

Southern Arizona Home Builders Association

NAHBNews



May 2026

Housing Starts Rise Despite Affordability Challenges

Housing production bounced back in March as builders ramped up production despite ongoing headwinds.

Overall housing starts increased 10.8% in March to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.5 million units, according to a report from HUD and the U.S. Census Bureau.

The March reading of 1.5 million starts is the number of housing units builders would begin if development kept this pace for the next 12 months. Within this overall number, single-family starts increased 9.7% to a 1.03 million seasonally adjusted annual rate and are up 8.9% compared to March 2025. The multifamily sector, which includes apartment buildings and condos, increased 13.3% to an annualized 470,000 pace and are up 15.5% compared to March 2025.

On a regional, year-to-date basis, combined single-family and multifamily starts were 36%



higher in the Northeast, 7.8% higher in the Midwest, 3% higher in the South and 15.5% lower in the West.

Overall permits decreased 10.8% to a 1.37 million unit annualized rate in March. Single-family permits decreased 3.8% to an

895,000-unit rate and are down 7.9% compared to March 2025. Multifamily permits decreased 21.5% to an annualized 477,000 pace and are down 6.3% compared to March 2025.

Looking at regional permit data on a year-to-date basis, permits were 15.4% higher in the Northeast, 1.1% higher in the Midwest, 9.1% lower in the South and 6% higher in the West.

The number of single-family homes under construction is at 587,000 units while the number of apartments under construction is at 677,000 units.

NAHB Launches Industry Pulse Check

As the residential construction industry changes, NAHB must evolve to meet the needs of industry professionals. [Blueprint to 100](#) is our initiative to build an association that better meets industry needs as NAHB approaches the 100th anniversary of our founding. An Industry Pulse Check is the first step in this process.

The Industry Pulse Check is NAHB's largest listening initiative to capture what's working, what's missing and what matters most in the home building industry. Please [provide your feedback here](#).

Canadian Lumber Duties Expected to Drop

The U.S. Department of Commerce has signaled that it plans to lower [antidumping and countervailing tariffs](#) later this year on imports of Canadian softwood lumber products from the current rate of about 35.16% to 24.83% following its annual review of existing tariffs.

Commerce indicated that it would set antidumping duties at 10.66% vs. the current rate of 20.56% and countervailing duties at 14.17% (currently 14.63%), bringing the combined rate down from 35.16% to 24.83%.

DOL Proposes New Joint Employer Rule

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has released a [new proposed rule](#) that would establish a nationwide standard for determining joint liability for employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act.

There has been no DOL regulation on a nationwide joint employer standard since the one issued during the first Trump administration in 2020 that was later withdrawn by the Biden administration in 2021. The new rule change would bring much-needed nuance to the test to determine joint employer status.

NHE Grants Boost

Home Building Education

Since 2009, the National Housing Endowment has invested more than \$6.2 million in grants to 60 colleges and universities through its HELP Program. The program seeks to increase the number of qualified graduates entering the home building industry. This year, [a record nine recipients](#) were awarded funds, including: Cal Poly University - San Luis Obispo; California State University at Fresno; Florida A&M University; Georgia Southern University; Roger Williams University; University of Hawaii at Manoa; University of Southern Mississippi; Wayne State University; and Wentworth Institute of Technology.

U.S. Customs Announces Tariff Refund Process

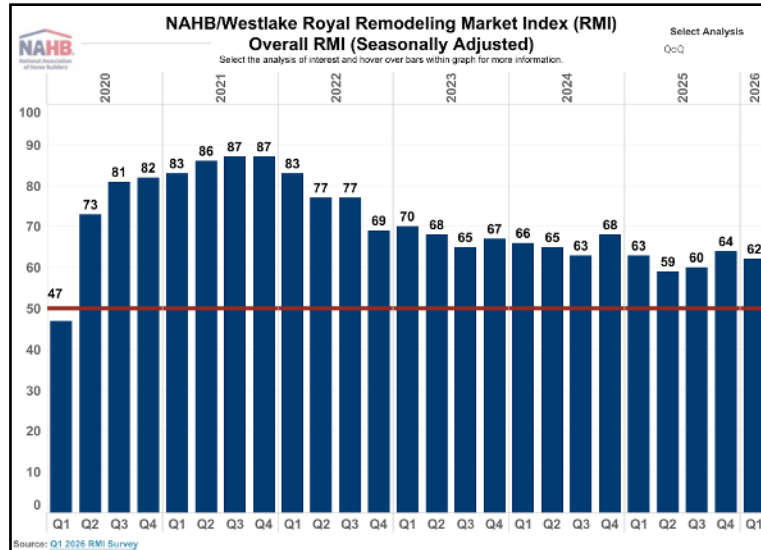
The U.S. Customs and Border Protection has launched a new landing page for "International Emergency Economic Powers (IEEPA) Duty Refunds," rolling out a [process for recouping IEEPA tariffs](#). It should be noted that only importers of record and authorized customs brokers can apply for tariff refunds, and many questions regarding refunds remain unanswered.

