

# Oklahoma Builder

**Oklahoma State Home  
Builders Association**



November/December 2010

## Just Around the Corner

**With tax season quickly  
approaching, get a step  
ahead with some tax tips.**

**Ask the  
Fuel Expert**

**Ten Ways to  
Cut Fuel Costs**

**Builder Profile**

**Kurt Dinnes of  
Sun Custom Homes**

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**Oklahoma State Home  
Builders Association**

917 N.E. 63 Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
405-843-5579 • 800-256-9980

**Executive Editor**

Mike Means • mikem@oshba.org

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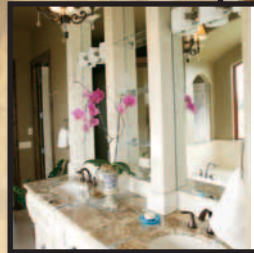
Managing Editor ..... Stacey Tetloff  
Graphic Designer ..... Jason Gabel  
Publication Coordinator ..... John Bitters  
Advertising Sales Manager ..... Brenda Poe

**Advertising Sales**

Marsha Suwinski: (800) 935-1592, ext. 106  
marshas@wildblue.net  
Jeff Pinwar: (800) 935-1592, ext. 118  
jpinwar@printcomm.com  
Brenda Poe: (800) 935-1592, ext. 115  
bpoe@printcomm.com

# contents

Volume 45 Number 6



13

## features

- 8 Employee vs. Independent Contractor—Seven Tips for Business Owners**  
*Seven quick tips for determining a worker's employment status from the IRS.*
- 9 Independent Contractor or Employee**  
*Learn how to identify employees and independent contractors for tax responsibilities.*
- 10 Do you Qualify for Relief Under Section 530?**  
*Section 530 provides businesses with relief from federal employment tax obligations if certain requirements are met.*
- 11 Ask the Fuel Expert**  
*Learn ten easy ways to cut fuel costs.*
- 12 Builder Profile**  
*Kurt Dinnes of Sun Custom Homes builds affordable homes with distinction.*

## departments

- 4 President's First Word**  
*My Last NAHB Meeting*
- 5 State Rep's Report**  
*Dramatic Shifts*
- 6 OPWB**  
*Fall Board Is in the Air*
- 15 By All Means**  
*Look Into my Crystal Ball*





## President's First Word

Tom French

# My Last NAHB Meeting

It is hard to believe that my year as president is almost over. I know that because I have just returned from my last NAHB meeting as your president. At the IBS next January, Michael Herndon will be representing Oklahoma as president. But for now, let me share with you my thoughts from the most recent national board meeting.

### A Visit to New York City

First, I loved New York City. What a fabulous town, and the food is excellent. We took in a Broadway show and saw the sights. We saw the Empire State Building and cruised around the Statue of Liberty, and, of course, Julie had to go in Macy's, the largest department store in the world with nine floors! Oh, and we did do a little business.

But before I share a little business, let me once again say how great it is to be living and working in Oklahoma with our wide open spaces with plenty of room, friendly people and lots of sunshine. Why, someone should make a play about how great Oklahoma is!

### On to Business

Business began for me with the President's Council. This is an opportunity where presidents and first vice presidents from local and state associations share time with the NAHB senior officers and each other, just discussing what is happening in each area and the current outlook. Even though we are still feeling the effects of the recession, and will for some time in my opinion, there was still a lot of optimism in the room. The Central Oklahoma HBA even got a little plug for their innovative iPhone app for their upcoming Parade of Homes.

The Area Caucus made me realize that the upcoming board meeting was going to be a challenge. Just as our state and local associations are facing some trying times, our national association is really feeling the effects of the housing downturn. The budget and future of the association is faced with many difficult choices. If you are a director, then I urge you to consider attending the IBS early next year as that meeting will be one of the most important ever.

I hope all of you will make plans to join us at our next installation banquet on January 7, 2011. Until next time, go sell something. **OB**



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## **Dramatic Shifts**

**L**et me begin my article this month by declaring what a vibrant and exciting place New York City is! The restaurants, theaters, buildings, shopping and top notch, and I'm sure rival any in the world. It provided a stunning backdrop for what will likely be as important a Board of Director's meeting as any I have attended. Many of the committee and executive board meetings I attended leading up to the main board meeting were tense, and at times out of control. But in the end, I believe the stage has been set for a dramatic shift in the way our association will be lead.

