



Doug Lape named the HBA's newest executive officer

With a name and resume that is familiar to long-time Traverse City residents, the Home Builder's Association sees the hiring of Doug Lape as something of a coup. On Feb. 3, Lape is slated to become HBA's newest executive officer.

"We're extremely lucky to find this kind of talent locally," said HBA board president Chuck Drouillard.

To hear Lape tell it, the hiring was providential. Everything he's done professionally for the past three decades has culminated in Lape being precisely the person HBA was looking for in a new leader.

"I'll admit, I had an extremely strong emotional desire that my application would be noticed and that I would be looked at for this position," said Lape, 58.

Lape saw HBA as a place where his passion for affordable housing could be fun-

neled into positive changes.

"There is a critical need in the Grand Traverse area for affordable housing," said Lape. "This area has many service-type jobs in which the employees can't find affordable housing. Because they can't afford to live close to town they end up moving to outlying areas. Not only do they ultimately pay more for housing than they can afford, but they're also paying more in transportation costs."

Lape says HBA is in a position to influence change.

"If our community is going to grow and enjoy healthy growth, we're going to have to find ways to provide housing for our residents," he said.

Known as an innovator, Lape says that there are surely ways to make homes more affordable. One of the things HBA will be looking at is the high cost of building regulations.

"Sure, some regulations — those intended to make houses safe — are fine," Lape said. "But 20 to 35 percent of the cost of building a new home can be tracked back to regulations that have been implemented by some part of the government. HBA is in the position to have influence locally and nationally, to work on that issue."

There is nothing new about Lape's civic-mindedness. While in education, Lape was part of bringing higher education opportunities to Traverse City. He served for nine years on hospital boards, has volunteered with the Red Cross and United Way. Lape now serves as president of Boys and Girls Club.

It was a winding road that lead Lape to HBA, but one that was paved with experiences he could use in his new profession.

Not only does he hold a

doctorate in Educational Leadership/Technology, but Lape is also co-founder of a successful Internet firm.

Drouillard, for one, is excited about the breadth of Lape's experience.

"As the former founder in an Internet company he brings a set of skills that will be extremely valuable for us," Drouillard said.

"Fortunately, he also brings a very interesting set of other skills such as a knowledge of the industry and an excellent financial background. In the kind of econo-

my we're in today, anyone who's in a business or a trade organization has to keep sharp eyes on finances."

The Home Builder's Association's 515 members were looking for someone who could lead them into the new millennium and all the challenges they will be facing.

Chuck Drouillard believes they've found the right man in Doug Lape.

"I guess if there was a perfect fit, he comes very close," Drouillard said.

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