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**West Virginia housing association formed; executive director announced**

CHARLESTON – Industry leaders who yearly provide thousands of new housing units in West Virginia announced the formation of a new trade association by merging two groups. They also named an executive director.

The West Virginia Housing Institute Inc., 1118 Kanawha Blvd E, Charleston, will be the voice for the factory-built home industry in the Mountain State, said co-presidents Steve Brown of Hurricane and Kevin Wilfong of Fairmont.

The Housing Institute merges the memberships of the West Virginia Manufactured Housing Association and the Mountain State Manufactured Housing Association.

“The time was ripe for these two groups, with identical backgrounds, to band together in one trade association,” said Wilfong, head of Middletown Home Sales of Fairmont.

“Because of the importance of our industry in providing affordable, quality-built housing to first-time home buyers, those looking toward retirement, and our expanding middle market, we saw this as a good fit,” said Brown, head of The Home Shows of Hurricane.

The Housing Institute is formed of factory-built home retailers, manufacturers, suppliers, contractors, housing community owners, installers, financial institutions, service companies, law firms and others interested in the factory-built home industry in West Virginia.



The co-presidents announced that A.V. Gallagher of Charleston, a longtime newsman at the state Capitol, would be the new executive director of the Housing Institute. Gallagher was vice president for Cheri Heflin and Co. and lobbied for the West Virginia Nurses Association before assuming his new duties.

“I am honored to be joining the leading edge industry in providing safe and affordable housing for West Virginia residents,” Gallagher said.

The Housing Institute includes more than 300 members in and outside the state.

Federal 2000 Census figures showed 146,000 people in West Virginia live in factory-built housing, a 25 percent increase over the 1990 figure. On the average, factory-built homes cost a fourth of what a site-built home costs.

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