### **The Budget**

First up is ... the budget. The NAHB Budget Committee has whittled the projected budget deficit for 2011 down to about \$2 million from \$15 million. With a cash infusion from our reserve fund, they are now able to present a balanced budget without a dues increase for 2011 and 2012. This was welcome news for a beleaguered executive board reeling from a report that our national membership now stands at 167,838, a far cry from our heyday just a few years ago when we had 250,000. While we are not ready to declare victory over our financial troubles, it is certainly possible that after 2012 NAHB will be on much firmer footing and poised to implement the changes most feel are coming. More on that in a minute.

Revenue from the International Builder's Show is certainly a critical part of NAHB's financial health, and staff is cautiously optimistic about slightly exceeding this year's budgeted revenue. They believe they will have over 500,000 square feet of booth space sold in the Orlando Convention Center, and registrations are ahead of last year's total at this point. By the way, Frank Caliendo, the impressionist, will give the keynote speech on opening day, which ought to be hilarious!

A brief reminder ... Friday, October 29 is the deadline for special NAHB block hotel room rates. Prices thereafter will go up! If you haven't yet registered, you can go ahead and reserve your room, and your credit card will not be charged for the deposit until December. Go to [www.buildersshow.com](http://www.buildersshow.com) to make reservations. Oklahoma's hotel is again the Hyatt Place hotel, and the negotiated rate is \$169 per night through Oct. 29th. Also, registration for the exhibit floor is only \$50 per person through December 12th.

Also included in the 2011 and 2012 budget is a \$4.5 million fund for a media blitz in the event that Congress or the administration attempts to attack the mortgage interest deduction. This is a "Just In Case" fund that we felt was critical in light of several recent comments by President Obama regarding what most members view as the most important single reason for NAHB's existence—the protection of this

deduction. NAHB will also identify partners to work with (i.e. the Realtors, Mortgage Bankers Association, the bankers, etc.) who can also help with the campaign. We are hopeful that our leaders will see that we have geared up for war on this issue and will be hesitant to attack.

### **Headquarters**

Also decided in New York was whether to move NAHB's headquarters out of downtown Washington, DC. NAHB hired a group of consultants to study the feasibility of such a move and what benefits, if any, might be realized. The consultants presented the results at the board meeting. After a nationwide search, they determined five "hub" cities which made sense for a move—Dallas, Kansas City, Cincinnati, Denver and Atlanta. Taking into account cost of living, incentives from those cities, relocation expenses, etc., they determined that NAHB could realize a savings of around \$1.8 million per year. Unfortunately, it also meant that we would lose around 85 percent of the current NAHB staff. Most of them have family in and around DC, and spouses that work there as well. Since jobs with other associations are fairly plentiful there, the consultants determined that almost all of NAHB's senior staff would not relocate. It was obvious to most that a savings of \$1.8 million per year was not nearly enough to make up for the loss of so much institutional knowledge, not to mention the political clout we have with the headquarters located in Washington DC, so the issue was dropped. Due to the declining staff morale problem a prolonged review of this nature presented, we thought it was important to make a decision quickly.

### **The Future of NAHB**

You will be hearing a lot over the next few months about the "Future of NAHB" Task Force that is currently gathering information from local members and associations nationwide to determine what kind of change, if any, is needed within NAHB. I don't have the space to go into detail here, but Ken Klein, a member from Tulsa, is heading up the committee and will be collecting comments from the grassroots over the next several months. Some of the changes being scrutinized are the elimination of the fall board meeting each year, and just going to two meetings, one at IBS and one in Washington, DC, in conjunction with our Legislative Conference in late spring or early summer. Also being studied is a proposal to shrink the executive board to allow for faster decision-making to keep up with the fast-changing housing landscape. Many of the issues are VERY controversial, yet need to be thoroughly discussed if we are to continue to be the voice of our industry. More to come in future issues, so stay tuned! **OB**





**President of OSHBA Women's Council**

**Kimmi Houston**

## Fall Board Is in the Air



**A**s I am writing this article, the air is clean and brisk, the sun is shining and it is a beautiful day in Oklahoma! Fall is in the air! Change is in the air!

I have just returned from New York City where I attended the NAHB Fall Board of Director's meetings. And, although NYC is an awesome city, I am glad to be home ... and glad my home is Oklahoma!

During the Fall Board meetings, much attention was given to "Member Services." Budgetary constraints have driven NAHB and PWB to re-evaluate current programs and services to members. Their ultimate goal is to NOT cut any services, but rather be able to provide services in the most cost effective manner.

### Membership Changes

With that said, you will soon notice changes with your membership. These changes are exciting and will be revolutionary. Changes such as focusing on delivering services through electronic means will be heightened. Webinars will be increased and archived, readily available to members. Also, the national magazine *Building Women* will soon begin being delivered electronically rather than in print. Your membership will become state-of-the-art with these changes and a few more that are on the horizon.

