

# Connections

*Enhancing Communication, Providing Resources, Fostering Business Relationships*

## 3rd Qtr Newsletter

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CREW



NETWORK

CREW Network is a national association of commercial real estate women, established in 1989, representing every discipline in commercial real estate. The CREW Network is dedicated to furthering the success of its members by providing opportunities that foster productive and supportive relationships and enhance personal and professional growth. The CREW Network consists of 60 Chapters and 6,500 members across the country.

## From the 2006 CREW Pittsburgh President

*by Eve Bursic, Soffer Organization*



In the last issue of our newsletter, I discussed the demographics of our chapter and the CREW Network. In this edition, I would like to focus on helping you get more out of your membership using the technology available at both the local and national levels.

If you haven't visited our website ([www.crewpittsburgh.org](http://www.crewpittsburgh.org)) recently, I encourage you to do so. Most of our members use it to quickly register for events and programs, but there are many other resources available to you. One of the features of particular note is the Bulletin Board page. Information relative to members in the news, including personal achievements such as promotions can be found there along with employment opportunities and resume postings. Since networking is such a core purpose to CREW, we encourage you to utilize this forum. If you wish to post a listing, please contact our administrator, Kara Uhrlen at [kara@tprs.com](mailto:kara@tprs.com) or call her at 724/622-1143 for further instructions.

The CREW Network website ([www.crewnetwork.org](http://www.crewnetwork.org)) is also a valuable resource. General information about the organization is available on the home page, but the most valuable resources can be found in the Member's Only section. These resources include a library of best practices for your own professional development, as well as online discussion groups targeted toward specific professions or areas of interest. I personally have used these particular resources to gain valuable insight into best practices in my area of specialization, and I encourage you to do the same. Another valuable aspect of the CREW Network website is access to a fully searchable membership directory, which can be used to strategically locate the players you need to start and complete your next real estate transaction or to learn about existing opportunities for you to get more involved.

I hope that you will take this opportunity to better acquaint yourself with these resources and get the most out of your membership with CREW Pittsburgh.

## Midwest Conference Report

*by Mary Guinee, Civil and Environmental Consultants  
and Kathy Graham, WCB Properties*

In addition to the National Convention held annually by CREW Network, each year there is a regional conference sponsored by CREW Network and its local affiliate chapters in the Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast, West Coast (California) and South Central (Texas).

CREW Cleveland proudly sponsored the 2006 Midwest Regional Conference in May drawing members from over 16 Midwest Chapters to the conference. Joining together Cleveland's Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame with CREW Network's goal of providing an opportunity for members (and non members) to facilitate business relationship, the conference was appropriately themed **ROCK YOUR NETWORK!** There were panel discussions by industry experts, local sightseeing tours, dine-arounds, a career & leadership development forum, and an awards ceremony. It was a great opportunity to conduct business, enjoy local entertainment and build personal, and professional relationships.



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# Connections

## Interview with our Construction Members

by Kathryn Petrie, Strada

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CREW Connections is a quarterly newsletter published by the CREW Pittsburgh Communications Committee and distributed to members in good standing. The CREW Connections mission is to provide information concerning business opportunities and developments in commercial real estate, facilitate member networking, and to promote CREW membership and events.

### How many years have you been working in the field of Development and/or Construction? How did you become involved in this field of work? What attracted you to this field of work?

*Laura:* I have been working in the field of construction since the early 1980s. Two years after earning my Bachelor of Science degree in Economics and Business Administration, I began working for Collier Structures, Inc., a Bridgeville based general contractor, who specializes in multi-family housing. I married into a family who owned a commercial construction company, and my husband's enthusiasm about this business was contagious. The competition and the desire to succeed in a male dominated industry become more than a fascination, it became a way of life. In 1998, I decided it was time to put my hard work and expertise to the ultimate test and purchased Allegheny Construction Group, Inc., an emerging commercial contractor that was only two years old.



**Laura Deklewa**  
President  
Allegheny Construction

*Sandra:* I have been directing the retail branch construction activity for Dollar Bank since 1993. My work prior to that time had been related to risk management activities including the purchasing of insurance, loss control and safety programs. I was given the opportunity to advance my career by adding oversight of the retail branch construction and property management functions to my risk management work. The combination of these areas has created a truly unique operating group that provides safe, inviting, and cost effective facilities for our customers and employees.



**Sandra Wise**  
Vice President  
Dollar Bank

*Alyssa:* I have been working in the construction industry since 2000 having completed my undergraduate degree in marketing at Duquesne University. My first job was in Business Development at a mid-sized general construction firm. Although construction was not my planned career path, after starting to work in the industry, I was intrigued by the numerous facets of the industry and the diversity of construction-related firms. I interact with multiple levels of people from business development and marketing professionals to key principals and owners.



