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EDITOR'S LETTER

Keeping in Touch



Earlier this fall, I was talking with a deck builder about the DeckExpo, the annual trade show and conference that *PDB* helps to sponsor. My friend has attended past shows regularly, but was wondering if he should save a little money and skip the show this year. "Will there be anything there that I haven't seen already?" he asked. At the time, I didn't have a

good answer, but I think I do now.

The DeckExpo was held in Baltimore this year, in conjunction with the Remodeling Show and—for the first time—JLC Live. If there's any doubt in the deck-building industry that 2015 is poised for solid growth, it wasn't in evidence on the show floor. It was busier than it has been in years.

One thing my friend would have noticed had he attended the show was that several decking manufacturers have added railings to their lineups, while several railing companies have added decking, and most of the big companies are now offering matching LED lighting kits, fixtures, and accessories. The term I heard used at several of the booths to explain this trend was "outdoor living," which I interpreted as a move away from marketing a specific product and toward marketing a lifestyle. A deck builder who isn't aware of this trend might miss out on a golden opportunity to grow his business next year.

The aisles were packed with innovative products and tools. At the RainTight booth, for example, I was able to talk with the company's young owners, who had developed an interlocking aluminum underdeck panel. At the Camo booth, I saw a demonstration of the brand-new Edge Pro, a stand-up collated fastening tool that hasn't even been formally introduced yet. You can't duplicate this kind of personal contact on Facebook.

While at the show, I took time to attend NADRA's annual dinner meeting, where they were also celebrating their 10-year anniversary. The event was held at the National Aquarium on the city's beautiful inner harbor. Mostly I was there for the food, drink, and good company, but I was also curious to see the results of NADRA's annual outdoor-living design and construction contest. Fortunately for those who weren't able to attend, some of the amazing work that was showcased that night can be seen at slideshare.net/nadRARocks/2014-nadRA-awards-ceremony-10-year-anniversary-40871636.

It's too late (at least this year) to tell my friend that DeckExpo is a great way to personally connect with others who are also passionate about their craft. As that's also the job of *PDB* the rest of the year, I need to let readers know that our publishing schedule is changing in 2015. Instead of *PDB* appearing every other month starting in January, don't expect to see our first issue until late February. We'll also publish *PDB* in April, May, June, July/August, and September/October. In the meantime, we're not going on vacation. Expect to see more online content as we gear up to deliver more news and information through our website, e-newsletters, and social media.

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