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## **2010 is the year to join the Appraisal Institute: The best time to plant a tree is years ago!**

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2010 sounds futuristic. Let's face it, if you can remember reading George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four when that date was far ahead, you have been here a while. A surprising fact is that if you are in your mid-50's you are about the average age of an MAI. On one hand that is probably good as you will likely have been a real estate appraiser and consultant for more than 20 years, and your judgment includes the benefit of experiencing a few complete market cycles. Conversely, what it says about the appraisal profession may not be as healthy.

The MAI designation of the Appraisal Institute denotes competence in the valuation of commercial, industrial, residential, and other types of properties, as well as the ability to advise clients on real estate decisions. The designation can be earned in a few years; however, it requires a commitment that often takes longer to achieve as life has a way of interfering with elective education. Along the way or as the principal objective, the SRA designation, which denotes competence in residential property valuation, can also be earned. The requirements for each designation are available under the Education heading on the Massachusetts Chapter website for the Appraisal Institute at [www.ma-appraisalinstitute.org/](http://www.ma-appraisalinstitute.org/).

Some of you may ask, if it takes so long and requires such effort, then why do it? My answer is simple; for the benefit gained through the required education and accompanying interaction with others at the top of the field, and self-interest. You should interpret the second part of this answer as earning capacity. I have often wondered why people become accountants and do not earn their CPA designations, and I feel the same way about commercial property appraisers. My reasoning can be summarized in the results of a quick survey I made of appraisal firms and full-service real estate companies in and around Boston. I found that of the major commercial property firms, nearly all have an MAI as their appraisal entity president. This fact alone should tell you more about the value of the designation than anyone's marketing. If you still have doubts, call a couple of MAIs or SRAs. You will likely find them busy, yet still willing to give you a moment of valuable advice.

The Mass. chapter of the Appraisal Institute will hold its Economic Outlook and Real Estate Trends for 2010 meeting at the Federal Reserve building on January 26th. The speakers at this event are among the most knowledgeable in the field of brokerage and development, and for appraisers, brokers, lenders and affiliated real estate professionals this is the best couple of hours you can spend not skiing in January.

For those considering appraisal as a profession, and for those unsure, yet desirous of a good real estate education, the courses of the Appraisal Institute are a wise investment. And yes, the Massachusetts Chapter wants good candidates; its members recognize the skills and energy that new members will bring. New candidates will find a support system that will aid them, and in this process, maintain the health of the profession.

They say the best time to plant a tree is years ago because now you would be in the shade. If you are in the appraisal profession or have just chosen to enter, time will pass and you will age. Plan for the shade.

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