

NAIOP NEW JERSEY CHAPTER PRESIDENT OUTLINES GOALS

Brandywine Realty Trust's George Sowa vows to build on the Success of his Predecessors

When he officially took over in January as President of the New Jersey Chapter of NAIOP, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association, George Sowa lauded his predecessors, including immediate past President Jeffrey Milanaik of Heller Industrial Parks. "We have the opportunity to build on their legacy. The strength of our members, aided by the recovering economy, has put some wind in our sails," he said at the Chapter's Annual Meeting

With that legacy in mind, Sowa, Executive Vice President and Senior Managing Director of Brandywine Realty Trust, has outlined six goals for his term as President of the 530-member chapter, which is the tenth largest among the 56 NAIOP chapters in North America. Diversity, advocacy, technology and branding highlight his ambitious agenda as the chapter's president.

"Goal number one is to increase the NAIOP brand, both internally and externally," he said. "With our own membership base, we want to make sure that our members fully understand what we do and how we do it. Our membership is extremely dedicated, and we want to get our members even more engaged than they already are.. As with any organization, the more you put into it, the more everyone gets out of it.

"Externally, we have become a statewide force, and we want to continue to make sure our political leaders and other trade associations understand who and what we are," Sowa said. "We are actually good for the economy—we are not 'the enemy' by any means. We want to continue to increase our role in the political process to ensure the collective voice of our members is heard and to assist in shaping key legislation. We also want to increase our affiliations with other trade associations to facilitate a broader reach and to help achieve our respective goals."

Goal number two on Sowa's agenda is to continue to improve on NAIOP NJ's already highly successful events, including the Annual Gala, President's Awards, the Annual Forecast, chapter meetings and seminars, ensuring that they continue to be timely and topical. "We intend to keep our members fully engaged," he said. "Accomplishing that drives our committees, and our event attendance."

Goals three and four include forging closer ties with Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, as a key resource; and in general, utilizing technology "to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves for our staff and enhanced services for our members."

Goals five and six involve diversity, both demographically and geographically. "We would like to see more minorities and women actively involved in this organization," Sowa said.

"And geographically, our goal is to expand our membership in central and southern New Jersey. This is the New Jersey Chapter of NAIOP, and it represents the entire state. We need to ensure that we are seen and speak as one voice on state-wide issues," he said. Several Central and Southern New Jersey members have already been added to the chapter's Board of Directors, and an additional goal is to have more chapter events in that part of the state.

"Nothing is 'broken'," Sowa emphasized. "Everything is in place for the continued success of this organization. We will revisit some of the things that we have been doing, and we will continue to see how we can do things even better. We have made our mark on New Jersey's economy and business community, and we will continue to be a force to be reckoned with."

Immediately prior to being elected as NAIOP New Jersey's President, Sowa had served as the chapter's Vice President-Public Affairs. He has been on the chapter's Executive Committee for seven years, including a term as Treasurer, and is also a member of NAIOP Corporate's Board of Directors. For Brandywine Realty Trust, a publicly traded real estate company with more than 300 properties comprising 36 million square feet nationally, he oversees the firm's nearly 6 million square foot office portfolio in New Jersey and Delaware.

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