



# Plumb Line

PLUMB HOUSE, INC. • DALTON BUILDERS, INC. • ADVANCE CONCRETE • GRAFTON ELECTRIC, INC.

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## THE WORK-HOME SAFETY QUOTIENT

In order to be safe at work, you first have to get to work in good condition. Who among us hasn't leaned a stepladder at home, failed to wear a hard hat on a side job, gotten sunburned at the beach, or stretched the speed limit on the way to work? Shame on us. Because non-work-related injuries hurt and disable just the same as on-the-job injuries. What's really needed is a closing of the gap between home safety and work safety. You shouldn't have to switch mental channels when you go to work—you should always be tuned in to safety, for the sake of the only body you're issued. You shouldn't need a Supervisor to nag you on safe work practices. You shouldn't need a law, like the new texting law, to stop obviously unsafe behaviors. You shouldn't have to rely on workers' comp. or disability insurance for an income. Whether you wear safety glasses using a nail gun or mowing your lawn, they still protect the same baby-blues. The common goal we should all (willingly!) embrace is to prevent injury—regardless of whether in your workplace, your backyard or on the road. Safety is, after all, ultimately your own responsibility. Everywhere. So what's our reward for working safely today? Tomorrow!

## BETTER...BUT,

OSHA is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. In 1970, when President Richard Nixon signed legislation creating the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, 18 out of every 100,000 workers were killed on the job—a total of nearly 14,000 dead, roughly equivalent to the population of Northborough, the town I happen to live in. Workplace fatalities are down 65% since 1970, thanks in large part to OSHA's efforts. But...despite this progress, workers still face many dangers, especially in construction, which is now considered the most dangerous industry. Construction represents only 6% of the workforce, but is responsible for 20% of workplace fatalities. Every year more than 4,000 workers die on the job,

and more than 4 million suffer work-related injuries and illnesses, at a cost that we won't even talk about because it's a number with too many zeroes to be meaningful. So OSHA must stay vigilant and keep up with ever-changing occupational hazards, and we have to join them, and forgive them for making life so difficult for us with more rules and sons of rules. Aren't 10,000 saved lives a year worth it? I know what the families of even one of those lost workers would say.

## RIDING CANCER INTO THE GROUND

This year 7 riders will pay homage to Dick Anderson's passion for the Pan Mass Challenge by riding 192 miles from Sturbridge to P-Town to help find the cure for cancer. The training required to accomplish a ride like that in the brutal August heat has the added benefit of improving the health of the trainees. Everyone has been affected by cancer either directly or indirectly, and Team Plumb House is profoundly inspired this year by two in-house cancer survivors who are very dear to us. We are deeply grateful to the owners, subcontractors, vendors, friends and family who have donated so generously and so often to help eradicate this dread disease. Together, we *are* making a difference.

## CHECKING THE TRADE JOURNALS

Since economists change their minds as often as we change socks, we thought we'd check again for apartment news, which we've selectively quoted here ("accentuate the positive; eliminate the negative" as the old Bing Crosby song says):

- ◆ "Mid-year market overviews favor apartments, the newest hope in real estate and the one bright spot in the residential property scene."
- ◆ "The sluggish job market, falling home prices and persistent foreclosures have driven up demand in the rental market. As many as 2.2 million people are moving from homeownership to renting after foreclosure."
- ◆ "Multi-family housing starts are up, and developers are preparing for additional increase in demand."

◆ “Renters have grown by 1 million in the past year, which will help yield a 23% increase in total multifamily housing starts this year.”

◆ NAHB expects little improvement in single-family housing starts in 2011, but solid gains in multifamily starts.”

◆ “Proof of the current strength of apartment sales is that demand for apartment communities is moving beyond the coasts and into middle America.”

If these indicators can be believed, and they seem to be holding strong, then we can reasonably expect to be busy for quite some time. Busy is good!

### WEYMOUTH START-UP

We had our first New Employee Safety Orientation in a long time at the Weymouth jobsite. Not only does it feel good to be hiring again, but it felt good to get mud on my boots at the sitework and concrete stage of a new project. All footings and foundation walls are complete, and the first wall panel was stood in place on June 28<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations to the foundation crew for the bonus they earned for beating the schedule. It’s fun to be doing what we do best again.

### LIME GREEN ADDITIONS TO TRAILER

The AED (automated external defibrillator) and a new gravity-fed emergency eyewash station have both been added to the Weymouth construction trailer. The AED looks like a George Foreman grill, and the eyewash station looks kind of like a drinking fountain. Even though they’re the same color, try not to confuse them.

### DECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Plumb House signed the demolition contract for five multi-story load bearing masonry buildings in Watertown.

### JOBSITE WILDLIFE

We’ve had skunks, raccoons, turtles, snakes, seagulls and litters of kittens on our jobsites before. Our most recent visitor is a coyote in Weymouth who’s taking on mascot status. We have pictures of him prancing around like he owns the place.

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING BACK ON SCHEDULE

Congratulations to the 21 students who now know better what to do (and just as importantly, what not to do) in a medical emergency, thanks to the two-

night First Aid/CPR/AED/Back Injury Prevention training by Applegate Associates. It seems they change the CPR protocol every couple of years, so there’s always something new to learn, even in annual training. Jorge Costa and I have also put the fear of God into our new hires with 37 years’ worth of safety stories (including the one where his hard hat saved Jorge’s life) at their orientation. We’ve just completed the rigging and signal-person training required of GC’s under the new crane standard that went into effect last November. No one minded learning the crane signals because a fair damsel was depicting them on the hand signal chart. Dave Touhey from Contractors Risk Management covered the new fall protection rules that went into effect June 16<sup>th</sup>. And we brought a manlift to the Maintenance Shop for the classroom and hands-on aerial lift training that NES Rentals was kind enough to put on for us.

### WEDDING BELLS AND MECHANICAL BULLS



Congratulations to Mark Biron and longtime girlfriend, Angela Ford, on their Spring engagement. There was a near stampede to Mark’s cell phone to see a picture of the ring. We predict they’re going to be very happy, since Mark has been smilingly referring to Angela as “the Mrs.” for years.



A number of Plumb House families headed North in vans to Ranch Gagnon in Quebec for the rodeo that Luc dedicated to Dick Anderson. The kids got to make maple candy and chase a sheep around the rink to capture its bandana. I have pictures of Superintendents on the mechanical bull that play havoc with their image as safety professionals. Reports were that everyone had a great time.

### QUARTERLY TRIVIA

Built in only 16 months, the Pentagon is 71 feet tall and yet it has 5 floors, 17.5 miles of corridors, 131 stairways, 284 restrooms, 691 drinking fountains, and 7,754 windows (more than 7 acres of glass). Cost of just the building? \$49.6M.

Reflections  
Reflections

*“In what you say of another, apply the test of kindness, necessity and truth, and let nothing pass your lips without a 2/3 majority.”*

~Liz Armbruster