**Alyssa Pike**  
Business Dvpt. Mgr.  
Construction Mgt. Div.  
Dick Corporation

### If you were mentoring high school girls or college students, with respect to entering the field of construction, what practical advice would you give them concerning the necessary skills needed to succeed in this field?

*Laura:* I was asked to mentor a group of high school girls, and it was evident that many of the girls could certainly rise to the challenges in the field of commercial real estate. I invited them to my office, took them to a job site, and gave them an overview of my day-to-day responsibilities. My advice to young women is to challenge themselves throughout their education. Never take the easy way out. And, take advantage of every opportunity and cultivate long-term relationships.

*Sandra:* To be successful in this field, or any other service industry, one must possess effective communications skills. The ability to clearly define objectives, follow-up in a timely manner and document activities is crucial to assuring all members of a project team are working towards a common goal.

*Alyssa:* I would advise them to concentrate on their studies, participate in clubs and professional organizations, work in various internships and industries to get a feel for what they like and don't like, continually network with peers, teachers, and professors, keep an open mind, and of course, have fun, but focus on the future! Building strong relationships is key in this industry, especially with the tight competition that exists.

**What has been the biggest change or trend relative to the construction industry since you began your career? How has this affected your work?**

*Laura:* From blueprints to computers and everywhere in between we have seen significant change. We have grown leaps and bounds with technology over the years in this industry. Accounting software, engineering printers, e-mails, printers, copiers, cell phones, palm pilots, etc., each has made our lives faster and sometimes more complicated. Now there is less downtime. We can be reached wherever and whenever.

*Alyssa:* One of the changes is the exponential increase in communication and exchange of information due to technological advances such as virtual offices, PDAs, virtual plan rooms, e-procurement tools, etc. This makes the marketplace even more competitive as there are fewer hidden opportunities, and it is even more difficult to distinguish one's firm from the multitude. However, technology also provides tools to give equal footing for smaller firms to be able to pursue, compete, and manage work.

**How long have you been a CREW member? In what ways has CREW membership been of benefit to you? What suggestions do you have for new members to get the most of out of their membership?**

*Laura:* I have been a CREW member since 2003. Networking is not strictly business development; there is also personal enrichment. This is what I have experienced through my CREW Pittsburgh membership.

*Sandra:* I have been a member of CREW for almost one year, and in that short time, I have formed a number of useful business associations. There are a wide variety of commercial real estate disciplines represented in the Pittsburgh Chapter and I encourage all members to network – network – network!

*Alyssa:* I have been a CREW Pittsburgh member since 2003 (when our affiliation with the national network began) and was also involved prior to that with PWCRE. When I started my first job, CREW gave me the opportunity to network with many talented, experienced, friendly women who were willing to assist me as a young woman at the onset of her career. I find CREW members not only to be colleagues and resources but also friends. Being involved with the CREW Pittsburgh membership committee has helped me to meet additional CREW members and learn more about these individuals, their companies, and how we may be able to assist one another. I would advise members and potential members to regularly attend CREW functions and to get involved with committees in order to make the most of the many benefits the organization has to offer.

Of particular interest to Mary Guinee, Membership Director for CREW Pittsburgh, was the program entitled "Legends of Rock: Leading the Way to Success." The program included a panel discussion of five executive women who provided advice to women within three career levels (entry, mid, and executive level), according to Mary. "Each of the panelists is a leader in their field and each offered real-time, no clique advice for women in real estate." She added, "It was especially interesting to learn about effective ways to deal with gender bias in a field that is still predominantly male." According to Mary, CREW Pittsburgh is planning a special *members only* meeting concerning CREW Network's Industry Research which was published last year on parity in the field of commercial real estate.

Another unique presentation called "Under the Boardwalk: Port Authorities as Development Partners" included panelists from the Netherlands, the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority and the Erie-Western PA Port Authority. This presentation addressed the integral role port authorities can play in the regional economy. More specifically, an in-depth look at the creative financing tools available to developers who have formed partnerships with the port authority were covered. Examples of these partnerships were particularly enlightening to long time CREW Pittsburgh member and volunteer, Kathy Graham, Vice President of Asset Management for WCB Properties. Kathy stated, "A number of developers, who

were converting properties both inland and along the lakefront described their various projects ranging from recreational and industrial to residential and office. The presentation on the Bayfront Convention Center in Erie, Pennsylvania, was very intriguing given the large number of public and private entities involved. It is quite a huge undertaking requiring extensive work and creativity. It was fascinating." The development of the Erie Bayfront Convention Center, scheduled to open the summer of 2007, is considered a key component of Erie's endeavor to create a prosperous commercial and entertainment district along Erie's Port. For more information on this presentation or about the Bayfront Convention Center go to:



[www.crewcleveland.org/Presentations.php](http://www.crewcleveland.org/Presentations.php) [www.bayfrontconventioncenter.com](http://www.bayfrontconventioncenter.com).

