

# ICC Government Relations

January 2026

## Monthly Update

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### International Code Council Board of Directors delivers first Cayman Islands custom building code

The International Code Council (ICC) and its Board of Directors presented representatives from the Cayman Islands Ministry of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure with the islands' first custom building code. While the Ministry has adopted previous versions of the International Codes® (I-Codes®), the Cayman Islands Building Code is the first to be published under its name, signifying the islands' ownership of the code. The new code is based on the 2021 International Building Code® and is designed to align with modern global standards while accommodating local needs. It is anticipated that the code will be officially adopted in 2026. The Cayman Islands will also be adopting the 2021 versions of the International Residential Code®, International Mechanical Code®, International Plumbing Code® and the International Fuel Gas Code®. The first printed copy of the Cayman Islands Building Code was presented to Hon. Johany S. "Jay" Ebanks, Minister of Planning, Lands, Agriculture, Housing & Infrastructure, by ICC Board of Directors President, Mike Boso.

[Read more here →](#)

### UPDATE YOUR CALENDAR

**2026 Public Comment Hearings – Group A & B**  
**April 19–28, 2026**

The Connecticut Convention Center, Hartford CT

**2026 ICC Annual Conference and Expo**  
**October 18 – 21, 2026**

Gaylord Opryland Resort Nashville, TN

### Norristown, Penn., receives HUD Secretary's Award

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary's Award for Excellence in Healthy Homes highlights the work of agencies, organizations and Tribes that are advancing healthier living environments while ensuring housing remains affordable. Administered through HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH), the award shines a spotlight on innovative strategies, effective policies and community-driven initiatives that reduce health risks, address environmental hazards and improve housing quality nationwide. The award honors ongoing achievement and sustainability while fostering innovative approaches to reduce lead and other health hazards in homes. The Municipality of Norristown in Pennsylvania is the recipient of the 2024 HUD Secretary's Award for Excellence in Healthy Homes.

[Read more here →](#)

## Belcik elected to American National Standards Institute Board of Directors

John Belcik, CEO, ICC, has been elected to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Board of Directors as a Director-at-Large beginning January 2026. Belcik will serve in a strategic leadership role, contributing to ANSI's governance over a three-year term, helping shape standards and conformity assessments to develop markets, drive innovation and gain international competitive advantages. The ANSI Board is comprised of a distinguished group of organizations, including the National Science Foundation, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Clinical and Laboratory Standards Institute (CLSI), the National Institute of Standards and Technology, U.S. Food and Drug Administration and more.

[Read more here →](#)

## National roundtable addresses housing affordability issue to seek solutions

The International Code Council (ICC), Pew Charitable Trusts, the National League of Cities and the American Planning Association recently hosted roundtable discussions on permitting and zoning best practices that support housing affordability. The discussions featured case study presentations by San Antonio, TX, and Fairfax County, VA, on permitting practices, and Raleigh, NC, and Seattle, WA, on zoning practices, as well as engagement by several members of ICC's zoning code development and education committees. National participants included representatives from National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), Habitat for Humanity, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Enterprise Institute, Urban Institute, National Zoning Atlas, Mercatus Institute, AARP, the Niskanen Center and the National Housing Trust. For a high-level overview of solutions posed during the discussions, which links to results of an ICC member survey on these topics conducted in Q3 of 2025, click [here](#).

## Code Council's Chief Knowledge Officer O'Neil Appointed Chair of SPAB

Joan O'Neil, Chief Knowledge Officer and Executive Vice President, Content and Services of the International Code Council (ICC), has been appointed Chair of Standards Publishing Advisory Board (SPAB) 2026 Annual Conference taking place Feb. 23-25 in Scottsdale Arizona. As a global organization comprised of Standards Development Organizations (SDOs), SPAB has been discussing matters impacting standards development, publishing and distribution for 50 years. The 2026 theme is *From Standards to Systems: Building the Interoperable Future*. As Chair, O'Neil will lead strategic discussions, guide the annual conference agenda and foster partnerships that advance interoperability and digital transformation across the industry. Her expertise will influence global standards and digital transformation.

