



Finding the Silver Lining

It is said that attitude is everything.

One can easily get discouraged with the negative news about housing. This industry has been laboring under the effects of a miserable winter and a not much better Spring. A customary fast construction start seems elusive this season. Commodity price inflation, combined with higher fuel prices, are creating challenging business conditions. The forecast for housing in the near and long term is anything but clear.

If you look at the big picture, conditions in the Midwest, while not robust, are certainly in a better place when compared to other parts of the country. Yes, housing activity is down. Of course, there is uncertainty about the economy. Yet despite this, conditions are far worse elsewhere than in our own backyard.

Consider these events:

A series of killer tornadoes on Sunday, May 25, causes extensive damage and loss of life to citizens in northeast Iowa. An EF 5 force tornado destroys almost half the homes in Parkersburg, Iowa, alone.

On May 2, a typhoon came on shore in Myanmar killing in excess of 100,000 people and causing an untold amount of damage. Due to the military junta in power, we may never know the extent of human tragedy in that country.

Less than two weeks later, on May 12 an 8.0-magnitude earthquake centered in the Sichuan province of China killed tens of thousands and affected tens of millions more. The extent of the damage in terms of its affect on human lives is difficult to comprehend.

So to put things into perspective, while we are experiencing difficulty in our industry, let's not begin to feel too sorry for ourselves. There are many who remember what times were like in the 1980's. For those who were not--ask someone who was!

Construction can be a cyclical industry. The current downside will not last forever. Let's be grateful for what we do have and lend a hand to those who really need help.

