

## Reader Feedback

The following excerpts are taken from comments in response to the JLC articles referenced.



# Letters

### **"THE \$680K MISTAKE: BEACH HOUSE BUILT ON WRONG LOT," BY TED CUSHMAN (ONLINE, 10/28/14)**

**Dennis Celsor:** Timely article. This shows the importance of getting a foundation form survey. Regrettably, your article makes it sound like it was all the builder's fault, that he neglected to obtain the proper surveys. The original article that you referenced makes it clear that the builder did all he could to verify he was building on the correct lot. The initial survey, the form survey, and the final survey by another company were all wrong. The builder says he took all the precautions that he normally takes to prevent this situation.

### **"IS OSHA THE NEXT ANGIE'S LIST?" BY CLAYTON DEKORNE (ONLINE 10/2/14)**

**Safetyfirst:** I am there with you. I make residential construction safety inspections for builders. Unfortunately, I see the same safety issues [described in this article]. There is little or no planning for safety done by many residential subcontractors. Some subcontractors who work at heights appear to take pride in taking unnecessary risks with their personal safety. Part of what I do is explain how an OSHA inspector would view their particular safety situation in terms of issuing a citation and a fine. Some listen, most don't.

### **IS A HUMAN LIFE WORTH \$2,363? (TOOLS OF THE TRADE, ONLINE, 10/30/14)**

**Stp479:** This article illustrates perfectly why we have unions and reminds us that those who would suggest that this is adequate compensation are the same people who once sent company thugs to murder union organizers and strikers.

### **"FRAMING A ROOF WITH I-JOISTS," BY TIM UHLER (JUN/13)**

**Myrtron:** I wonder how the I-joists hold up over time with wet weather before the building gets closed in? On the same note, has anyone had any experience dealing with rot repairs down the road in a roof framed with I-joists?

**Tim Uhler, responds:** As you know, we get a lot of rain here in Washington state. We've used I-joists many times in the wet time of year and have never noticed any problems with them swelling or coming apart. However, we have had plywood sheathing swell on the roof.

My thinking on using I-joists as rafters is that they aren't exposed for long before being dried-in. As joists,

they get a lot wetter. I have not heard anything negative either from inspectors or lumberyards. About a year ago I went into the attic of a house we'd built in 2002 with I-joist rafters. We had built the house in the winter and it got very wet, but the I-joists looked great. Hopefully that helps a little.

### **"WHAT'S THE PAYBACK FOR BECOMING A HOME PERFORMANCE CONTRACTOR?" BY MYRON FERGUSON (AUG/12)**

**H20HeatingInfo:** Thank you for sharing. I did not know about the yearly financial sale goal/requirements. I can see that being an issue for contractors in small markets. In my area (Northeast) within my segment (heating), the price point per job is reasonable. Energy prices in my state (Connecticut) are among the highest in the country. We still have many homes without natural gas that are either "all electric" or using "heating oil," or a combination of both for residential heating. Homes in my area without the benefit of low-cost natural gas are paying a lot for electricity and heating oil (\$2,000 to \$5,000 in heating expenses per season). High heating expenses usually result from a poor thermal envelope. I'm taking the BPI envelope course next month to better educate myself on the heat-loss process. With this improved understanding and BPI accreditation, I hope to get a leg up on my competition in the heating industry in the New Haven, Conn., market.

In general, the plumbing and heating industry in New England is different from the industry in other parts of the country. When looking at a \$4,000 gas-fired domestic tankless water heater, for example, sure it looks like a lot of money if you're comparing it to a stand-alone atmospheric gas-fired water heater for \$1,000 replacement "swap-out." But in my area, we run into a lot of indirect water heaters, aqua boosters, and oil-fired water heaters—items that have a replacement price of \$2,000 to \$5,000. In this case, upgrading to a \$4,000 tankless unit might be marginally more, but you're getting a product one-fifth the size with a warranty that lasts twice as long. The upsell to a tankless water heater in my area is infinitely easier than it would be for a plumber trying to sell a tankless water heater to a homeowner in North Carolina. ROI calculations vary greatly from location to location. In New England, high-efficiency water heaters and boilers (usually) make a lot of sense because we have cold winters (long heating seasons) and the second-highest energy prices in the nation.

*Published letters and comments may be edited for length and clarity.*