Another focus mentioned at Fall Board was "Advocacy." The quote coming from the board floor was that "Housing Is Under Attack." This is an alarming quote, but further, an alarming realization! Please join with me in reading Phil Rhees' article in this magazine. He will detail out the message much better than I can. This is something we all MUST collectively work and respond in kind. NAHB has put together a Critical Housing & Strategic Plan to stimulate in favor of housing, MID (Mortgage Interest Deduction) and reform. This affects us all ... personally and professionally.

I would love to personally invite everyone to attend my installation while at the IBS. I am proud to be able to place a focus on Oklahoma and I would be HONORED to have all of you, my Oklahoma family, share this occasion with me!

Please look for OPWB to help to gear up advocacy efforts very soon ... and join us!

### Our Next Venture

January will be here soon. We are now beginning plans for our 2011 Annual Installation of Officers. Look for a fun-filled evening at the luxurious Skirvin Hotel in early January. Details to follow.

### A Personal Note ...

Also in January will be the International Builder's Show in Orlando, Florida. The dates are January 12-15. It is a great show and Orlando is lots of fun. Plus ... many may already know this, but others may not ... I will be installed as the 2011 NAHB Professional Women in Building Chairwoman. I would love to personally invite everyone to attend my installation while at the IBS. I am proud to be able to place a focus on Oklahoma and I would be HONORED to have all of you, my Oklahoma family, share this occasion with me! It will be held on Thursday, January 13, 2011 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Whirlpool is sponsoring and dedicating the evening. If you have not attended an event sponsored by Whirlpool, it is in itself a great time. Thank you! I hope you can come.

The vision of OPWB still remains ... to provide an opportunity for all professional women and men to serve the needs of our state and our industry.

We are always looking for prolific, professional members that are passionate about our industry. If you would like to hear more about the Oklahoma Professional Women in Building, please call Kimmi at 405.823.2515 or contact us through our Web page at [www.oshba.org](http://www.oshba.org). **OB**



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# Employee vs. Independent Contractor

## Seven Tips for Business Owners

### IRS Summertime Tax Tip 2010-20

**A**s a small business owner you may hire people as independent contractors or as employees. There are rules that will help you determine how to classify the people you hire. This will affect how much you pay in taxes, whether you need to withhold from your workers paychecks and what tax documents you need to file.

Here are seven things every business owner should know about hiring people as independent contractors versus hiring them as employees.

