



# **AIA Update**

For the  
**International Presidents' Forum**

**May 2008 – April 2009**

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*This report provides highlights key initiatives and accomplishments of the AIA organized around the organization's four goals.*

## **GOAL I: INCREASE MEMBER VALUE**

### **AIA Membership**

The AIA continued to grow in 2008 as year-end total membership reached 86,026, up by nearly 4 percent from in 2007. The number of Architect members increased 3 percent for the year, while the number of Associate members increased by 7.6 percent. Preliminary numbers for 2009 membership renewals as of February are 25 percent below target. Retention and recruitment strategies are underway.

### **Resources for Navigating the Economic Downturn**

As the global recession has deepened, AIA leadership and staff have continued to provide resources to members and components to assist them with strategies and tactics to position architects in firms of all sizes to survive the downturn and prepare for the coming recovery in areas as diverse yet interrelated as energy efficiency, resource conservation, integrated project delivery, contract documents, international commerce, community development, emergency preparedness, and government advocacy with the steady gathering and rapid dissemination of this universe of knowledge.

Between September 1, 2008 and February 26, 2009, there were 41,298 page views of resources on the website. Specific resources delivered include:

- On AIA.org, the Navigating the Economy page, offers articles and podcasts on practice management, resources on managing personal finances and professional challenges, and more than a dozen Web links to related information.
- A January 15 AIA-sponsored webinar, "Designing a Financial Plan in Uncertain Times," was viewed in 899 locations; since then it has been accessed more than 200 times.
- To accommodate market changes in demand for short-term and long-term architectural talent, the AIA Career Center now has a Post Outsourcing/Contract Opportunities category to assist members.
- A page for project opportunities links to Professional Prospects sites that carry hundreds of government and private-sector leads.

### **Emerging Professionals**

Grassroots hosted three emerging professionals programs that focused on mentoring, changes to the intern development program, professional development and best practices that have been developed by components and firms to encourage the development of emerging professionals. These topics, along with the downturn of the economy will be the focus for both the NAC and YAF for 2009, particularly because less senior staff are often more vulnerable to staff reductions.

### **Expanding Diversity at Grassroots**

The strategic initiative of diversity was represented in several activities at this year's Grassroots Legislative and Leadership Conference. A pre-Grassroots workshop was offered titled, "Diversity, Representation and Inclusion for AIA Components." This workshop explored what those terms mean to the AIA and how its components can support members in creating a more diverse and inclusive organization and profession. The workshop featured representatives from AIA components who described best practices implemented locally.

### **Shadow an Architect**

For the first time at the Grassroots conference, the Institute hosted a Shadow an Architect program which brought 20 students from Washington, D.C.'s Phelps Architecture, Engineering, and Construction High School to the conference and on a tour of the Washington Convention Center led by 2008 AIA President Marshall Purnell, FAIA, a principal of the architecture firm that designed it. Students then led 14 AIA volunteer mentors on a tour of the Phelps school and presented their work, which spans every facet of the architecture, engineering, and construction industry. Such mentoring events expose young people to the profession as they begin to make choices about their future education and career. As part of a general session on the future of the profession, Grassroots attendees were treated to presentations by representatives of the Charter High School of Architecture and Design in Philadelphia, the ACE Mentoring program, and Freedom by Design (an AIAS project). Each of these presentations highlighted how the profession can be more inclusive and diverse by creating opportunities for the next generation of architects.

### **Sustainability**

#### **2030 Coalition**

During a productive 2030 Coalition CEO meeting in October, the coalition resolved to broaden the scope of work for 2009 to include a new focus on educational resources, research, and knowledge sharing while continuing already strong advocacy efforts.

#### **2030 Commitment**

The AIA 2030 Commitment is a voluntary program for AIA components, member firms and other entities in the built environment. It asks these organizations to make a pledge, develop multi year action plans and implement steps that can advance the AIA's goal of carbon neutral buildings by the year 2030. The AIA 2030 Commitment will formally launch at convention. To date, we have eight firms who have already shown early support for the effort by adopting the AIA 2030 Commitment. Those firms include: SHW Group, The Miller | Hull Partnership, OWP/P, EwingCole, Gould Evans, HKS, Inc., Lionakis, Perkins + Will, and ADD.

#### **Sustainability Continuing Education**

Beginning this year, four of the required eighteen annual CE learning units must be in sustainable design.

