

Turning Challenges into Value Added Opportunities by Bruce G. Boncke, P.E., President

About the time you receive this issue of "In-Sites", I will be making a presentation at the NAHB National Green Building Conference in Austin, Texas. The topic of my talk is turning regulatory and environmental challenges into project opportunities. NAHB calls it the "art of developing green." I must admit that when I started my development oriented career in 1970, I didn't see myself making presentations on developing green!

I won't editorialize on the challenging regulatory and political environment we work under in the building industry. The fact is, it's here to stay and isn't going to get any easier. Just as we do with building products, we have to keep looking forward for methods and opportunities to be better stewards of the environment with land development. We need to find ways to turn those opportunities into value added amenities on developed sites. Until we have a court system that truly understands 5th amendment rights and takings, we will have to find ways of recouping the regulatory loss of value. Maintaining value while improving the environment is the goal.

In this volume of "In-Sites", we are giving you some thoughts on two of the most challenging issues we face; the demand for "open space" and wetland regulations. Both can significantly reduce available land, yield and property value. However, both can also provide added value that prospective owners may be willing to pay for.

In addition, the administrative and monitoring costs of the new EPA Phase II Stormwater Regulations are now starting to be felt by developers. It is questionable whether the regulators have a clue what the cost of these requirements are on our industry and the disproportionate cost / benefit results. The fact is, they are here to stay and we will have to find ways to work with our clients to optimize these costs. We hope Dave Wood's article will help.