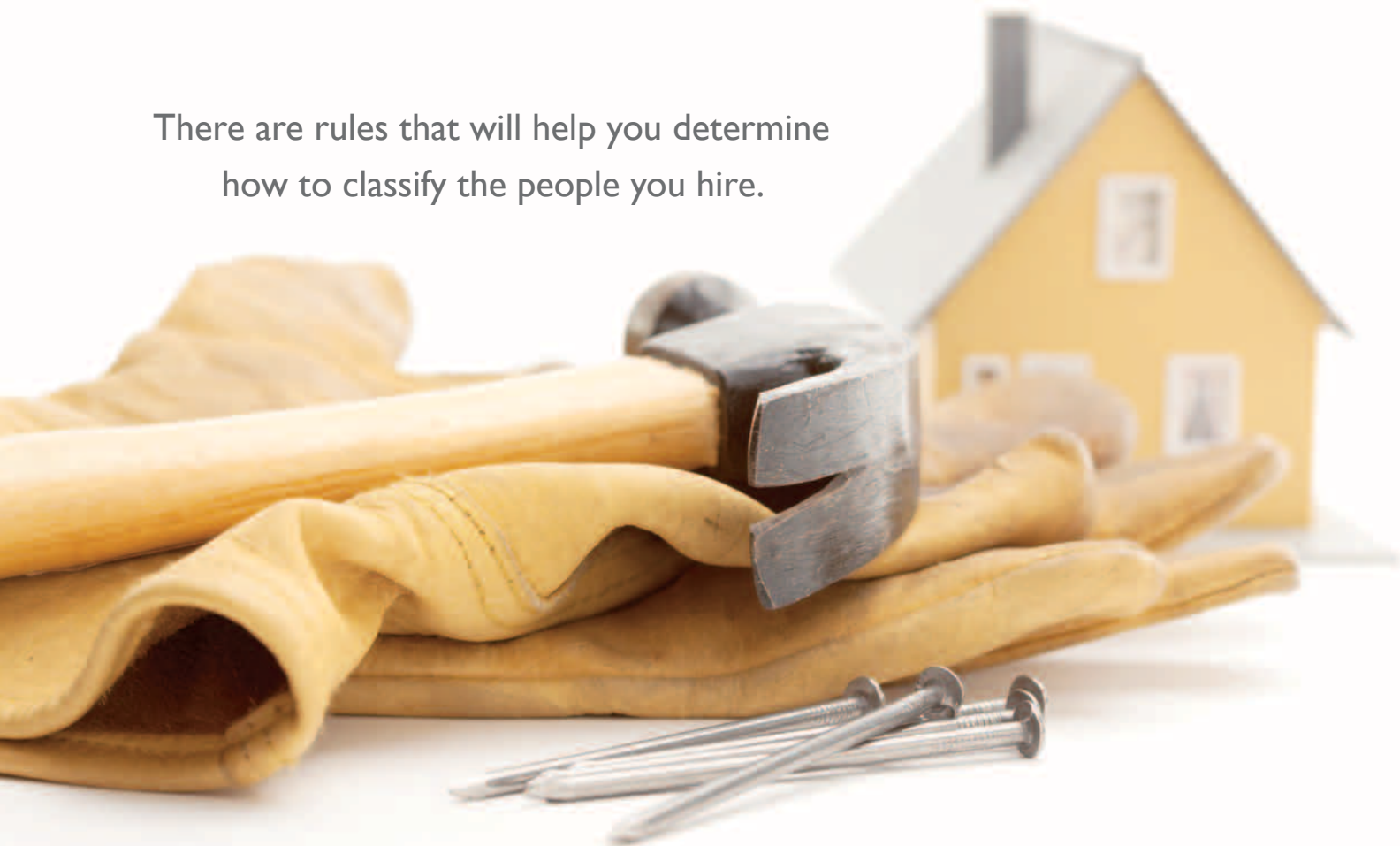
1. The IRS uses three characteristics to determine the relationship between businesses and workers:
  - Behavioral Control covers facts that show whether the business has a right to direct or control how the work is done through instructions, training or other means.
  - Financial Control covers facts that show whether the business has a right to direct or control the financial and business aspects of the worker's job.
  - Type of Relationship factor relates to how the workers and the business owner perceive their relationship.
2. If you have the right to control or direct not only what is to be done, but also how it is to be done, then your workers are most likely employees.

3. If you can direct or control only the result of the work done—and not the means and methods of accomplishing the result—then your workers are probably independent contractors.
4. Employers who misclassify workers as independent contractors can end up with substantial tax bills. Additionally, they can face penalties for failing to pay employment taxes and for failing to file required tax forms.
5. Workers can avoid higher tax bills and lost benefits if they know their proper status.
6. Both employers and workers can ask the IRS to make a determination on whether a specific individual is an independent contractor or an employee by filing a Form SS-8, Determination of Worker Status for Purposes of Federal Employment Taxes and Income Tax Withholding, with the IRS.

You can learn more about the critical determination of a worker's status as an Independent Contractor or Employee at [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov) by selecting the Small Business link. Additional resources include IRS Publication 15-A, Employer's Supplemental Tax Guide, Publication 1779, Independent Contractor or Employee, and Publication 1976, Do You Qualify for Relief under Section 530? These publications and Form SS-8 are available on the IRS website or by calling the IRS at 800-829-3676 (800-TAX-FORM). **OB**

*Reprinted from the IRS website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).*

There are rules that will help you determine  
how to classify the people you hire.





# Independent Contractor or Employee?

## Which Are You?

**F**or federal tax purposes, this is an important distinction. Worker classification affects how you pay your federal income tax, social security and Medicare taxes, and how you file your tax return. Classification affects your eligibility for employer and social security and Medicare benefits and your tax responsibilities. If you aren't sure of your work status, you should find out now. This information can help you.

The courts have considered many facts in deciding whether a worker is an independent contractor or an employee. These relevant facts fall into three main categories: behavioral control; financial control; and relationship of the parties. In each case, it is very important to consider all the facts—no single fact provides the answer. Carefully review the following definitions.

## Behavioral Control

These facts show whether there is a right to direct or control how the worker does the work. A worker is an employee when the business has the right to direct and control the worker. The business does not have to actually direct or control the way the work is done—as long as the employer has the right to direct and control the work. For example:

- **Instructions:** If you receive extensive instructions on how work is to be done, this suggests that you are an employee. Instructions can cover a wide range of topics. For example:
  - how, when, or where to do the work
  - what tools or equipment to use
  - what assistants to hire to help with the work
  - where to purchase supplies and services
- If you receive less extensive instructions about what should be done, but not how it should be done, you may be an independent contractor. For instance, instructions about time and place may be less important than directions on how the work is performed.
- **Training:** If the business provides you with training about required procedures and methods, this indicates that the business wants the work done in a certain way, and this suggests that you may be an employee.

