

EMPLOYMENT STRUGGLES IN HORRY COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA



New home sales increased by almost 10 percent in the month of January, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Compared to sales from this time last year, sales in the South were up by 22 percent, according to WBTW.

The President of the Horry Georgetown County Home builders Association said that many builders in the county are struggling to find enough skilled laborers to work construction jobs as the housing market continues to improve.

Scott Galvin owns a siding company in Myrtle Beach. He said that he has witnessed a major change in the housing industry over the past 10 years or so.

Thousands of skilled laborers had to find work outside of the housing industry when the bubble burst in the middle of the 2000s. Galvin noted that at one point, it was just himself and his former boss working jobs.

"I try to keep the crews that I have now busy. If I get enough work I do have [the] potential of other crews that I can bring in but they would be required to have insurance and that's what's hard on them boys because they can't afford it because they're not working steady," Galvin explained.

Galvin said that many workers could not stay in the industry due to their inability to afford it.

"They just all changed to different trades. A lot of them just didn't survive the slow period," Galvin said. "When they have come back, they're so down-scaled."

Alex Sunday spoke with WBTW. Sunday is a skilled laborer with more than 15 years experience with insulation and siding. He was working multiple jobs until recently to keep the money coming into his bank account. He was then hired full-time by a former co-worker some five years prior to being laid off.

"I'm finally making a living again, you know? It makes a man feel proud to be able to bring home a paycheck," Sunday said