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### Web Sites

#### CREW Pittsburgh

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#### CREW Network

www.crewnetwork.org

On Tuesday, May 9, 2006, over 75 members and guests of CREW attended a panel discussion about Pittsburgh's neighborhoods, held at the Rivers Club. Representatives from five communities in the city discussed how they have increased economic development and opportunities to live and work in their neighborhoods. Moderated by Robert Rubenstein, Director of Economic Development for the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, the panel included: Linda LeFever, Executive Director of the North Side Leadership Conference; Kelly Hoffman, Real Estate Program Manager for the Oakland Planning & Development Corporation; Ernie Hogan, Director of Residential Development for East Liberty Development, Inc.; Becky Rodgers, Executive Director of Neighbors in the Strip; and Patty Burk, Director of Housing and Economic Development for the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership.

Attendees learned that each neighborhood is building on the strengths of the surrounding areas to attract new businesses and new residents. Andrea Geraghty of Geraghty & Associates, P.C. stated, "Visible investment in downtown real property creates a true sense of excitement in this city. The May luncheon speakers proved city neighborhoods are benefiting from similar investment, and community development leaders are coordinating efforts to encourage continued growth."

That continued growth is fueled by the assets and resources which make Pittsburgh a great place to live and work. The hot topic was undoubtedly downtown living which Patty Burke discussed. Currently, there are over 800 units planned for the immediate downtown area with other residential units planned or under construction in many of the surrounding neighborhoods. People are attracted to downtown because of rising fuel costs, transportation issues and direct access to culture and recreational amenities. Ernie Hogan said these reasons are also feeding East Liberty's plans for new commercial, retail and housing construction as well as the renovation of older buildings. With the neighborhood's connection to the East Busway, Shaydside and Oakland communities, he described how it has become a desirable location to establish new retail such as the Home Depot and Whole Foods with recent announcements that Walgreens, Borders and Trader Joe's Market will also shortly be arriving.

The strong cultural and educational resources in Pittsburgh also allow neighborhoods to seek grants to implement a variety of programs and improve the neighborhood's infrastructure and streetscape elements. Becky Rodgers outlined plans for The Strip Marketplace. This will be a concentration of local retail/wholesale businesses and vendors of food, arts, crafts and other unique products in the heart of Pittsburgh's traditional wholesale Strip District. The concept is very similar to Seattle's Pike

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## 10 Steps For Great Networking



**Victoria Jolly**  
Vice President  
Brascan Financial Real  
Estate Group

The following steps for great networking were graciously provided by Victoria Jolly of Brascan Financial Real Estate Group, CREW Network Director and Past President for CREW Toronto, during her presentation entitled "Plug into the Power of Your Connections" at the June 13<sup>th</sup> CREW Pittsburgh Networking Luncheon:

- 1 Follow up on leads within 48 hours.
- 2 Keep files on all your contacts.
- 3 Take notes when networking.
- 4 Be willing to give *and* receive.
- 5 Never ask directly for advice.
- 6 Ask for only one thing at a time.
- 7 Force yourself to circulate.
- 8 Be prepared to listen.
- 9 Research people you hope to contact.
- 10 Develop a plan before an event.



CREW Pittsburgh has recently surpassed the 100 member mark! Please take this opportunity to acquaint yourself with our newest members and be sure to add this insert to your membership directory for future reference. Help our membership grow even more by recommending our half-year membership opportunity to colleagues who are curious about our organization. Membership will be available at the discounted rate of \$150 (40% off) beginning July 1, 2006 for membership through December 31, 2006.

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## CREW Careers Update

by Heather Kozlowski



**CREW Careers**  
BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES

The CREW Foundation, a philanthropic arm of CREW Network, began the CREW Careers: Building Opportunities program as a participatory hands-on program targeted towards teenage girls, focusing on the fundamentals of commercial real estate and career opportunities within the industry. Although the CREW Careers program is coordinated by and in part funded through the CREW Foundation it shares a similar CREW Network goal which is to achieve parity between men and women in the field of commercial real estate. To this aim, CREW Careers endeavors to bring more gender and ethnic diversity into the field of commercial real estate by enabling young women to observe and become familiar with the opportunities within the industry.