## Financial Control

These facts show whether there is a right to direct or control the business part of the work. For example:

- **Significant Investment:** if you have a significant investment in your work, you may be an independent contractor. While there is no precise dollar test, the investment must have substance. However, a significant investment is not necessary to be an independent contractor.
- **Expenses:** if you are not reimbursed for some or all business expenses, then you may be an independent contractor, especially if your unreimbursed business expenses are high.
- **Opportunity for Profit or Loss:** if you can realize a profit or incur a loss, this suggests that you are in business for yourself and that you may be an independent contractor.

## Relationship of the Parties

These are facts that illustrate how the business and the worker perceive their relationship. For example:

- **Employee Benefits:** If you receive benefits, such as insurance, pension, or paid leave, this is an indication that you may be an employee. If you do not receive benefits, however, you could be either an employee or an independent contractor.
- **Written Contracts:** A written contract may show what both you and the business intend. This may be very significant if it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine status based on other facts.

## When You Are an Employee

- Your employer must withhold income tax and your portion of social security and Medicare taxes. Also, your employer is responsible for paying social security, Medicare, and unemployment (FUTA) taxes on your wages. Your employer must give you a Form W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, showing the amount of taxes withheld from your pay.
- You may deduct unreimbursed employee business expenses on Schedule A of your income tax return, but only if you itemize deductions and they total more than two percent of your adjusted gross income.

## When You Are an Independent Contractor

- The business may be required to give you Form 1099-MISC, Miscellaneous Income, to report what it has paid to you.
- You are responsible for paying your own income tax and self-employment tax (Self-Employment Contributions Act – SECA). The business does not withhold taxes from your pay. You may need to make estimated tax payments during the year to cover your tax liabilities.
- You may deduct business expenses on Schedule C of your income tax return.

## IRS Tax Publications

If you are not sure whether you are an employee or an independent contractor, get Form SS-8, Determination of Worker Status for Purposes of Federal Employment Taxes and Income Tax Withholding. Publication 15-A, Employer's Supplemental Tax Guide, provides additional information on independent contractor status.

## IRS Electronic Services

You can download and print IRS publications, forms, and other tax information materials on the Internet at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). You can also call the IRS at 1-800-829-3676 (1-800-TAX-FORM) to order free tax publications and forms.

Publication 1796, 2007 IRS Tax Products CD (Final Release), containing current and prior year tax publications and forms, can be purchased from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). You can order Publication 1796 toll-free by calling 1-877-233-6767 or via the Internet at [www.irs.gov/cdorders](http://www.irs.gov/cdorders).

Call 1-800-829-4933, the Business and Specialty Tax Line, if you have questions related to employment tax issues. **OB**

*Reprinted from the IRS website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).*

# Do you Qualify for Relief under Section 530?

## Section 530 Relief Requirements

**Y**our business has been selected for an employment tax examination to determine whether you correctly treated certain workers as independent contractors. However, you will not owe employment taxes for these workers if you meet the relief requirements described below. If you

do not meet these relief requirements, the IRS will need to determine whether the workers are independent contractors or employees and whether you owe employment taxes for those workers.

To receive relief, you must meet all three of the Section 530 relief requirements.

### Reasonable Basis

First, you had a reasonable basis for not treating the workers as employees. To establish that you had a reasonable basis for not treating the workers as employees, you can show that:

- You reasonably relied on a court case about Federal taxes or a ruling issued

to you by the IRS; or

- Your business was audited by the IRS at a time when you treated similar workers as independent contractors and the IRS did not reclassify those workers as employees. You may not rely on an audit commenced after December 31, 1996, unless such audit included an examination for employment tax purposes of whether the individual involved (or any other individual holding a substantially similar position) should be treated as your employee; or
- You treated the workers as independent contractors because you knew that was how a significant segment of your industry treated similar workers; or
- You relied on some other reasonable basis. For example, you relied on the advice of a business lawyer or accountant who knew the facts about your business.

If you did not have a reasonable basis for treating the workers as independent contractors, you do not meet the relief requirements.

