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## **CAI president's message: "Harvest new ideas"**

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The theme for this year's Annual CAI New England Chapter Conference and Expo is not only appropriate for the season, but it also puts an emphasis on the importance of board member and homeowner education and the unique lessons to be learned in sharing ideas with other community association volunteer leaders and professionals. "Harvest New Ideas for Your Community" aptly describes the many opportunities that await the hundreds of condominium homeowners, board members and industry professionals who will participate in this year's annual conference on Saturday, October 20th at the Burlington Marriott Hotel in Burlington, Mass.

Nearly one out of every six Americans (an estimated 42 million people) lives in a community association, such as a condominium, homeowner associations or cooperative. Regardless of the form of common-interest ownership or whether the community is professionally managed or self managed, all homeowners are members of the association and a volunteer board elected by these members governs them all.

Homeowners have a responsibility to follow the association rules and to be active in their communities, and volunteer board members have a fiduciary responsibility to the association and are responsible for protecting and enhancing the value of the community. Board members have a responsibility to communicate with homeowners, fulfill association obligations required by statutes and governing documents, enforce community rules and regulations, and attend to a long list of business affairs. That list includes the oversight of common property, reserve funds, long-range plans, and assessment collection. Where can homeowners and volunteer leaders turn for the expertise and information they need to understand and fulfill their respective responsibilities?

The annual conference and expo is the highlight of the CAI-NE programming calendar, offering a full day of informative seminars and professional consulting opportunities for homeowners and board members. In addition, exhibiting vendors will be on hand to assist with all your association needs, and you will find networking opportunities you won't find anywhere else. I challenge you to "harvest new ideas for your community" and join hundreds of others at the Burlington Marriott Hotel on October 20th. I look forward to seeing you there.

Erik Simard is the 2007 CAI chapter president, Wellesley, Mass.

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