The program, presented and produced locally by CREW chapters in either a one-day or multi-week format, occurs during the months of March and/or April. The program uses one or more real (or imaginary) commercial real estate developments to illustrate various aspects of a commercial real estate project essentially taking it from raw land through lease up. Additionally, a brief overview of the educational requirements and “typical” career path in the various disciplines is often presented.

Launched in March and April of 2005, the CREW Careers “Pilot 10” included ten chapters serving approximately 267 girls. This year an additional nine chapters participated in the program. According to Christi Neroni, CREW Pittsburgh President Elect, our chapter has submitted its Letter of Interest to the CREW Foundation and will be notified before the CREW Network National Convention in October regarding its application status. Meanwhile, although we do not want to put the proverbial “cart before the horse,” we certainly want to be pro-active, and therefore CREW Pittsburgh has begun preplanning efforts in the advent we are chosen to participate in 2007.

The CREW Foundation wants to be the leading source for commercial real estate programs that advance the success of women and as such it has gone to great lengths to provide participating chapters with the resources needed to successfully implement the program at the local level. These resources include a chapter resource guidebook, local committee structure guide, budget and recommended sponsorship solicitation/volunteer services, curriculum materials including binders, dividers and notebooks, tote bags for participants, a program banner, certificates for participants, measures of success surveys, and ongoing CREW Careers Committee support and assistance. According to the CREW Careers Committee the following sub-committees are recommended in addition to the two co-chairs for the program:

- Marketing - Photography, Videography, Local Publicity & Public Relations
- Sponsorship - Financial and In-Kind Donations
- Curriculum Coordinators – Instructors and Substitute Instructors
- Logistics - Location, Food/Beverage, Audio Visual Equipment
- Measures of Success & Program Recap - Survey & Follow Up Activities

As I reflect on my own eagerness to participate in this program, my feelings concerning this worthwhile endeavor are echoed in the words of a CREW Foundation Trustee, “Giving back to the community that has nurtured us is both a privilege and a responsibility. None of us got to where we are without some combination of help or good luck mixed in with our own hard work. Investing in the next generation of women will be our permanent legacy.”

For further information on the CREW Careers program, please visit [www.CREWFoundation.org](http://www.CREWFoundation.org) or contact Lanette Stineman, CREW Foundation Manager, at 785-832-1808. If you are interested in participating in CREW Careers, please contact Christi Neroni via email at [cneroni@tuckerlaw.com](mailto:cneroni@tuckerlaw.com) or by telephone at 412/594-5505.

Afterthoughts! continued from page 4

Place and Philadelphia’s Reading Terminal. The Strip Marketplace will be located in the historic Pennsylvania Railroad Fruit Auction Building, also known as the Terminal Building.

Kelly Hoffman described how the Oakland Planning and Development Corporation has collaborated with a diverse group of Oakland “stakeholders,” which include residents, business professionals, and representatives from of surrounding institutions, on new design guidelines for streetscape improvements to the entire Fifth and Forbes Avenue corridors throughout Oakland.

Pam Hauber of Travisano Construction summed up the meeting well. “I really enjoyed the May luncheon on the upcoming economic growth of Pittsburgh and its neighbors. Pittsburgh is a wonderful city and more people need to realize that and help our city grow.”

*Connections*

**Upcoming Events**

**August 7**  
Fourth Annual Golf Classic

**August TBD**  
Community Action Day

**September TBD**  
Comedy Club Event

**September 17**  
Walk for Whisper

**October 10**  
Lunch Program

**October 18-21**  
CREW Convention -  
Atlanta, GA

**November 14**  
Awards Banquet High Tea

**November TBD**  
Community Action Day

**November 17**  
Board of Directors Retreat

For registration and more  
information visit  
[www.crewpittsburgh.org](http://www.crewpittsburgh.org)

# Typical . . . We're Not

## *Citizens Bank is proud to support CREW*



# Citizens Bank

Not your typical bank.®

## **CREW Pittsburgh Foundation Charity Golf Classic**



CREW Members and Guests, Register Online at  
[www.crewpittsburgh.org](http://www.crewpittsburgh.org) now through July 31st

**Location:** Edgewood Country Club

**Date:** Monday, August 7th

**Cost:** Foursome \$625; Single \$160; Dinner Only \$ 50

Registration, Box Lunch, Open Range 11:30 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

Shot Gun Start (Scramble Format) 1:00 p.m.

Dinner/Cocktails and Prizes 5:00 p.m.

All proceeds benefit the CREW Pittsburgh Foundation, a 501(c)3  
charity organization that supports women with cancer.



