



May 4, 2009

President's Report

Hello. Well, we are well into 2009 already, and the time has been flying! The first quarter of the year was extremely busy, as the legislature was in session and there was a lot of activity focused predominantly on proposed bills to eliminate the Real Estate Appraiser Commission. More on this later.

I do want to “welcome” our newest board and organizational representatives to ACOW for this year:

David Hunnicutt, Dan Hewitt, Rob Wenzel, Bruce Jolicoeur, and Michael Imes

Goals for 2009, and beyond:

When I took over the reins as ACOW President for 2009, there were two primary goals I wanted to focus on for this year, and to build upon for the future:

1. Overall Communication: better overall outreach to appraisal organizations and appraisers in the state; and,
2. Membership: increase ACOW memberships, and by doing so also raise more operating funds through dues and donations to ACOW.

In pursuit of the above, to date, I believe communications have improved overall, though there remains more to do (again, more on this later). I have really stressed ensuring that, first and foremost, all ACOW board members and organization reps are kept in the loop as to key issues and the “goings on” of ACOW, in particular via email. Most of the feedback to date has been positive, with only one person actually asking to be removed from the email lists.

To date, I have also been traveling around the state, meeting with some of the representative organizations, and soliciting for their support (and getting it!) while also filling them in on ACOW – what it is, what it has done and is doing, and where we need to go yet. Though I have not yet been able to fit in visits to all organizational chapters, more trips are planned, and the reception has been very positive. If any of the board members would like to join me on these trips, let me know – it has been quite worthwhile!

It is important that ACOW be out in front and visible about what we are doing, what is important, and where we are headed, and to solicit input from all appraisers and appraisal organizations in the state. I believe we are doing a better job of it so far. We can do

more: more work needs to be done on our website; we need to send out some mailings and emails, in particular asking for support from the unaffiliated WA state appraisers; organize some ad hoc committees and/or forums to work on the various issues confronting our industry; etc.

We have a lot of challenges facing our industry. I am honored to be a part of this organization, and in particular to now be the ACOW President, though I have some incredibly “big shoes to fill”! I doubt they will be filled anywhere near the level of commitment that Jim Irish gave, and continues to give, to ACOW, but am working to at least not stumble around in them! I very much appreciate the support provided so far this year by not only Jim Irish, but also Barry Wilson, and others, who have aided in dealing with the legislative issues, along with all of the other issues we have been asked to confront, or need to confront, in the coming year, and beyond. Thanks!

I encourage all organization representatives to encourage active support of and membership in ACOW. If there is anything that we can do to improve, please do offer your suggestions.

Legislative/Regulatory Overview:

The 2009 legislative session began with a flurry and rush of activity. I was more than a bit nonplussed by it all Thanks to Jim Irish, and also Barry Wilson, along with other board members and appraisal community members who provided insights, assistance, suggestions, etc.

The single most significant issue we confronted was the potential elimination of the Real Estate Appraiser Commission. Many contributed their time and energy to contacting their legislators, while I and others travelled to Olympia to testify before both House and Senate Committees. To date, the bills introduced did not pass, and were also amended at the very last moment to redact the portion that would have eliminated the REAC; however, it is noteworthy that this issue (elimination of boards and commissions) is expected to again be broached in future sessions, and we need to remain vigilant and active in support of ensuring that the REAC is not eliminated. Pending federal legislation may make it more likely that entities such as the REAC remain in place, with perhaps some expanded scope of authority. We can be hopeful, but cannot let down our guard. It has been proposed that we form a committee to develop a “strategy” and/or as a board hold a “strategy session” to deal with the likelihood of this bill arising once again, and how we would act on it if it does. I support this effort. We need a volunteer to chair this effort.

Another bill that we attempted to have amended to include appraisers as part of the “exempt” class was the Distressed Property bill. However, the Realtors also were asking to be part of the exempt class, and opposed the inclusion of appraisers as an additional exempt class. While Senator Rodney Tom indicated that he would support an amendment to include appraisers as exempt in this legislation, he indicated that we would first have to have the support of the realtors and some private non-profit judicial activist organizations to do so. We attempted to meet with the WAR representative and those representing the judicial groups, but could not get them to sit down with us to discuss this issue and support our inclusion in an amended bill. While it was not necessarily critical this year that we be included in this bill, I believe we should continue to support the inclusion of appraisers as an exempt class for distressed property consulting work for future sessions.

In addition to a variety of other minor bills that we monitored, more work is needed to address these issues: BPOs, AMCs, and the HVCC. The issue of Appraisal Management Companies (AMCs), and how they operate, appears to be the single most important issues facing most appraisers in the state at present, and has been gaining momentum and a groundswell of support for action by ACOW. Again, we need a volunteer to chair this effort; and, this appears to be an issue that we could address more fully at the upcoming Summit in August.

ACOW Budget/Support Plan – 2009

I am including for this meeting a budget and operating plan I would like the board to consider and act upon. Please review the plan, sent as a separate attachment.

Things We Need to Do/Focus On for the Remainder of the Year

- ACOW At The Summit – we need to immediately send out a notice, plan and organize this event, and coordinate/confirm with the facility and REAC. Plan for August 21 – 22, Friday – Saturday...?
- Educational Seminars/Forum – in addition to the Summit, we really need to put together at least one or two more seminars or forums for 2009 (one or two-day events, or perhaps a four-day seminar, depending on course needs and interest).
- Thanking those who have contributed to ACOW –orgs and individuals. We need someone to volunteer to help send out thank you notes to acknowledge not only our contributing chapters, but also those individuals who have contributed to ACOW to date for 2009.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Stan Sidor
President, ACOW