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Condo Questions? Discover CAI

By McCurdy, Secretary, Highlands of Avondale Condominium Association
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Do you live in a condo or homeowners association? If so, you're in good company. According to the Community Associations Institute (CAI), in 2014, an estimated 66.7 million Americans lived in homeowners associations, condominium communities and cooperatives, with more than one million of us living in Wisconsin.

Lucky for us, there's CAI – an organization focused on people living in community associations. CAI is a national, non-profit, educational organization created for community association leaders and the professionals who provide services to them. CAI members benefit from affiliation with not only the National organization, but with the local chapter, CAI-WI, an active group with a great deal to offer, including a subscription to the chapter's quarterly magazine - Community Leader, seminars, networking opportunities, access to industry experts in Wisconsin, and the CAI-WI and national websites.

Why Join CAI?

I got involved with CAI in 2010, when I was appointed Acting President for a small, contentious, self-managed condo association. Finding CAI-WI was like an answer to a prayer. A newspaper article described CAI-WI's upcoming conference and trade show featuring educational seminars, networking opportunities, and experienced exhibitors. The association's Secretary and I joined immediately, attended the conference and came away with knowledge and skills to help govern our community and Board more effectively and with less anxiety. The Wisconsin chapter and National publications continued the process of education and confidence building. Today I serve on the Board of a large managed community as Secretary. Being a member of CAI has been invaluable to me and the associations I've served, with the benefits far outweighing the cost.

At a recent CAI chapter meeting, I had the opportunity to speak with a few other members. When asked why he was a member, Jeff Hunt, CEO of Hunt Management, a community association management company, and current CAI-WI chapter president said, "Hunt Management represents more than 65 client associations in Southeast Wisconsin; we value the many benefits of CAI membership, both locally and nationally. Most important are the educational offerings, including courses, seminars and publications, which our managers take advantage of to earn CAI National certifications and designations. Having access to CAI's wealth of best practices, they become more knowledgeable in their trade and are better able to manage their client associations." Hunt added, "The opportunity to network and share information is very helpful. Membership is a win-win relationship for all."

Lydia Chartre Esq., CCAL, an attorney specializing in condominium law at Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek S.C. said, "Some condominium owners throughout Wisconsin may not be aware that there are specific state statutes that govern them, and attorneys that specialize in condominium and HOA law. Thankfully, there is an organization for condo and HOA owners to have direct access to this information and

attorneys through legal seminars provided throughout the year at little to no cost for members. CAI-WI connects condo owners to professionals whose services are tailored directly to their association's unique needs.

As co-leader of Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek S.C.'s Condominium and HOA Law Team, I am highly involved with CAI-WI's Board of Directors and Legislative Action Committee, which is actively lobbying our state legislators for necessary changes to the Wisconsin Condominium Act, to ensure that associations' interests are better served by the law."

Jesse Bozman, Senior Account Executive for Landscape Concepts Management, Inc. explained why he joined CAI. "I wanted to be connected to a national organization that focuses on the condominium and HOA industry. As a CAI member, I have found the benefits of membership are worth the investment - including access to CAI's website and opportunities to interact with this very specialized audience through chapter events, writing for the chapter magazine and involvement on committees. In addition to connecting with board members of self-managed associations and community managers, I have established strategic relationships with other service providers that have connected me with potential clients."

If you'd like to experience what CAI-WI is all about, attend its Annual Conference & Tradeshow on Friday, March 11, 2016, from 11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at Country Spring Hotel in Pewaukee. This year's conference will feature a legal panel, a number of educational sessions and more than 60 exhibitors. The event is open to the public.

CAI-WI members can attend for \$20 and non-members \$50. Walk-ins are welcome. To register or learn more, call 262-532-2440 or visit www.cai-wi.org.

About Community Associations Institute

CAI is an international membership organization dedicated to building better communities. With more than 33,500 members, CAI works in partnership with 60 chapters. CAI provides information, education and resources to the homeowner volunteers who govern communities and the professionals who support them. CAI's mission is to inspire professionalism, effective leadership and responsible citizenship—ideals reflected in associations that are preferred places to call home.

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