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President's message: A look back as we plan ahead

November 04, 2009 - Owners Developers & Managers

Year end is often a time of reflection on the past and more importantly can be a time to optimistically look to the future. This is a time to look back at important events, conquered challenges and unfulfilled expectations, and to look to the future with ambitious resolutions, new perspectives and limitless opportunities.

The Community Associations Institute, New England Chapter (CAI-NE) has marked several important events over the past year including a record number of programs and events with sold out venues and an unprecedented turn out of condominium board members, managers, industry professionals and business partners from around New England. The Maine Legislative Action Committee (MELAC) in its first year of organization was successful in amending important legislation and caught the attention of legislators with their filing of a "superlien" law for condominiums in that state. Following on the heels of Mass., R.I. and Me., Vermont was successful in establishing a CAI Legislative Action Committee in that state and members will tackle legislative initiatives in the coming session.

Challenges abound in the industry with new Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac and FHA guidelines affecting condominiums around N.E. as well as a number of new state laws including a Mass. data security act, Vermont "clothesline" law and Maine law that provides for the escrowing of condo assessments. CAI members and legislative action committees have worked tirelessly to bring industry concerns to the attention of legislators and have developed guidelines, forms and best practices to help associations understand and comply with these new laws and regulations.

With an uncertain economy and associations around New England facing unprecedented financial circumstances, the chapters focus has never waivered from providing valuable resources and information to CAI members and Condo Media magazine readers in a timely manner and as cost effectively as possible. While this focus resulted in more local educational programs and networking events, webinars and the introduction of a digital edition of the chapter's monthly publication Condo Media magazine, limited resources and volunteer time provided fewer opportunities than had been anticipated to investigate and expand chapter services to include new technologies like twitter and facebook or develop and deliver new programming for related groups such as real estate sales people and business partners.

CAI-NE looks to the future and with the current review of its 5 year strategic plan will address unfinished business, investigate new opportunities and establish a direction to continue to provide the benefits and services that have established the chapter and Condo Media magazine as one of the most distinguished and recognized CAI chapters and industry publications in the country.

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