### **GOAL II: BE THE AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE**

#### **Relaunch of [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org)**

The new integrated AIA Web site was officially launched in a phased approach beginning on February 2, 2009. The first phase of the project introduced the new AIA homepage, and main subpages to include condensed and streamlined content areas

focused on the practice of architecture, education, becoming an architect, advocacy, industry standard tools (Contract Documents), events, and consolidation of all search functions across content and knowledge areas into an easy to use interface. The new site will eventually fully integrate the extensive knowledge repository (formerly named SOLOSO, renamed Architect's Knowledge Resource, which provides access to the AIA's expansive compilation of knowledge objects as well as allows members and others to contribute their knowledge and expertise to this resource. New features include:

- "Member Spotlight" found on the homepage which includes video or audio interviews and other related content about the projects and accomplishments of members.
- "Member Project Spotlight" which features projects submitted by members to the Architect's Knowledge Resource. Viewers will select their favorites and vote on projects which will be showcased throughout the AIA.org Web site including one project that will be showcased on the homepage.
- An area of the homepage focused on the strategic initiatives of the Institute and other important topics of the profession. This page provides links to resource centers containing all of the important information and toolkits available to the public and members on the various topics/initiatives.
- Additional upgrades to the Web site are planned for subsequent phases in 2009.

#### **AIA 2009 Annual Convention**

"The Power of Diversity: Practice in a Complex World" is the theme for the April 30 – May 2 annual convention in San Francisco. A broad range of sessions are being offered to address some of the most pressing needs of our members. These include:

- Job coaching, resume writing, interviewing, and portfolio development
- Business planning, marketing, and firm evaluation
- Human Resource/legal aspects for downsizing and dissolution
- Repositioning for large and small firms
- Life coaching to include stress and health management
- A full-day workshop ("Trends, Tools and Tips for Uncertain Times") to provide resources for members that will help them survive in the current market and position themselves for recovery.

Flexible options will be offered to respond to the budget and time constraints of our members. Participants can take advantage of a one-day registration option or a free Expo pass which allows them to peruse more than 800 exhibitions and attend general sessions.

For the first time, AIA is offering virtual options for those who cannot attend Convention including: live streaming content from the keynote presenters via the Internet; online exhibitors with new and innovative products and services (available to chat in real time); a limited number of critical education sessions streamed live; and networking opportunities for like-minded (virtual) attendees.

As of March 2, registration is down 11 percent compared to this same time last year.

### **GOAL III: SERVE AS THE CREDIBLE VOICE**

#### **Rebuild and Renew**

The AIA Board Advocacy Committee and AIA Government Affairs staff launched the Rebuild & Renew program to help members work with their congressional representatives—to bring the focus to the state and local levels—as well as the Obama Administration—to approve funding—and encourage school modernization; green commercial, The American Institute of Architects Washington, DC residential, and government construction; regional development and transit projects; and financing for ongoing historic preservation projects. The AIA provided specific recommendations to be included in the Administration’s recently passed economic stimulus plan, The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, including funds for infrastructure improvements work that could potentially benefit members and architectural firms. Many of the AIA’s recommendations were incorporated into the final bill passed in February. Other accomplishments:

- Between January 1 and February 26, there were more than 7,500 page views of the Rebuild & Renew Web page.
- 16,558 messages were sent to Congress since December through the Vocus database system.
- Collaboration with more than 80 organizations on issues in the Rebuild & Renew agenda such as school modernization and others.
- AIA testified before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in support of green federal buildings in the stimulus bill.

#### **2009 Grassroots Legislative and Leadership Conference**

877 attended the 2009 Grassroots Conference. AIA component leaders came to Washington, D.C., to advocate for the policies included in the AIA’s plan for economic recovery, Rebuild and Renew. AIA leaders met with their congressmen and senators to support the stimulus bill and advocate for policies that would help architects get back to business.

#### **Advancing Citizen Architects**

“Citizen Architect on the Move” was launched in February. This program features interviews and podcasts with Citizen Architects from across the country to highlight architects who are involved with their communities on a civic level. Featured architects discuss the interplay between civic engagement and architectural practice, explain the value and influence of the AIA in getting architects involved, and examine the role of architects in politics.

#### **Pro Bono Service Guidelines**

In December, the Board approved “Institute Guidelines to Assist AIA Members, Firms and Components in Undertaking Pro Bono Service Activities” to encourage AIA members, their firms, and state and local components to provide pro bono services as part of their contributions to the profession and the Institute in service to society. Through participation, AIA members can support and further Institute priorities, such

as sustainable design and practice, diversity, and the public's awareness of the value architects bring to their communities.

**AIA Speakers Registry**

The speakers registry is a national database of informed professionals prepared to speak on a range of topics from affordable housing to the latest design trends. The registry was launched in January with a two-part goal: first, to respond to the increasing requests for knowledgeable and effective speakers and second, to give key decision makers who have a role in shaping the built environment access to the expertise of AIA members and others in the industry.

**GOAL IV: OPTIMIZE ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

**New Association Management System**

Actions are underway to transition from TIMMS to Net Forum. Implementation is targeted for 2nd Q 2009.

**“One AIA” on the Road**

The AIA national component staff visited at least one state or local component and one architecture firm in 2008. The purpose was to better understand member needs, their challenges, and identify best practices.