[Read more here →](#)

## More than 50 earned Master Code Professional designations during 2025

The [International Code Council's \(ICC\) Master Code Professional](#) (MCP) designation is the highest level of ICC certification and is the "gold standard" for demonstrating proficiency in the code profession. A Master Code Professional's achievements contribute both to the advancement of code enforcement and the well-being of their communities. While thousands have been certified by ICC, only a select number have attained this high level of achievement. As of Dec. 3, 55 code professionals achieved the prestigious MCP designation in 2025. The MCPs were also recognized during the Annual Business Meeting at [ICC's 2025 Annual Conference](#) in Cleveland, Ohio. Obtaining this level of certification requires a commitment to the profession, diverse knowledge of codes and a high level of self-initiative. Typical MCPs hold 17 or more ICC certifications.

[Read more here →](#)

## New standard establishes test method for wall panel wythe connectors

The Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute (PCI), in collaboration with the International Code Council (ICC), is developing a new standard, ICC/BSR/PCI 155-202x: Specification for Test Method of Precast Concrete Insulated Wall Panel Wythe Connectors, to establish test method protocol for the determination of wythe connector properties. Currently, designers rely on design properties, or entire insulated wall panel system design from wythe connector suppliers that may not be verified through a consistent test method across different connector types. This standard provides test method protocol requirements for fabricating specimens and testing wythe connectors, typically used in precast concrete insulated wall panels, to develop wythe connector properties. This will aid designers in creating backbone curves to be used in insulated wall panel design.

[Read more here →](#)

## Code Council joined key stakeholders and government officials at COP 30

The International Code Council (ICC) once again joined global stakeholders participating in the recent [UN Global Climate Change Conference \(COP30\)](#) in Belém, Brazil, to elevate the importance of having strong, right-sized building codes supported by a robust ecosystem for compliance to ensure both resilience and sustainability in the built environment. While national climate policy makers from around the world were negotiating carbon reduction and adaptation goals, the ICC team joined a large gathering of NGOs, industry, development banks and government leaders to discuss solutions and take action to support the overall aims of creating a more sustainable and resilient

world. The buildings and construction sector has had an increasingly important voice, and was comprised of stakeholders represented by the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GlobalABC), the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), UN Habitat and the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). The idea of a “neighborhood” of like-minded organizations addressing the “Cities, Infrastructure and Water” aspect of the COP30 agenda was a response to the COP30 Presidency’s call for a Mutirão Global, or a space for collective action involving multilevel governance and private sector solutions.

[Read more here →](#)



## January 15 is the deadline for presentation proposals for 2026 Academy

The Code Council is seeking presenters for the [2026 Chapter Leadership Academy](#) (CLA) to be held April 17–18, 2026 in Hartford, Connecticut. This is your opportunity to motivate fellow chapter leaders and contribute to the mission of the CLA: *Empowering Chapter leaders through education, networking, and information sharing*. Help build a successful event by sharing your expertise on the 2026 theme: **Effective Chapter Administration and Management**. Proposals should include:

- Session overview
- Session length (30, 60, 90, or 180 minutes)
- Session type:
  - Presentation/Lecture
  - Breakout
  - Team building

[The deadline for submissions is January 15](#). Selected presenters will be notified by February 1 and final presentations are due March 15. For more information on the CLA or to view the 2025 presentations, click [here](#).

## ICC Plumbing, Mechanical, and Fuel Gas Updates

### Geothermal HVAC Systems: Harnessing the earth for sustainable comfort

As the demand for energy-efficient and environmentally responsible building systems grows, geothermal heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are emerging as a compelling solution. Geothermal HVAC systems, also known as ground-source heat pumps (GSHPs), operate by transferring heat between a building and the earth through a network of underground pipes called ground loops. These loops circulate a water-based solution that absorbs or releases heat depending on the season. These systems leverage the earth's stable underground temperature to provide heating and cooling with remarkable efficiency and longevity. For code officials, inspectors and contractors, understanding the technology, its benefits and the regulatory framework is essential to supporting safe and effective installations.