Qualified applicants can apply for an ACE portal importer account and enroll in [ACH refunds here](#).

Remodeling Market Sentiment Dips but Remains Positive

The NAHB/Westlake Royal Remodeling Market Index (RMI) in the first quarter of 2026 posted a reading of 62, down two points compared to the previous quarter. Despite the decline, the overall reading has been solidly in positive territory since Q1 2020.

Remodeler sentiment remained generally positive in the first quarter, even as many remodelers are still working to manage



their customers' cost expectations. Only a relatively small share report homeowners putting projects on hold due to economic and political uncertainty. Remodelers reported 21% of their projects were

associated with home improvements made shortly after a purchase, while only 4% were for homeowners projected to ready a home for sale.

More Interest in Skilled Trades

A new study conducted by NAHB finds that more young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 are interested in the construction trades, but more work needs to be done to educate the public that there are increasing opportunities for rewarding, lucrative careers in the skilled trades.

[The new research](#) is similar to a study conducted in 2016. The NAHB survey found that the share of young adults interested in a career in the construction trades doubled from 3% a decade ago to 6% today. The two most important benefits young adults see in a career in the trades are good pay (73%) and the ability to obtain useful skills (65%).

White House Cites NAHB Studies

The White House in April released its Economic Report of the President (ERP) that contains a section on housing and homeownership that [cites NAHB regulatory studies](#).

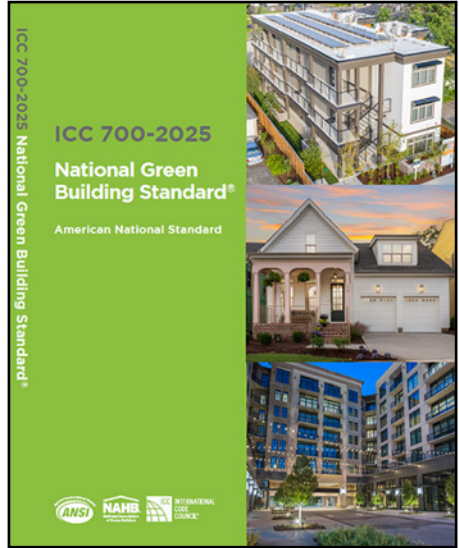
Specifically, the ERP highlighted an initiative proposed during the Biden administration that called on HUD and the USDA to adopt the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and ASHRAE 90.1-2019 as the minimum energy-efficiency standards for certain single-family and multifamily housing programs. The ERP also highlighted NAHB research on the cost of adopting the 2021 IECC.

The report includes other NAHB-supported housing policy recommendations.

NAHB Releases 2025 National Green Building Standard

NAHB and the International Code Council (ICC) recently announce the release of the ICC 700-2025 National Green Building Standard® (NGBS). This is the fifth edition of the leading residential green building standard.

The 2025 NGBS, developed through an independent consensus committee and approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), reflects leading thinking in green design, construction and building performance. It applies to single-family homes, remodeled homes, multifamily buildings, mixed-use developments and land development projects.



The 2025 edition includes several major updates:

A new property certification path for existing multifamily and mixed-use communities with multiple buildings.

Expanded resilience practices to help homes better withstand natural disasters and support residents sheltering in place.

New practices to encourage low-carbon design to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Alternative energy efficiency compliance options.

A revised existing building chapter with more flexible compliance options.



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