

# Construction industry advocate successfully lobbies for change, affordable housing

By CARLOS RICO, *The Daily Transcript*  
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The screenshot shows the SANDIEGOSOURCE website interface. At the top, there are logos for SANDIEGOSOURCE and AudioAssociates. Below the navigation bar, a sidebar on the left lists various categories like News, Construction, Defense, etc. The main content area features a 'Construction' header with a grid of eight portraits of industry professionals. An orange arrow points from the 'Construction' header to the 'Murrieta' and 'San Diego County Credit Union' logos, which are part of a 'Sponsors' section.

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The Building Industry Association of San Diego is an advocate for better construction practices by lobbying public and government agencies to pass legislation that helps developers, builders and homeowners.

Borre Winckel is the organization’s president and CEO, leading the nonprofit against government regulations and policies that make it harder and more expensive to build in the county.

In 2011, the BIA continued its crusade by helping pass affordable housing master plans in the city and county of San Diego.

“We are proud we had a large hand in getting these plans to the finish line because it gives (San Diego) new development plans that will help the people,” Winckel said.

The BIA, which has a staff of 10 people, is working with the city of Oceanside to redefine its affordable housing rules and regulations, in particular legislation that lowers the cost of building permits and the length of the environmental review process.

“We are working on new price policies to build more new units, because right now affordable housing is driven by rules that raise prices,” Winckel explained.

“Oceanside is a critical player because the city has a lot of requirements to build affordable housing units.”

Winckel added that it’s been a challenge this year and more difficult for the BIA to get legislation passed that favors its cause due to “union domination.”

“The unions want a (project labor agreement) in hotel construction where it would be only union workers,” Winckel said. “Construction would only have been driven by 25 percent of San Diego contractors.”

The BIA is also working to cut down water costs for developers, contractors and homeowners. Winckel said the water agencies in the county are forcing 5/8-inch sprinklers to be replaced by one-inch sprinklers.

“We are very concerned because the city will get \$10,000 in fines if developers and builders don’t comply with this new measure,” Winckel said. “We are battling with water agencies and this policy that was made by elected officials.”

Winckel added that its main goal is to help construction reduce costs and cut down on red tape from government agencies, because “150 people get jobs from a new development.” The BIA feels it’s their responsibility to help facilitate these jobs.

The BIA is also influential in other ways besides lobbying. The organization has helped raise and donate \$120,000 to Noah Homes, Casa de Amparo, Pro Kids and high school and college students in the county seeking a career in the construction industry.