



Josephine County, Oregon

Board of Commissioners: Jim Riddle, Dwight F. Ellis, Jim Raffenburg

BUILDING SAFETY

DEPARTMENT

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OBOA Brief History*

DRAFT: April 2006

(Formerly Oregon State Building Officials Association)

OSBOA was chartered in 1974 after the statewide implementation of the Building and Mechanical codes via SB 73 effective July 1, 1974. OSBOA's purpose was to serve as a legislative group and as a forum for Building Officials to collectively deal with the State Building Codes Division, Department of Commerce. I was never quite sure if we formed because of or in spite of, the State of Oregon, BCD, Relations were rocky.

The primary moving force in creating this new organization was John Edward Boss, B.O. Lane County. He and Mick Nolte of Eugene and Ron Clark of Springfield had for some time forged a cooperative "tri-jurisdiction" pact whose effectiveness was frequently touted at SOCICBO on Friday night Chapter meetings.

At a late 1974 joint SOCICBO meeting with Columbia River (CRICBO) and Central Oregon (COICBO) chapters, OSBOA was formed with the understanding and commitment that it would not take the place of the regional chapters but would rather be a supplement to, not a replacement for, the chapters which would remain as the primary means of interaction for all inspectors and building safety professionals.

Signators for OSBOA's charter, I believe, included John Boss, Mick Nolte, Ron Clark, Roland Withrow (Marion Co.) Cliff Christenson (Portland) Floyd Watson (Bend) Del Newton (Mult. Co), Bob Eppstein (Corvallis) and Dave Bassett (Medford). Bob Eppstein with his flaming red hair was the most adamant that OSBOA not diminish the three local chapters..

The first decade of Presidents "75 to '85 continued the founding principles and had varying degrees of "cooperation" to nearly open warfare with the State BCD. Individuals in both organizations held each other in high regard, but there were many issues that were hostile at best and horrible at worst.

*** To be posted with the "Parade of Presidents".**

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These were vibrant years of high activity, high stakes and high emotions by hard driving, hard-headed, sometimes hard-drinking men who somehow held OSBOA's well-being high enough above their own that the organization survived, even thrived, on the boundless energy, adrenaline and testosterone of its members. The single most stupid act of OSBOA was to fail to advance Dan Smith (formerly of Springfield and then BCD administrator) from OSBOA Vice President to President. This action was taken by a 26 to 27 vote at the Albany public library and spawned a new era of unparalleled hostility between OSBOA and Oregon BCD.

Many good things did get accomplished in that the Educational institutes were taken over by OSBOA and later with COECO but relations with BCD were strained at best.

Decade two began with a bang when we "lost our S" and became OBOA when Ron Besphlug was president. The next group of presidents and members opened some constructive dialogue with the state but we were mostly focused on activities at ICBO and the national level and with CABO's 1 and 2 family dwelling code and CBO certifications.

During this era, our first (and so far only) female president Margaret Mahoney (also first 2 year president) changed the tenor of OBOA from Protagonist to Part-time Partner with BCD. Such diplomatic presidents as Clint Hilman, Lee Marsh, and David Scott kept OBOA doing good work with some tendrils of peace with BCD. Solid services to members were enhanced by finally hiring a staff person (Glen Hafner) to see to the business of the organization on a daily basis.

The third and current decade saw expansion of OBOA's influence inside and outside Oregon in both legislative matters as well as national level activities. Finally, in the last few years after Mark Long became BCD administrator, the two organizations have achieved a culture of cooperation and peace for the good of both and for the citizens we serve. OBOA through its members, officers, and staff have finally matured into a vital, effective, and very professional group via our vision and mission statements. We will continue to go forth and do great things as long as we continue to value:

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“Public Safety via Safe Buildings” and we forge partnerships with allied groups and professions who have similar goals, objectives and commitments to Safe Buildings.

Best regards,

David A. Bassett, P.E., C.B.O.

Roustabout/Historian by default. (old age)