

# REAL Estate

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## Island builder playing key role in legislation

■ **The NAHB's R. Randy Lee has his hands all over measures involving housing issues**

Bills introduced into legislative bodies bear the name of the sponsor, a member (or members) of the legislature. Very often, however, they are the work of others — government agencies, business and trade associations, labor, special interest groups and lobbying organizations.

A concept and even the language of a proposed law dealing with senior citizens, for example, may be handed by the AARP to a friendly legislator ready to be thrown into the hopper.

When it comes to legislation dealing with building and housing issues, property rights and regulatory matters, the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) is the leading lobbyist and is responsible for many of the bills that get to be considered by Congress.

Legislative activities consume a good deal of NAHB's energies and resources. At a recent meeting of the board of directors in Washington, some 1,700 of the nation's top builders discussed legislation they believe is needed by the housing industry.

Leading the discussion was R. Randy Lee.

Lee, a Staten Island attorney and builder whose Leewood Real Estate Group is based in Granite-

ville, is a member of the NAHB's executive committee, legal actions committee and federal affairs committee.

Although he said he led discussions on three bills recently introduced in the House, it was a working group of NAHB members under Lee's direction who, at the least, formulated the concepts on which each of the three bills are based.

A property rights bill introduced by a California Republican addresses procedural legal hurdles that prevent builders and property owners from getting their "takings" claims heard in federal court. A "takings" claim occurs when a property owner contends he is deprived of the use of the property by government action. It can take years and a good deal of money to get such claims to court.

A Wisconsin Republican sponsored a bill to reduce restrictions created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in connection with wetlands permits. The old rules allowed impacts up to 10 acres and any impact under one acre could proceed with notifying the corps. A new rule, in effect for five months, reduced the allowable limits to three acres and a third of an acre, respectively.

The proposed legislation would reinstate the old rule.

Another California Republican whose name may be familiar, Sonny Bono, put in a bill that would provide immunity to trade



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and professional associations that provide information to their members on such issues as defective products. It would give associations limited protection from liability, protect them from subpoenas and establish a level of qualified privilege between associations and their members.

These bills may bear different names, but Lee's fingerprints are all over them.

### House for sale

The Northfield Community Local Development Corp. (LDC) will stage an open house in its flagship home, 18 Van Riper St., Port Richmond, July 30 from 3 to 6 p.m.

We reported in April that the detached, two-bedroom house was undergoing renovations under the federal 203(k) program, which provides for a single mortgage,

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insured by the Federal Housing Administration, to cover purchase and rehabilitation costs.

The work is completed and the house is on the market with a price tag of \$82,000.

Among its features are a modern kitchen, a private yard and appliances, carpeting, thermopane windows and exterior doors, all new. It is located a short distance from Forest Avenue near Egbert Square.

"A low \$6,000 for down payment and closing costs and an annual

income of \$30,000 may qualify you as the buyer," states a flyer distributed by the LDC. "With an approximately \$807 monthly mortgage, including taxes and insurance, owning this home is more affordable than renting."

Kathleen Bielsa, Northfield's housing development coordinator, said plans call for the purchase of an additional six homes within a year for purchase and rehab under 203(k). It hasn't been easy, she indicated, finding properties worthy of inclusion in the program.