## Committee Updates

### Charity Update

by Virginia Weida, Virginia Weida Designs



The CREW Pittsburgh Foundation is proud to announce that we are on track to meet our goal of making, filling, and distributing 600 Satchels in 2006 to women going through chemotherapy in our area. This could not be accomplished without the support and commitment of every CREW member on the Charity committee, thank you!! I would also like you all take a moment and join us in rejoicing about our "Celebration of Caring" event on June 1<sup>st</sup> at James Gallery. The setting was unique, the harp music was enchanting, and even the raindrops did not stop the 80+ attendees from coming to help us celebrate our CREW Network award from last fall and hear the music that goes into each Satchel performed live. I am especially pleased to announce

that the event raised just over \$6,500 for our program, which means that we can now fill and distribute another 260 Satchels to women with cancer – WOW!! Kudos to the hardworking event committee which included Georgine Golitko, Kathy Graham, Martha Graham, Eileen Iorio, Heather Knuth, and June Swanson, and also to Ellen Williams-Gardner for the memory book and Linda Fryz for the delicious ribbon-cookie favors. The committee was also out in force at the event to volunteer for registration, Satchel tables, and auction sales. This was a fantastic committee to be a part of, and another shining example of how CREW Women can get things done!



Now that we are glowing and proud of what we have accomplished so far, I want to make the plea that we still need your help to reach our goal for the year! Our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Charity Golf Outing is coming up on Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>. Registration is now open, and I encourage all of you to come to golf or just to join us for dinner – it will be a fantastic afternoon and evening. Sponsorships for this event are still available, and we are also in need of auction items. Remember that our Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation so all donations are tax deductible and letters will be provided. Please contact me at [vweida@comcast.net](mailto:vweida@comcast.net) or 412/916-6579 with any questions, or regarding donations for this event, or for more information about the Foundation activities in general, or how to get involved. Keep those journal donations coming. Thanks again to all of you for your support and remember that together we can make a difference!

### Sponsorship Update

by Debra Flinner, Citizens Bank

CREW Pittsburgh would like to thank the corporate and individual sponsors who have helped raise over \$20,000 dollars this year in support of our organization and the CREW Pittsburgh Foundation.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available for the High Tea Awards Banquet scheduled for November 14<sup>th</sup> at the Omni William Penn Hotel. Please contact me at 412/867-2148 or via email at [debra.flinner@citizensbank.com](mailto:debra.flinner@citizensbank.com) for additional information.

### Events Update

by Megan Zillweger, Laureate Capital

The Comedy Club event is slated for September. More details will be forthcoming soon on our website at [www.crewpittsburgh.org](http://www.crewpittsburgh.org). Come join us for an evening of laughs and fun!

### Downtown Property Cruise



Colleen DeFilippo & Sharon Landau



Ellen Gardner, Lisa Scally, Pal Schlachter & Kim Ford



Jeff Keating & Dan Puntill

# Connections

## Board of Directors

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## CREW Network Convention

Never before has the commercial real estate industry experienced opportunities rising quite like they are today. Markets are strengthening, cultures are changing and doors are opening across all sectors of the industry. Join us for three powerful days at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, Georgia (October 18-21) with women and men who, just like you, are focused on building networks, strengthening their market knowledge and making deals happen.

Look for informative sessions on:

- Pitch to Win: How to Give Presentations that Win Business
- Strategic Negotiation for Leadership Success
- Fundamentals of Real Estate Management
- Evolution of Capital Markets
- The Secrets of Retail Site Selection
- Eminent Domain: "Hello, I am from the Government and I am Here to Take your Property."
- Urban Universities – From Isolation to Neighborhood Transformation
- Business with Big Business – Corporate Real Estate Trends
- New Smart Growth Developments – Prototype Communities for Sustainability



To get more information on this event or register, please go to [www.crewnetwork.org/events/Events\\_frm.html](http://www.crewnetwork.org/events/Events_frm.html) or contact Heather McPeck at CREW Network 785/832-1808 or [heatherm@crewnetwork.org](mailto:heatherm@crewnetwork.org).

## Women's Research Study

The University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing is conducting a research study that investigates the effectiveness of meditation on reducing menopausal symptoms, and they are currently recruiting women ages 30 to 65 to participate. If you are interested in participating in the study or learning more, please contact Margaret R. Haas, School of Nursing University of Pittsburgh at 412/383-5874.



## 2006 Board of Directors

Front Row L to R: Heather Knuth, Virginia Weida, Heather Kozlowski

Back Row L to R: Tracy Merzi, Christi Neroni, Debra Flinger, Jennifer Cowles

Not pictured: Eve Bursic, Marcia Grimes, Megan Zillweger, Mary Guinee

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