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## **The Real Estate Exchange sets a blue ribbon standard as an interdisciplinary networking organization**

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The Real Estate Exchange was founded by a group of women experienced in commercial real estate, looking for a way to cultivate business contacts with other women. Today The Real Estate Exchange, now in its 21st year, sets a blue ribbon standard as an interdisciplinary networking organization.

The Real Estate Exchange is the only commercial real estate organization in Connecticut where a cross section of professionals, including finance, design, law, construction, sales, appraisal, property management and development can network directly with other industry professionals. The Exchange provides a networking and social forum for commercial real estate professionals of every related field and discipline. Our membership consists of almost 100 active participants. With events ranging from large public forums to intimate dinner parties, there is ample opportunity to develop relationships, to become more educated on real estate topics, to find friendship and support, and to discover employment opportunities.

Our constant goal is to make the Exchange membership meaningful and productive for new and existing members. The benefits of the Exchange include multiple networking opportunities for those seeking business development, and professional development for those seeking expertise or training.

We are known for very high quality public forums, panel-discussion programs which deal with important issues and trends. Speakers are knowledgeable, well respected and entertaining. Events are designed to inform and to stimulate discussion. The program calendar includes three public forums per year including the Developer's Showcase/Connecticut Real Estate Awards held every March, plus the State of the State event each September.

The Exchange operates through a board of directors and with active committees. As an example, The Blue Ribbon Committee solicits nominations for and selects the winners of the Annual Connecticut Real Estate Awards which are presented by The Real Estate Exchange at the Annual Developers Showcase. Participants come from all parts of the state. And registration to attend is open to all. The Showcase is coordinated by the Programs Committee, and both events occur together in March. Exhibitors at the Showcase include professionals from many sides of the commercial real estate spectrum. And the evening ends with awards from a pool of nominations to developments completed by the end of the prior year, that, in the sole opinion of the committee and according to criteria established by them, have had the greatest positive impact on the state of Connecticut, the region or the city in which it is located, while overcoming significant obstacles.

Most of the members of the Exchange are seasoned professionals but we encourage participation by associate members. The Professional Development Committee designs and hosts members-only educational presentations to promote the professional growth of our members regardless of their

years of experience through lectures, seminars and workshops led by peers and by industry experts. This allows commercial real estate professionals to network and learn aspects of the industry that fall outside of their formal training. Being involved with The Real Estate Exchange allows us to share our expertise while discovering the specialties offered by our colleagues. We have given presentations on negotiating leases, understanding surveys and building inspection reports, as well as taken tours of new developments like The Lofts at Main and Temple in Hartford and The Campus at Greenhill in Wallingford. But the Exchange wouldn't work unless we balanced professional development with fun.

Membership in The Real Estate Exchange also provides the opportunity to attend members-only social functions, informal gatherings of real estate professionals which encourage good friendships. Our traditional menu of members-only events includes a spring social, a summer social and annual meeting at the Essex Yacht Club, a fall dinner, and a holiday party during December. Last year we held an exceptional 20th year anniversary party at the newly opened Gershon Fox Room, 960 Main St. in Hartford.

The Real Estate Exchange is a Connecticut organization with a national reach. Membership in The Real Estate Exchange includes membership in the national CREW Network, an 8,000 member organization dedicated to advancing the success of women in commercial real estate - and inclusive of men. A great way to get to know the Exchange members is to attend a CREW Convention; this year to be held in Houston. At the convention, you can expect to meet hundreds of members from over 60 CREW chapters across the USA and Canada.

One of the many opportunities to learn more about the Exchange is to attend this year's Blue Ribbon Connecticut Real Estate Awards and Developer's Showcase March 26th at 5 p.m. at the Connecticut Convention Center.

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