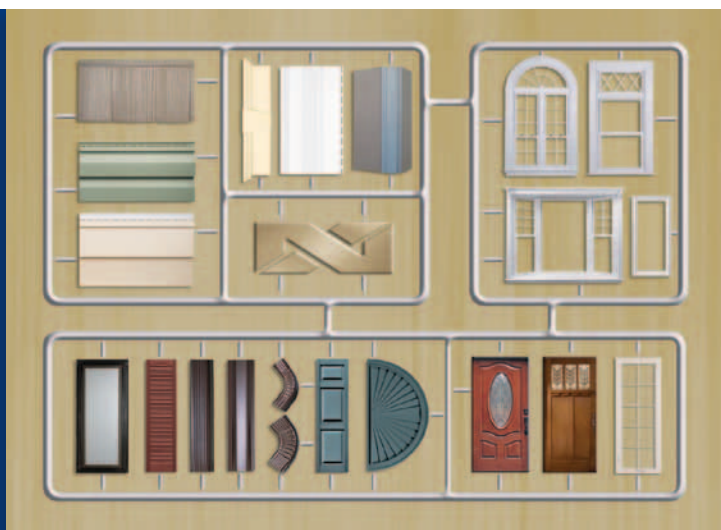
### Substantive Consistency

In addition, you (and any predecessor business) must have treated the workers, and any similar workers, as independent contractors. If you treated similar workers as employees, this relief provision is not available. If you are paying an individual who is providing services as a test proctor or room supervisor assisting in the administration of college entrance or placements examinations, the substantive consistency requirement does not apply with respect to services performed after December 31, 2006, (and remuneration paid with respect to such services). The provision applies if the individual (1) is performing the services for a tax-exempt organization, and (2) is not otherwise treated as an employee of such organization for purposes of employment taxes.

### Reporting Consistency

Finally, you must have filed all required federal tax returns (including information returns) consistent with your treatment of each worker as not being employees. This means, for example, that if you treated a worker as an independent contractor and paid him or her \$600 or more, you must have filed Form 1099-MISC for the worker. Relief is not available for any year and for any workers for whom you did not file the required information returns. The IRS examiner will answer any questions you may have about your eligibility for this relief. **OB**

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# Ask the Fuel Expert

## Ten Ways to Cut Fuel Costs

by Jack Lee

**R**emember the good old days...about a year and a half ago? Well, the good old days are gone forever and today we live in a world where fuel prices seem to go up by the hour. Now pundits speculate on living with oil prices running up to \$200 per barrel.

As consumers, many of us have adjusted our lifestyles. We try to drive less. Some have chosen to car pool, while others get rid of their gas-guzzlers and opt for more fuel efficient vehicles, including hybrids.

For companies, the good old days meant fuel up and go. Little attention was paid to managing fuel. But in the past year the price of oil has doubled, cutting deeper than ever into profits and causing owners and managers to adopt a new fuel consciousness. Fuel management is a necessity.

You can't control the price of fuel, but you can control your fuel consumption. The answer is fuel management.

Any company can improve their fuel efficiencies. It takes work and commitment from the head office to your people on the road and at the job sites. More and more companies are making changes in their operating practices to cut costs now and to be prepared for even higher costs in the future.

To help you adjust, here are ten ways to cut fuel costs.

### Train and Educate Your Drivers

It starts with the people who have their foot on the gas pedal. Your drivers can control fuel consumption each time they fire up their engines, and proper training can improve fuel efficiency, economy and emissions. Hard acceleration, speeding and idling are the biggest causes of fuel waste. Initiate a training course for drivers and reward participation.

### Decrease Idling

Be aware of the time engines idle. No longer can we leave machinery and equipment running all day long. Stop your engines! Excessive idling adds to your fuel costs by as much as 50 percent and can shorten the life of engine oil by 75 percent, adding more costs. Initiate a campaign to reduce idling time and reward participants. Allowing an engine to idle more than three minutes causes expensive damage, which harms efficiency, shortens engine life and increases maintenance costs. It all adds up.

### Start Off Slower

This is another lesson your drivers must be taught. Jackrabbit starts waste fuel and save less than three minutes per hour driving, but can result in using 40 percent more fuel and increase toxic emissions by 400 percent! What's the rush? Ease up on the gas pedal and your efficiencies will improve.

### Slow Down

Speeding is dangerous. It wastes fuel and creates higher levels of toxic emissions. Speeds over 62 miles per hour drastically impact fuel efficiencies—cars travelling at 75 miles per hour use 20 percent more fuel. Trucks traveling at 75 miles per hour use 50 percent more fuel and also emit 100 percent more carbon monoxide, 50 percent more hydrocarbons and 31 percent more nitrogen oxides.

### Lose Weight

Excess weight places unnecessary strain on your vehicle's engine and greatly affects its fuel efficiency. By removing as little as 100 pounds, you can significantly improve your gas mileage. Check each vehicle and pitch out that unnecessary weight.

