

VBCOA initiative promoted pool safety

IMPROVING POOL SAFETY was the Virginia Building Code Officials Association's focus during Building Safety Month in May. Pool accidents are the second leading cause of accidental death in children under the age of 14, second only to car accidents. Each year there are more than 300 drowning deaths of children age 5 and under and more than 3,000 submersion injuries that result in trips to emergency rooms. Only 2 percent of the injuries resulted from trespassers; instead most of the injuries occurred in a family-owned pool or one owned by relatives.

As part of its outreach efforts VBOCA promoted pool safety tips and distributed information on the permitting process for pools. Many local building departments offered courtesy pool inspections to help in

the identification of safety concerns.

VBCOA also contributed \$2,500 to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center by selling pins commemorating the five branches of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard.

In recognition of its work, VBCOA received a Merit Chapter of the Year award from the International Code Council. The ICC is the association that develops the building codes used in most of the United States, as well as in many countries around the world. ICC has about 340 chapters, and VBCOA has received a merit award for each of the previous three years.

VBCOA members did not limit their outreach to pool safety. VBCOA Region II, which includes the Roanoke/New River Valley area, undertook a public awareness cam-

campaign highlighting the importance of building codes and building safety. Region II received the "Raising the Profile" award from ICC in recognition of its efforts.

VBCOA Region VIII, in Hampton Roads, helped pay for a residential sprinkler system installation in a house built for Habitat for Humanity.

VBCOA provides training for its members through two conferences held each year. The 2010 spring meeting focused on the future of the construction industry. For the October meeting, VBCOA will

partner with the Virginia Plumbing & Mechanical Inspector Association, the International Association of Electrical Inspectors and Virginia Cross Connection Control Association for training on the plumbing, mechanical, electrical, building, and energy codes.

VBCOA has earned a national reputation for professionalism in promoting building safety. Chesterfield County Building Official Bill Dupler is the secretary/treasurer of the ICC and Fairfax County Code Specialist Guy Tomberlin serves on the ICC board of directors. Numerous Virginia officials serve on the ICC committees that develop codes and ensure professional standards for building safety professionals.

VBCOA members actively promote building safety at the state level as well through membership on the Board of Housing and Community Development, the Board for Contractors, the Manufactured Housing Board, the Design/Build Construction Management Review Board and the State Technical Advisory Review Board. Many members also serve as instructors in the Jack A. Proctor Virginia Building Code Academy.

VBCOA's officers for 2009-10 are President James Collins, Prince William County; First Vice President Joel Baker, Roanoke County; Second Vice President Vernell Woods, Norfolk; Sergeant At Arms Kris Bridges, Martinsville; and Immediate Past President Lynn Underwood, Norfolk.

VBCOA is an 827-member statewide association of building and code official professionals dedicated to improving public safety through building code enforcement. To achieve this goal, VBOCA works with its partners in building safety: fire prevention, plumbing, mechanical and electrical inspectors as well as its industry partners in the development community.

VML Director of Research Mary Jo Fields serves as executive director of VBCOA. 



VBCOA President James Collins