

### North Idaho Code Enforcers

The following historical information concerning the origins and progress of the North Idaho Building Inspectors Professional Organization has been prepared by David Bruce, and is to the best of his recollection an accurate description of the events leading up to 1999. Dave apologizes for any inaccuracies or memory lapses, which may have resulted while compiling the following membership lists and facts.

In the winter of 1980-81 a small group of Building Inspectors from the Coeur d'Alene, Idaho area first got together with the idea of forming a professional inspectors' organization as a forum to discuss common code enforcement problems, to lay the ground work for regional consistencies of code interpretations, to promote code and construction education, and finally to promote professional camaraderie.

Originally, the Inspectors' group was very loosely organized and didn't really have an official name. We were known simply as the Building Inspectors Group. There were no officers, but everyone was a volunteer and expected to do whatever it took to make the organization work. Probably the most important thing accomplished during the first month of existence was to gain the endorsement and support of the Coeur d'Alene City Engineer, Tom Wells, and the Kootenai County Engineer, John Carpita.

Some of the earliest monthly meetings were held at the old Pines Restaurant, where the entire membership could be informally seated in one booth or at one table for coffee and pie. The group also met from time-to-time at the old North Shore Hotel, the Iron Horse Restaurant, and at the Log Cabin Restaurant.

During the first year of actual operation of the Inspectors' Group from January to December of 1981, the original membership came to include the following: (Alphabetical Order)

Jim Austin, State of Idaho, Building Inspector  
 Steve Belzak, City of Coeur d'Alene, Building Inspector  
 Dave Bruce, Kootenai County, Building Inspector  
 Warren Freund, City of Hayden, Building Inspector  
 Joe Johnson, Kootenai County, Building Inspector  
 Fred Markley, State of Idaho, Electrical Inspector  
 Joe Meyers, State of Idaho, Plumbing Inspector  
 Ira (Corky) Millenbruch, Kootenai County, Chief Building Inspector, First President Pro Tem  
 John Miller, City of Post Falls, Building Inspector  
 David Salois, City of Coeur d'Alene, Building Inspector  
 Ron Sampert, Kootenai County Fire District, Fire Inspector, Building Inspector  
 Tom Stuart, City of Coeur d'Alene, Chief Building Inspector  
 Otis Wuest, City of Dalton Gardens, Building inspector

Over the years some interesting events have taken place during our meetings. On one occasion, when meeting and dining at the old North Shore Hotel Restaurant, a fire alarm went off due to a kitchen fire. All the occupants of the dining room quietly exited the facility except for the Fire and Building Inspectors attending the monthly meeting, who remained seated. We were expressly invited to leave by the restaurant staff. Another time while meeting in the lounge at the Sunset Bowling Center, the lounge staff after having served everyone, departed to attend a funeral and locked all the exit doors on their way out. Their actions thereby stranded all the area Fire Inspectors and Building Inspectors for a few minutes until Chief Sexton loudly arranged for our release.

The first two years of existence for the inspectors' group saw some terrific growth in membership, and the development of some lasting relationships between local inspectors and those outside the area. For example, Jack Chadwell regularly traveled from Shoshone County for the Group's activities. Don Carter of Sand Point and Bob Garrison of Bonner County often attended the monthly meetings. Ing Montgomery of the City of Spokane was a regular attendee, and Doug Zimmerman of Missoula Montana occasionally

made the trip. Mike Maland continues to drive from St Maries to our meetings. The preparations and scheduling of educational opportunities for those early meetings was conducted by President Pro Tem Corky Millenbruch well into 1984. Of prime importance to the group at that time was to encourage all local political subdivisions, to see the wisdom of providing training and networking opportunities such as attendance at the annual ICBO conferences. Few political jurisdictions held training and education budgets for inspectors in high regard.

From 1984 through 1986 Dave Bruce performed the function of President Pro Tem, scheduling meetings and guest speakers. During this period the group started entering into various political debates such as the regulating of group health care facilities. Many unregulated nursing homes or shelter homes housing 20-30 residents were springing up in R-3 occupancies, with very little life safety considerations. These discussions and actions helped initiate the inclusion of I-2.1 and R-4 Occupancies in the Uniform Building Codes. Additionally, the inspectors group became very involved with learning about building material and product certifications such as AWP, UL and ICBO listings. Dave also acted as the Inspectors Group liaison with the North Idaho Building Contractors Association (NIBCA ), which continues today through various sub committees.