### Use a Fuel Management System

This is the most powerful way to lower fuel costs and increase productivity. Available systems range from basic onsite refueling (which saves up to 20 minutes in wasted time and fuel each day, per vehicle) to automated fuel tracking (which details every gallon pumped into every vehicle by date, time, quantity and fuel type) to telematics (which measures overall fuel efficiency, vehicle performance, tracks fuel waste due to idling, speeding, etc., and identifies critical areas to improve efficiency and reduce fuel costs and emissions). The technology exists so you can become a fuel manager and stay on top of your fuel consumption, one vehicle at a time. It can work for you.

### Upgrade Your Fleet

Whenever possible, invest in modern, fuel efficient vehicles. Modern diesel engines are far more fuel efficient and perform better with modern diesel fuels such as ultra low sulfur diesel and biodiesel. Though it may seem expensive, new diesel vehicles can save thousands of dollars in maintenance, fuel and productivity per vehicle. Measure each piece of equipment for fuel efficiency and get rid of the bad ones! Replace and upgrade your equipment regularly. It may hurt now, but it will pay you back.

### Tune-up Vehicles Regularly

Do you have a stringent, well-managed maintenance policy? Many companies "fix it when it breaks." This attitude costs too much in wasted fuel. A well maintained vehicle performs better, improves fuel efficiency, reduces toxic emissions and, in the long run, will cost less to maintain.

### Pump It Up

Proper tire inflation improves gas mileage. At 4Refuel, our statistics show improperly inflated tires can cost up to two weeks worth of fuel per year! How big is your fleet? Two weeks per year per vehicle adds up to thousands of dollars in lost profits! In addition, proper inflation results in improved vehicle and braking performance and increases tire life.

### Implement Advanced Mobile Asset Management Technology

Wow, that's a mouth full! You can measure and manage your fleet better when you have the right information. Tracking miles traveled, average speed and engine efficiency is critical to cutting fuel costs. This information will help your drivers and managers optimize routes with better planning. Mapping software and GPS will eliminate thousands of unnecessary miles per week. Less time on the road means less fuel consumed, less wear on vehicles, decreased expenditures and overall increased productivity, plus lower toxic emissions!

Once you have made a total commitment to managing your fuel better and changing some of your bad fuel habits, results will follow. Stick with it. Fuel prices are only going up.

Jack Lee is the President and CEO of 4Refuel Canada Inc, The Leader in Fuel Management. If you have any questions or comments about this article, Jack can be reached at (604) 513-0386 or online at [askthefuelexpert@4refuel.com](mailto:askthefuelexpert@4refuel.com). **OB**



# Kurt Dinnes of Sun Custom Homes

Maintaining the company's core values and integrity has allowed Sun Custom Homes to build "Affordable Homes of Distinction."

Copyright Oklahoman



When Kurt Dinnes was a young boy, he always dreamed of becoming a home builder. "I always thought it would be the greatest thing in the world-and it is," he said

Dinnes has over 25 years of experience in the building industry, including his current homebuilding company, Sun Custom Homes. He started the custom home division a little over 10 years ago. Sun Custom Homes specializes in Old World European and classical American style homes for a broad range of client budgets.

## Affordable Homes of Distinction

"Creating a successful home building business presents many challenges," Dinnes said. The focus he and his partners share is the importance of unparalleled design, craftsmanship and affordability. These elements have allowed him to build a reputation of impeccable trust within the community, which, in his opinion, is the critical element to success in the custom homebuilding business.

Building relationships is the key to Sun Custom Homes' ability to create homes that truly are "Affordable and Distinct." Sun Custom Homes is committed to focusing on its clients and their needs throughout the entire build-

ing process. Sun's approach includes incorporating design elements that are tailored to each individual customer, uncompromised luxuries and amenities, and superior craftsmanship for any budget. The ability and willingness to work within any budget attracts a lot of clientele. "I have never had a client without a budget," Dinnes explained. "It does not matter how much money a client has or is planning to spend, there is always a budget."

The client-focused approach adopted by Sun Custom Homes amazes many of its clients. What created a strong initial motivation for Dinnes to get into custom home building "was our opinion that too many homes were under-designed and over-priced ... I truly believe what makes us different is the focus on our clients and providing superior, quality goods and services, while maintaining the trust and integrity clients deserve." Dinnes insisted, "From the beginning, Sun set high standards and values and never compromises those standards." More than a decade later, there is good reason to believe that their building philosophies have been confirmed by both their clients and the marketplace, allowing Sun Custom Homes to fulfill the dream of building "Affordable Homes of Distinction."