[Read more here →](#)

### Inspections help avoid disasters: Take the fuel gas protocols survey

Fuel gas inspections are the frontline defense against potential disasters. Regular inspections can identify leaks, faulty installations and aging systems that could lead to severe consequences if left unchecked. By identifying issues early, corrective actions can be taken to ensure the safety of homes, businesses and communities. This proactive approach not only enhances safety but also promotes energy efficiency, helping to lower utility costs. The frequency of gas explosions in the United States starkly illustrates the dire consequences of neglecting these inspections. With approximately 300 gas explosions occurring each year, resulting in loss of life and widespread property damage, the need for vigilant oversight is more pressing than ever. One of the most haunting examples is the 1937 New London School gas explosion in Texas, a tragedy that claimed nearly 300 innocent lives and forever reshaped safety

standards in gas usage. In response to this catastrophe, mercaptan was added to fuel gas systems to create a detectable odor, allowing individuals to identify gas leaks before they lead to disaster. [Click here to share your insights on the types of inspection protocols](#) jurisdictions have in place for fuel gas permitting and inspections to help identify training needs and ICC support for fuel gas installations and inspections.

[Read more here →](#)

## New plumbing apprenticeship school delivers well-rounded curriculum

The International Code Council (ICC) proudly recognizes the recent groundbreaking of the new Mechanical Skills, Inc. Plumbing Apprenticeship School in Beech Grove, Indiana. This development marks a major investment in the future of plumbing education and skilled trades workforce development across the region. Founded in 1973, Mechanical Skills, Inc. is a non-profit organization committed to training plumbing professionals through a rigorous apprenticeship program approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship Training and the Indiana Plumbing Commission. The program emphasizes technical proficiency, code compliance and a deep understanding of the laws and regulations governing the plumbing trade – values that closely align with ICC's mission to support safe, resilient and sustainable communities. The new facility will expand Mechanical Skills' capacity to deliver a well-rounded curriculum focused on independent judgment, hands-on experience and code-aligned instruction.

[Read more here →](#)

## ICC Family of Solutions Updates

### AI and Local Governments: Building a smarter future together

[Artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#) isn't just a futuristic idea anymore. It's a practical tool that's already helping local governments across the country work smarter, faster and more efficiently. From answering routine questions to improving plan review and permitting, AI is quietly transforming everyday operations in city halls and municipal offices. For local governments, AI offers a powerful opportunity to enhance public service, not replace it. With staff often stretched thin and community expectations rising, AI can help automate time-consuming tasks, improve data accuracy and free up valuable time for the human work that matters most: serving residents. In simple terms, AI refers to technology that can learn from data, recognize patterns and assist with decision-making. [For municipalities, that can mean:](#)

- Automated assistants that guide residents to the right forms or permit requirements
- Systems that analyze infrastructure data to predict maintenance needs
- Tools that summarize long reports or ordinances in seconds
- Smart platforms that check plans for potential compliance issues

The goal isn't to hand over control — it's to empower municipal professionals with better information, faster insights and consistent results.

[Read more here →](#)

### ICC-ES strengthens service offerings with its new test lab expansion

ICC Evaluation Service ([ICC-ES](#)) will be expanding building and plumbing testing services into a new, larger facility in Elkhart, Indiana, in order to better serve their customers and employees. The new facility will offer:

- Larger, more efficient laboratory spaces
- Improved comfort and amenities for staff
- Work areas designed to support safety, productivity, and collaboration
- A unified location that strengthens teamwork and streamlines operations
- A comprehensive scope of Building Products, Automotive, and Plumbing testing

"This move is an investment in our future growth, our ability to serve our clients, and—most importantly—our staff's daily work environment," said Tracie Stanush, Vice President of Testing Services at ICC-ES. The new facility will be a 65,000 square foot space fully equipped to perform large scale structural testing, bench top fire testing, fenestration, and more. The automotive testing department will also be able to offer a full-scale drive-in thermal chamber for more in-depth testing. The current test labs in Nappanee and Goshen have already begun the process of relocation. Phase 1 of the move is expected to be completed in February 2026, with the new facility expected to be fully operational by July 2026. ICC-ES will continue to be a full-service provider of testing, inspection, and building product certification. To learn more, visit [www.icc-es.org](http://www.icc-es.org).