During this period many more of our colleagues in the Fire Service became active members of the Inspector's Group. Among those were: (Alphabetical Order)

Jim Axtell Assistant Chief, Coeur d'Alene Fire.  
Lynn Borders, Fire Inspector, Post Falls Fire Protection District (later to become Chief)  
Jack Chamberlain, Chief, Worley Fire District  
Don Donart, Kootenai County Fire Fire Protection District (later to become Chief)  
Rick Everhart, Coeur d'Alene Fire Department  
Anson Gable, Assistant Chief, Hayden Lake Fire Protection District  
Warren Gay, Chief, Kootenai County Fire Protection District  
Stan Hammond, Chief, Rathdrum Fire Protection District  
Ed Hoffman, Chief, Spirit Lake Fire District  
James Kerns, Fire Inspector, Fire Code Instructor, City of Spokane  
Bill Rudd, Chief, Rathdrum Fire Protection District  
Frank Sexton, Chief, Coeur d'Alene Fire Department  
Wayne Syth, Chief, Hayden Lake Fire Protection District  
Bob Thornton, Chief, Bayview Fire Department

In 1986 the Inspectors' Group was officially named NICE, an acronym for The North Idaho Code Enforcers. Mike Jacobs came up with the idea and suggested the name NICE. He thought, that often code enforcers are perceived with a negative connotation but by creating a new imaged, "The Nice Guys", perhaps we could become known as a community involved association. So NICE was born.

In 1986 and 1987 Mike Jacobs of the City of Coeur d'Alene and Jack Chadwell of Shoshone County, along with Dave Bruce of Kootenai County worked on several other legislative issues that brought the newly named organization to the notice of the State Attorney General's office as well as the press, as we continued our quest to better understand the Shelter Homes issues. In 1987, Mike Jacobs , agreed to take over the leadership of the inspector's group. Mike was the first with an agenda to organize NICE into an association of professionals. During Mike Jacob's tenure as President Pro Tem, the reorganized "NICE Guys" decided it was time to elect its officers for a set term, rather than burn out volunteers. On March 18, 1987 Mike was elected the first bona fide President of the association. Jim Kerns was elected Vice President and Dee Hancock, Secretary/ Treasurer. One month later (April 13, 1987) NICE's first set of official goals as presented to the membership which were accepted later that year. It was about that time The Bonneville Power Administration started making its initial contacts with Idaho jurisdictions threatening monetary sanctions and sur-charges, unless their unproven energy code was adopted locally. Mike, and NICE took BPA to task to force them to prove their contentions, or change their proposed codes. Under Mike's leadership, NICE built some strong and enduring relationships with the Inland Northwest Chapter of ICBO as well as the National Offices of ICBO. Mike also encouraged attendance and limited memberships by contractors design professionals and other interested parties.

Others who had a profound interest in the work NICE was doing quickly started joining our ranks. Among those are: (Alphabetical Order)

Art Elliot, Shelter Associates  
Bruce Grachal, PE, Ruen and Yeager and Associates  
Robert Kaul, Washington Water Power Company  
James Macklin, Idaho State Fire Marshall  
Gene and Carol Slater, Independent Home Inspectors  
Paul Stewart, President, Stewart Construction  
Dennis Yandt, Independent Inspector

In 1989 NICE hosted the Inland Northwest Chapter of ICBO annual Short Course in Coeur d'Alene. This marked the very first time the Short course was held outside the state of Washington. By all accounts, the 1989 Short Course was a resounding success. Since then, NICE has hosted several other ICBO events. Including other short courses in 1991, 1995 and one scheduled in 1999.

Since its humble beginning, there have been a number of NICE members who have taken leadership roles in the furthering of the organization goals. Some have gone on to share their leadership talents in the Inland Northwest ICBO Chapter.

Following is list of past and current NICE Presidents:

1980-1984 Ira (Corky) Millenbruch, Pro Tem  
1984-1986 David Bruce, Pro Tem  
1987 Mike Jacobs  
1988 Jack Chadwell  
1989 David Daniels  
1990 Don Donart  
1991 Rick Ulveling  
1992 Ed Wagner  
1993 Larry Huber  
1994 Robert Wuest  
1995 Frank Sexton  
1996 Patrick Dalton  
1997 Roberta Rich  
1998 Duane Philebar  
1999 Nik Bentley

Following are the names of our friends and past NICE members who have passed away:

Jim Austin  
Joe Johnston  
Fred Markley  
Corky Millenbruch  
Gene Slater  
Otis Wuest

It has been very interesting reminiscing and going through old minutes of meetings while preparing this commentary. Also of interest is the long list of recording secretaries who have prepared the minutes over the years. NICE owes a great deal of gratitude to all those dutiful participants.

It is my hope NICE continues to be an effective and fun association for many years to come.

Respectfully submitted, David Bruce