*Continued on page 14*



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## BUILDER PROFILE

*Continued from page 12*

### **Making Associations for Success**

Challenges for the homebuilding business don't end after a company has been built into a success. Dinnes observed, "A challenge to most builders, is keeping up-to-date with the state and national homebuilding regulations. With ever-changing and constantly evolving regulations and laws, it is imperative for builders to stay apprised of all the changes and modifications. The best way to do this is for builders to get involved in the home builders associations from the local level to the state and national levels."

According to Dinnes, "The associations at the local, state and national levels are advocates for each and every home builder. They keep us in touch with all of the changes that will affect our industry, and protect our ability to be successful." He believes in being involved. He currently serves as president of the Southwest Homebuilders Association, as vice-president/treasurer of the Central Oklahoma Home Builders Association and as a board member of the Oklahoma State Home Builders Association. "I enjoy being involved on as many levels as possible," said Dinnes.

Dinnes also believes in the importance of the educational opportunities and certifications that are available through various associations across the state and on the national level. "I believe that every builder should become a state Certified Professional Builder. It means something to the public when they know they are dealing with a state Certified Professional Builder," he said. Taking advantage of the opportunities and certifications offered by the home

builders associations is an excellent way to gain added respect from the public and other builders and developers.

Another important benefit to builders, by being involved, is the ability to make connections. "Developing good, solid business relationships is invaluable," Dinnes explained, "Membership and involvement in the home builders associations provides connections with other builders, developers, suppliers, manufacturers, subcontractors and other associates that can prove to be a great help on the path to success."

### **It's Still So Cool**

While Dinnes enjoys the opportunities to be involved on many levels of the home builders associations, he mostly enjoys the role of being a builder and creating homes that his clients dream of—the very idea he thought was so "cool" as a kid.

For example, he enjoys taking a set of plans from an architect and tailoring the plans to fit the specific needs of each client. Dinnes stated, "Each home we build is unique and different." In that regard, he is adamant that Sun Custom Homes' reputation speaks for itself.

"Our passion and dedication to providing well-designed homes within a broad range of budgets, while maintaining superior craftsmanship and quality work, has earned Sun Custom Homes an impeccable reputation. I feel strongly that it is an honor and a privilege every time a client places their trust in us to build their new dream home. Developing positive relationships with our clients makes delivering the final product so meaningful. Seeing the excitement when clients move into their new Sun Custom Home that meets or exceeds their expectations will always be a real joy for me," Dinnes explained. **OB**





## By All Means: Executive Officer's Report

Mike Means

# Look Into My Crystal Ball

**A**s I write, the election is a little over five weeks away. If my crystal ball is accurate, as you read this it will be just a couple of weeks away. If nothing has changed much in the intervening weeks, then this could be another major change in the direction of our country. At the NAHB Fall Board meeting, political consultant Charlie Cook spoke to the directors and said that over 80 seats are in play and that most of those seats will fall to the Republicans. In fact, Mr. Cook thought the House would switch party leadership but that the Senate would not. If that is the case, then we can expect two years of gridlock. And in the end, that may not be too bad.

## Making History

In Oklahoma we will be making history no matter which party prevails as we will be electing our first woman governor. The question is will it be Lt. Governor Jari Askins or will it be Congresswoman Mary Fallin that gets to change their title? Since many of the political pundits leading up to the primary said it would be Attorney General Drew Edmondson contesting Fallin, I am not about to make any prediction. I just want to urge you to be sure and vote. Why? As Thomas Jefferson said, "We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate."

And speaking of participating, when you go to vote you may want to pack a light snack. There will be 11 state questions on the ballot. You will get to decide on a variety of issues ranging from providing identification when you vote to term limits for statewide office holders to making English the language for official state actions to setting the education budget to a regional average. Wow! I thought we had a state legislature for a reason, now I cannot decide what it is.

## Cuss and Discuss

These issues will be cussed and discussed in the next few weeks. We possibly could take a position as a state association on one of the ballot measures. In any event, please take the time to go and vote.

After the dust is then settled, it will be back to work for the next legislative session. If there is a pressing need or issue that you think we, as a state association, should tackle, please take a moment and let us know. I would again urge you to be sure and sign-up for our voterVOICE system when you get the opportunity.

And last but not least, if you are a user of Facebook or Twitter, be sure to follow us. Many times great information is shared using the social media networks.

Until next time,  
Mike Means  
State EO **OB**

Wow! I thought we had a state legislature for a reason, now I cannot decide what it is.

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