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Award winners shine at Community Associations Institute New England's Annual Banquet

June 07, 2019 - Owners Developers & Managers

Boston, MA At CAI-NE's annual dinner and awards presentation held in March, industry professionals, volunteer board members and homeowners gathered at the Burlington Marriott to applaud colleagues and peers for their achievements and for their contributions to their communities, CAI, and the condominium industry.

Joseph Carleton

Hall of Fame Award: Joseph Carleton, Jr., Esq., CCAL, of Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry. Carleton, of counsel with the Maine Law firm Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry, received the Hall of Fame Award. Nominated by members of the CAI Maine Legislative Action Committee (MELAC), which he helped found and on which he has served multiple terms, colleagues credited his experience as a state legislator and ongoing relationships with state lawmakers for enabling the Maine LAC "to reach key bill sponsors and ensuring that the [LAC's] positions are heard and understood." They also cited his key role in establishing CAI-NE in Maine, his "unique understanding of and experience with" industry issues, his tireless efforts to improve the condominium industry and condominium law, and his "lifetime commitment to condominium associations, CAI, and the New England Chapter."

Management Company of the Year: Empire Condominium Professionals.

The company's handling of a devastating fire at Park Place Condominium in West Roxbury, Mass. spurred the nomination for this award. The six-alarm blaze displaced 22 families and caused massive damage to the property, repair work on which is still ongoing. The nomination form notes the "countless hours" Empire officials have spent answering owners' questions, coordinating insurance issues and repairs, cutting through red tape, and "never wavering in doing everything humanly possible" to advance the recovery efforts.

Manager of the Year: Roger Cummings, CMCA of Sterling Services, Inc.

Oversight of a major construction project tests the skills of any manager. The façade improvement at Bellwood in Bellingham, Mass. provided that test for Cummings, and earned him this award, recognizing managers "whose efforts further the goals and objectives" of their client associations. The board at this 40-year old town-home community had two goals: Upgrade the façade to increase

property values and minimize any special assessment or fee increase required to finance the project. Initial proposals to replace the siding would have achieved the first goal, but not the second. So Cummings worked with vendors to develop a much less expensive customized solution that upgraded the façade without replacing it. The plan required modifications in the term of the bank loan financing the project, which Cummings was able to negotiate with the lender.

Community of the Year: Westminster Woods Condominium Association.

This award recognizes the efforts of boards and owners who respond effectively to major disasters or massive problems – problems like those that age and construction deficiencies created in this 126-unit community. The board rose impressively to the twin challenges of correcting the problems and financing the work, producing “a model example of how a board can accept a challenge and see it through successfully for the betterment of the community,” the award nomination says. Rejecting partial solutions, the board undertook the “total restoration” of the community – a \$5 million project, financing of which was the key to its success.

Unsung Hero: Carol Lang of Marcus, Errico, Emmer & Brooks.

The award recognizes a non-managerial employee “who has made a positive impact, shown a willingness to help in whatever capacity necessary, and displayed a commitment to excellence.” The description of the award echoes what the nominations for Carol Lang said about her. A long-time administrative assistant at MEEB, Lang is known as “the go-to person,” for attorneys within the firm and for clients and business partners outside of it. Other nominations emphasized Lang’s role handling the paperwork for association loans. “She goes above and beyond the call of duty to meet timing deadlines for associations that need everything yesterday,” one lender noted, “and she is unflappable when it comes to the twists and turns that routinely arise in the lending process.”

Community Association Rising Star: Andrew Cameron of Brigs, LLC, AAMC.

The “rising star” award goes to a manager with less than three years of association management experience “who has displayed integrity, reliability and a commitment to the industry and to clients.” – Multiple nominations submitted for Andrew Cameron cited all of those attributes – and many more. Association clients and industry professionals with whom he has worked cited this young manager’s professionalism, competence, patience, and concern for clients, and also noted Cameron’s “proactive” approach to dealing with problems and his ability to deal with many different personality types.

Special Achievement Award: Matthew Gaines, Esq., of Marcus, Errico, Emmer & Brooks

Members of the Massachusetts Legislative Action Committee (MALAC) nominated Gaines recognizing his 10 years of service on the committee and his six years as its chair. During that time, the nominating letter noted, Gaines “has diligently tracked hundreds of condominium bills,” testified “countless times” on a variety of measures, and worked with interested parties – with sometimes competing interests – to negotiate legislative language “that would best serve the interests of all, including community associations. Gaines has done much “to advance the interests of condominium associations throughout the state.”

Community Association Volunteer of the Year: Lisa Jacobowitz of Pickman Park Condominium.

A property manager, a vendor and a fellow-board member nominated Jacobowitz for this award, all citing her long tenure (32 years) on the association's board, her commitment to the community and her leadership skills. "Lisa has guided the association through many changes, difficult financial decisions, capital improvements and contract negotiations," one letter noted. Managing a property this size requires "commitment, infinite patience and a strong backbone," a fellow-board member noted, all of which, this board member said, Jacobowitz has demonstrated consistently.

CAI-NE Business Partner of the Year: Brendon Kilcoyne, CIC, EBP, of H&K Insurance Agency, Inc. Kilcoyne's active involvement in CAI earned him this award for "exemplary service" to community associations. "Brendon is always willing to volunteer and sponsor events; he makes every event better by being involved," one nominating letter noted. The letter also cited the "dedication and leadership" he brings to his service on committees, and his commitment "to help make CAI-NE a more successful chapter, [all of which make Brendon] a perfect example of what a business partner should be."

Creative Solutions: Waldenwoods Condominium Association

Most condominium associations struggle to create and sustain a sense of community. Waldenwoods solved that problem by creating a network of active volunteer committees to advise the board. Board members recognized that "the expertise required to successfully govern an HOA must not reside solely with the five trustees," the nominating letter explained. Volunteers provide that expertise through seven standing committees: Buildings and grounds, communications, community center, finance, landscape, rules and by-laws and library. neighbors helping neighbors, an unofficial committee, provides temporary assistance to residents coping with illnesses or other problems.

Member Communications: John Tuttle, of Windward Pointe Condo Owners Association.

This award recognizes "effective communication tools" that keep members informed about their community. The efforts of this association's communications committee certainly qualify. Chaired by Tuttle, the committee "has done a superb job of communicating with residents/owners," the nomination letter said. A quarterly newsletter provides information on association business and governance, as well as human interest articles and health and safety information. A bulletin board "updated regularly and situated in a prominent location" re-enforces the communications efforts, the letter noted.

Community Programs & Events: Regency at Emerald Pines Condominium.

Trustees and the association's social committee host activities and events, including: A poolside Summer Luau; a fireside "Winter Wonderland Soiree," themed pot-luck dinners, cooking demonstrations, wine tastings, Super Bowl and Kentucky Derby parties. Philanthropic events, such as "Toys for Tots" and food and coat drives, create opportunities for residents to "give back to the community;" multiple clubs target varied interests; and biweekly planning meetings "keep the program evolving and exciting," the nomination letter noted.

The CAI New England Chapter congratulates all award winners.