

North Central News

The Newsletter of the North Central WV Home Builders Association



February 2021

Housing Starts Finish Strong in 2020

While housing starts ended the year on a strong note, rising lumber prices and increasing regulatory cost concerns could affect future production. Led by a solid, double-digit gain in single-family starts, overall **housing starts** increased 5.8 percent to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.67 million units, according to a report from HUD and the U.S. Census Bureau.

The December reading of 1.67 million starts is the number of housing units builders would begin if development kept this pace for the next 12 months. Within this overall number, single-family starts increased 12.0 percent to a 1.34 million seasonally adjusted annual rate. The multifamily sector, which includes apartment buildings and condos, decreased 13.6 percent to a 331,000 pace.

Total housing starts for 2020 were 1.38 million, a 7.0 percent gain over the 1.29



total from 2019. Single-family starts in 2020 totaled 991,000, up 11.7 percent from the previous year. Multifamily starts in 2020 totaled 389,000, down 3.3 percent from the previous year.

On a regional and year-to-date basis (January through December of 2020 compared to that same time frame a year ago), combined single-family and multifamily starts are 13.2 percent higher in the Midwest, 7.5 percent higher in the South, 6.2 percent higher in the West and 2.8 percent lower in the Northeast.

Biden Freezes All Pending Regulations

The Biden administration has implemented a [regulatory freeze](#) for all pending regulations. Of note to the housing community, this action means that the U.S. Department of Labor's final independent contractor rule that was put forth in the waning days of the Trump administration, and scheduled to go into effect on March 8, is likely to face a delay.

The effective implementation date of the independent contractor rule is expected to be pushed back beyond March 8 while the Biden administration determines how to proceed and examines its options on whether to revise or even repeal the rule.

CDC Extends Eviction Moratorium

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has announced it is extending the current order temporarily [halting residential evictions](#) until at least March 31, 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a historic threat to the nation's health. It has also triggered a housing affordability crisis that disproportionately affects some communities.

2020 NGBS Important for Developers

The ICC 700-2020 National Green Building Standard® (NGBS), released last year, updated two sections that should be bookmarked for home builders engaged in land use and development. Understanding the changes from the 2015 NGBS will enable developers and builders to determine the compliance path that works best for their project. The 2020 NGBS provides land developers and builders the flexibility needed to [develop land and lots](#) that are sustainable, cost effective and appropriate for their geographic location.

Biden Signs Directive On Fair Housing

President Biden on Jan. 26 signed a presidential memorandum that directs HUD to examine the effects of the previous administration's regulatory actions that may have undermined fair housing policies and laws. [The memorandum](#) directs HUD to take steps necessary based on that analysis to fully implement the Fair Housing Act's requirements.

It also directs HUD to determine if the Trump-era disparate impact rule should be returned to the 2013 standard that made it easier to prove unintentional discrimination.

SGC Horizon Named NAHB's Media Partner

NAHB and SGC Horizon have jointly announced that NAHB has selected SGC Horizon to be its official [media partner](#).

The Partnership is designed to strengthen not just NAHB and SGC Horizon, but also the association's 140,000 members and the 285,000 readers of Pro Builder and other brands under the SGC Horizon umbrella.

Biden Signs Two Executive Orders on Climate Change

President Biden in January signed a series of executive orders, including two related to [climate change policy](#).

The first directs the United States to begin the process to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement, the 2015 international treaty signed by nearly 200 countries that calls for limiting fossil-fuel pollution that causes climate change. While symbolically significant, the accord relies on commitments made by signatory countries to meet specified goals, but contains no enforcement mechanisms. In the second order, "Protecting Public

ICC Publishes 2021 IECC Codes

Following a three-year development process, the 2021 ICC family of model building codes has been published. Many changes to the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) are of particular interest to home builders.

The development of [the 2021 IECC](#) was marked by controversy, culminating in multiple appeals by NAHB and others. Two of NAHB's appeals were upheld by the ICC Board.

But several problematic code changes that had been twice disapproved (first by the code development committee and then at public comment hearings) got into the 2021 IECC as a result of a controversial online ballot heavily influenced by block voting from non-code enforcement government officials that was linked to a single voting guide.

Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis," Biden calls for action to strengthen the role of science and to better enable accounting for the incremental increases in greenhouse gas emissions. The key metric the executive order discusses is re-establishing and revising the "social cost of carbon" (SCC), which was widely used by the Obama administration.



NCWVHBA Membership Report

Our renewing members are the backbone of our Association... It is for that reason we would like to thank the following members for renewing:

Bill George, **Lowes of North Morgantown**

Jeff Montgomery, **T.J. Contracting & Custom Homes**

Frank Oliverio, **Oliverio Realty**

Brent Skidmore, **First Exchange Bank**

Gary Smith, **First Exchange Bank**

Darrell Tichinel, **Jakes Concrete, LLC**

Jeffrey Zinn, **Gerald C Zinn & Son Inc**

Jennifer Burgess, **Lowes of South Morgantown**

Braenne Foley, **Lowes of South Morgantown**

Trudy Anderson, **Fairmont Kitchen Center**

Leadership List

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Christine Pauley

National Delegate

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Calendar of Events

17 Feb 2021, General
Membership Meeting

Location: **Brickside on the
Green**, Fairmont Field Club

18-20 Feb 2021, HBAWV State
Winter Board Meeting

Location: Virtual

18 Mar 2021, General
Membership Meeting: TBD

16-17 Apr 2021, HBAWV State
Spring Board Meeting

Location: Virtual meeting

23-25 Apr 2021, **NCWVHBA
Annual Home Show** (Click the
link for info)

22 – 24 Jul 2021, HBAWV State
Summer Board Meeting

Location: Canaan Valley Resort &
Conference Center in Davis, WV

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COVID-19 Continues to Affect Home Purchase Plans

As the nation begins to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, more Americans are interested in [purchasing homes](#), according to NAHB's latest Housing Trends Report.

The share of Americans who are considering the purchase of a home in the next 12 months was 15% in the fourth quarter of 2020, four percentage points higher than a year earlier and the largest year-over-year gain in the three-year history of this series. The gain shows the coronavirus outbreak continues to affect Americans' desire to buy homes.

Millennials stand out among the demographic groups in their intent to buy

a home. Between the fourth quarters of 2019 and 2020, the share of millennials planning a home purchase rose eight points to 27%. The share increased six points to 18% among Gen Xers, three points to 16% among Gen Z, and was flat at 5% among baby boomers.

Geographically, the share of adults with plans to buy a home rose in all four regions during this period, led by the Northeast (up nine points to 19%) and the West (up six points to 18%).

Rose Quint, NAHB's assistant vice president for survey research, provides more analysis in this Eye on Housing blog post.

Home Building Sees Net Job Gains

From May through December, the number of new residential construction jobs created offset the total amount of jobs lost earlier in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of residential construction jobs rose by 22,700 in December, well above the 15,800 increase posted in November. In the past eight months, 472,500 residential construction jobs were created, offsetting all the 456,800 [residential construction jobs](#) lost in March and April due to the coronavirus outbreak.

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