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Ohioans had input in new circuit code

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I want to respond to the March 30 *Dispatch* article "Groups at odds over new circuit code" and clarify an apparent misstatement and factual inaccuracy attributed to Vince Squillace, executive vice president of the Ohio Home Builders Association. OHBA openly opposes the expanded use of arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) and distributed inaccurate cost estimates to support its claim that the increased costs outweighed the enhanced safety provided by this advanced technology circuit breaker for homeowners.

According to the article, Squillace and the OHBA contend that the code, which required the expanded use of AFCIs, was adopted by the Ohio Board of Building Standards without public input. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The expanded use of AFCI technology in residential construction, along with hundreds of electrical safety requirements, are called for in the 2008 edition of the National Electrical Code and were carefully reviewed and publicly discussed according to Ohio's rigorous approval process. This complicated legal process includes ample public scrutiny, publication of the proposed code updates for public review and a public hearing affording opportunity at each step for public input.

The result of this extremely thorough public approval process was the complete adoption of the 2008 edition of the National Electrical Code by the Board of Building Standards.

Gov. Ted Strickland signed an emergency executive order a couple weeks ago to rescind the 2008 code and related energy codes for one-, two- and three-family construction in Ohio. He did so in order to have OHBA member residential contractors and code-enforcement officials reach an agreement or compromise implementing electrical safety and energy conservation requirements in the newest editions of those respective codes. Ohioans deserve and expect the safest homes possible.

Let's hope for the best outcome for all concerned, especially Ohio's homeowners.

ROBERT SALLAZ

Past president Ohio Chapter International Association of Electrical Inspectors Munroe Falls

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