

Delegates continue to move the needle forward

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In a year when other organizations might pull back and take a “wait and see” approach, CREW Network and its chapter leadership continue to lead forward to ensure the organization remains healthy and is meeting the current, unique needs of its members.

CREW Network Delegates voted on two priority issues for the organization during the recent Fall CREW Network Council Meeting held in San Francisco. First, delegates approved the affiliation applications for both Cape Fear CREW, serving the Wilmington, North Carolina area, and CREW Midlands South Carolina, which serves the Columbus, South Carolina area. The addition of these two new chapters increases CREW Network’s business network to 73 markets across North America.

Following a thorough and candid discussion of CREW Network’s proposed membership dues increase for 2011, delegates ultimately voted to approve the increase. With many chapters still battling the effects of the market downturn, several chapters expressed concern as to whether now is the right time to implement this dues increase. Many chapters will absorb the dues increase rather than pass it on to their members. 2010 CREW Network President Kristin Blount, CREW Network CEO Gail Ayers and several CREW Network board members spoke out regarding the need for the dues increase citing that it has been five years since the last increase. During this time, CREW Network has been forced to rely too heavily on sponsor dollars to fund new and existing member programs, which are challenging to acquire in a downturn. The dues increase will take effect with the 2011 dues renewal program.

In celebration of the strong and successful chapters that make up CREW Network, President Kristin Blount recognized three chapters celebrating 10, 20 and 30 year anniversaries with a special proclamation. The chapters recognized were: Indy CREW, 10 years; CREW Richmond, 20 years; and CREW Dallas, 30 years. As part of Ft. Worth CREW’s 25th anniversary celebration this year, chapter representatives Cynthia Bailey and Barbara Fife made a surprise presentation honoring CREW Network CEO Gail Ayers for her contributions to the overall organization and for the Network’s support in helping Ft. Worth CREW reach its 25 year milestone. Ft. Worth CREW presented Ayers with the Yellow Rose of Texas designation, the highest recognition honor for outstanding achievement issued by the Texas Governor to civilians.

President Blount updated delegates on the organization’s progress towards meeting its goal of providing tools and resources that keep its chapters strong and its members successful. First and foremost CREW Network focused on building and communicating the CREW brand. With the help of an outside consulting firm, CREW Network developed and adopted a branding statement to clearly articulate its organizational purpose: *CREW Network exists to influence the success of the commercial real estate industry by advancing the achievements of women.* Additionally, a standard CREW chapter logo was developed and offered to chapters, which several have already adopted. A strong national brand strengthens the market position of every chapter in the Network.

Supporting the business success of its members remains a top priority for CREW Network. This year CREW Network launched its newest business marketing tool, CREWbiz™, which provides members the

opportunity to develop personal marketing pages to further connect them to their network of 8,000 members. Members' profile pages feature their photo and business bio, as well as listings of their board and committee work, and professional affiliations they maintain. Every member who has loaded her bio and photo onto her profile page by December 31, 2010 will be entered into a drawing to win an iPad.

Informing the industry about key statistics regarding the advancements of women in commercial real estate is another critical way CREW Network supports the business and careers of its members. During the 2010 CREW Network Convention & Marketplace, CREW Network released the findings from its recent benchmark study. The study findings are currently posted in the Members Only section of the CREW Network website and every member will receive a printed copy of the report later this year. CREW Network has sent the study to the leaders of major companies and professional organizations in the industry. The study has already garnered significant media attention from major outlets such as MSNBC, The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times.

Leadership development was another key area for CREW Network this year. In partnership with Studley CREW Network developed the Leadership Development Series. Through this series, CREW Network members participated in seven webinars and conference calls aimed at supporting chapter chairman, as well as leadership development programs delivered to chapter leaders during the three annual Leadership Summits and Council Meetings. The series also featured a special University Leadership Series, with programs delivered by top professors at Harvard, Wharton, Stanford, Columbia and Cornell universities.

CREW Network continues to support the work of its chapters through the development of playbooks. Delegates received copies of CREW Network's two newest chapter playbooks to add to their chapter resource libraries. The Chapter Operations Playbook is a comprehensive work containing every resource needed to run a successful chapter including record keeping best practices, organizational documents, finance and auditing practices, and general operations information. Delegates also received the Career Outreach Playbook, which contains information and best practices on how to launch a successful CREW Network Career Outreach Program. Both playbooks are located in the Chapter Resources section of the CREW Network website.

Supporting the unique needs of all 73 CREW Network chapters and 8,000 members requires a proactive and progressive approach that becomes even more critical as the market continues to rebound. The CREW Network organization remains strong, healthy and relevant because of the forward-thinking approach adopted by its leadership and chapters. Investing in the success of its members and chapters remains CREW Network's top priority.