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MA/RI Chapter of Appraisal Institute president's message - by Bud Clarke

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The Massachusetts and Rhode Island Chapter of the Appraisal Institute held its annual meeting on December 14 at the Four Points Sheraton, in Norwood, Mass. Outgoing president Karen Friel, MAI, presented me with a ceremonial gavel and wishes for a successful year serving as president of the MA/RI Chapter of the Appraisal Institute in 2018.

I enjoyed the evening and was especially pleased to have my mentor and friend, John Leary, MAI, say a few words as part of the installation. John's comments served to remind us all of the importance of taking time to serve as a mentor and provide guidance to those pursuing careers in the appraisal profession. Not only did I learn how to appraise real estate from John, I learned the importance of giving back to the profession.

It is typical for incoming chapter presidents to share their vision of what they would like to accomplish during their twelve months of leadership. Over the past several years I have heard very thoughtful and ambitious ideas, including last year. To that end, I am very fortunate to be following immediate past president Karen Friel, MAI. Karen's thoughtful leadership over the past year has served the chapter very well, and we all thank her.

In particular, Karen pursued a partnership with the Babson College Management Consulting Field Experience (MCFE) program to research and formulate a message to students and young professionals regarding the benefits of a career in real estate appraisal. The Babson students were asked to analyze declining membership trends in the appraisal profession and on December 7, Karen and a team of chapter members went to Babson College to hear their findings and recommendations. Highlights of the presentation included the importance of developing a message that emphasizes the variety of work assignments available to appraisers, the opportunity to create flexible hours, and the potential for entrepreneurship. I look forward to continuing to work with Karen and members of the chapter to refine this message and strategically share it with college students and young professionals considering their futures.

My hope is to also continue the good work of all the past presidents of the MA/RI Chapter of the

Appraisal Institute. Over the years, this chapter has had the good fortune to have many talented real estate appraisers volunteer their time and talents to ensure the success of this chapter. Unfortunately, not all chapters across the country can say the same. Many chapters are facing declining membership and financial instability. As a result, there are changes being proposed at the national level to assist chapters in their day to day operations. The two major initiatives include a new financial management policy and changes in the governance structure at the national, regional, and chapter levels. Many of the proposals for change are well thought out and will serve the profession and local chapters well into the future; however, keeping an eye out for unintended consequences will require time and attention.

My goal is to keep the lines of communication open between our members, our chapter and other chapters, and stay in communication with national in an effort to be proactive in this time of change. To date, our chapter has responded to these initiatives in what we believe is our members' best interests, but each member should also make her/his voice heard because it is critical that the best ideas be communicated.

In closing, I wish everyone a happy and healthy new year, and invite our membership to be vocal and proactive. As our national past president Scott Robinson said at a recent regional meeting, "Constructive feedback is a gift." This resonated with me, and to that end, I look forward to your feedback throughout the year as we work together to ensure the MA RI Chapter of the Appraisal Institute's continued success.

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