of the recovery swing by having to spend our time re-instating the lapsed plan and permit approvals.

This will be hard work to gain any relief traction; many people have been involved. I ask for your continued involvement and participation in this process. All of our Advocacy Committee Chairs and the BIA Advocacy staff are focused on a hard campaign in 2009 with clear objectives and goals for what we want to accomplish and it is not just "status quo" year. Each of our Counties continues to look at new regulations and other developmental controls and requirements; this indicates to me and many others they must not understand the state of our real estate industry. The BIA leadership and advocacy team are hard at work in all of our Counties.

As we anticipate this year's challenges, we can question what was done in the past to address these matters, knowing full well that the

solutions that were successful in the past will not be successful for our current problems. We have to be creative, committed and have a work ethic to come up with fresh ideas. The collaborative effort that has been initiated to date by the 2009 Leadership Team has been very refreshing to me. Our Association has outstanding staff - we need to continue to recognize these individuals, their reputations in the Counties, and their professionalism. The BIA staff allows you and I to do a better job of representing the Industry. We are all focused on what our Association is all about – advocacy, networking, membership and education. This is a back to basics year, and all of us need the Association, NOW MORE THAN EVER!

We are focused on membership; we have a great membership leadership team in Marc Rose and Mike Faerber who are very energetic, very successful in closing and don't understand the word NO.

We are also, like our individual businesses, very focused on the financial stability of the Association. We have established a challenging budget and we are monitoring it closely. The early on fund raising events have met or exceeded our budget goals, however, we are not resting on our laurels; 2009 will be relentless. Our financial events have involved our Past Presidents, great staff support, enthusiasm and hard work for us to be successful in these early on financial accomplishments.

What has been most surprising to me so far is the dedication, hard work and love that our staff, leadership and members have for our Building Industry Association. So as we leave this room tonight; we stand ready for the fight; excited about the challenge; pleased with the camaraderie, and with full knowledge that anything worthwhile is worth fighting for. Thank you and thanks for our Building Industry Association – NOW MORE THAN EVER!!