

## **Mixing Business with Politics**

### *BOMA Members Take to the Halls of Capitol Hill*

By Laura Horsley

BOMA members throughout the U.S. came to Washington in early February to take commercial real estate's message straight to legislators on Capitol Hill during the 2010 *Winter Business Meeting* and *National Issues Conference*. A record number of meetings on the Hill took place as members met with lawmakers to discuss how issues such as energy, carried interest and leasehold depreciation have a tremendous impact on commercial real estate and the broader economy.

Here are a few highlights:

Senator Ben Cardin (D-Md.), co-chair of the Senate Real Estate Caucus, addressed BOMA members during the "How to Take our Message to Capitol Hill" session, telling attendees that job creation and a strong commercial real estate industry go hand-in-hand. Cardin also spoke about the current tax deductions for energy improvements, saying they are important but noted, "we need to improve it [the deduction] and make it more realistic with actual costs."

During the General Session sponsored by AlliedBarton Security Services, keynote speaker Charlie Cook, publisher of the *Cook Political Report* and Columnist for the *National Journal*, offered insight into the tumultuous political climate in Washington. Cook referred to independents as the largest and most influential political group, coining independents as "purple America" and suggesting that they look to sway heavily Republican in the 2010 elections.

BOMA 360 Performance Program Council Chair Dan Chancey honored representatives from BOMA 360 Performance Buildings during the General Session. Said Chancey, "BOMA 360 is exactly the kind of program the industry has been asking for and designees are telling us it is the best way to position their buildings as best in class."

Attendees also heard from Senator Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), co-chair of the Senate Real Estate Caucus, and Representative Danny Davis (D-Ill.). Isakson told attendees that cap and trade is essentially dead in the U.S. Senate and that "tax treatments that incentivize business are needed."

When it came time to take to the halls of Capitol Hill, BOMA members came out in record numbers to discuss energy and tax issues and the importance of a healthy commercial real estate industry to boost economic recovery.

*Winter Business Meeting* and *National Issues Conference* attendees had a chance to network during the Opening Reception, sponsored by Naylor, and swap Capitol Hill stories at the Networking Reception, sponsored by ThyssenKrupp. A very fitting

BOMAPAC fundraiser during the Networking Reception had attendees posing for photos with Washington's Political Elite - *even if the politicians seemed a bit stiff.*

**Look for it.** Check out what BOMA members had to say about their visits to Capitol Hill on BOMA's YouTube Channel, [www.youtube.com/bomainternational](http://www.youtube.com/bomainternational)

## **Board of Governors Highlights**

By Lindsay Tiffany

BOMA International Chair Jim Peck kicked off the business meeting with the approval of the general consent, minutes and new members. Peck told the Board of Governor's that the "power of the BOMA business network is stronger than ever" and that we're "creating a platform for high performance buildings as we interface with other groups."

Bob Peck, commissioner of public buildings, U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), was among the guest speakers at the Board of Governors meeting. Peck remarked that GSA appreciates its strong relationship with BOMA and derives value out of BOMA's meetings, education and the Experience Exchange Report (EER), which the federal government uses to benchmark against the private sector.

Peck briefed the crowd on how GSA is using its \$5.5 billion in stimulus money to green the U.S. building stock and create green jobs. Said Peck, "I think GSA has a responsibility to be a green proving ground—to beta test new advances and share our information with you."

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's Director of ENERGY STAR® Commercial and Industrial Branch Jean Lupinacci also addressed the Board of Governors, praising BOMA and its members for their commitment to energy efficiency. At least 50 percent of all office buildings in the U.S. have assessed their energy performance through ENERGY STAR, which Lupinacci credited in part to BOMA's market reach and the synergy between the two organizations.

BOMA Canada Chairman Michael Miceli briefed attendees on programs and news from BOMA members in Canada. Miceli reported that the annual BOMEX conference, held this past September in Quebec, saw an increase in attendance, and that BOMA Canada continues to bring pandemic preparedness resources to the industry, with a toolkit and guidebook available to property professionals. Miceli also discussed the success of "BOMA BESt," an industry standard for environmental certification with 1,400 buildings certified since 2005.

BOMA International Chair-Elect Ray Mackey and Vice Chair Boyd Zoccola, presented the Year in Review address, where they stressed the important role BOMA has played over the past year in helping the industry through the economic downturn. Despite current challenges, membership and attendance at events remained strong and BOMA

filled critical industry needs by introducing the BOMA 360 Performance Program, the new online EER and two new building measurement standards.

They also noted that BOMA continues to lead in all things green. In 2009 BOMA was recognized by the EPA with a 2009 Climate Protection Award and a 2009 ENERGY STAR Award for Sustained Excellence, receiving the ENERGY STAR award for the third straight year. Mackey also cited BOMA's work with the U.S. Department of Energy to launch the Commercial Real Estate Energy Alliance and the adoption of the 7-Point Challenge by several cities. Zoccola also delivered the report on the Medical Office Buildings Committee, which is preparing for its first stand-alone conference in Chicago, May 5-7.

In his financial report, BOMA International Secretary/Treasurer Kent Gibson explained that while 2009 was a tough year for the industry, BOMA International remains on solid financial footing and ended the year with a positive bottom line.

Dan Chancey, chair of the BOMA 360 Council, reported on the new BOMA 360 Performance Program. In the first six months of the program, close to 50 buildings have been designated and 40 more are in the pipeline. He added that the Council has decided to change the renewal schedule from annual to every three years, though designees will still need to participate in the EER and benchmark with ENERGY STAR every year. Chancey also announced that the Council has developed a guidebook on how to develop a Standard Operating Procedure manual.

Judy Purviance-Anderson with BOMA/Denver Metro delivered reports on the activities of the Government Affairs Committee, the Preparedness Committee and the BOMAPAC Council, during which the Board of Governors passed two new policy positions. The first was a revision to BOMA's policy on Preserving a Democratic Workplace. The second was a new policy on energy efficiency/green building codes.

John Scott, BOMA/Miami, briefed attendees on the Sustainability Task Force's new addition to the 7-Point Challenge, which provides guidelines for vendors who want to adopt the challenge by delivering innovative and cost-saving solutions to BOMA members to deploy in the reduction of energy use in existing buildings.

The 2009 Local Association EER Participation Award Winners were announced during the Board of Governors. The winners are:

Overall Winners

First Prize - BOMA/Houston

Second Prize – BOMA/Sacramento

300 Members Plus

BOMA/Atlanta

150 to 300 Members

BOMA/Austin

BOMA/Cincinnati

BOMA/Cleveland

Less than 300 Members

BOMA/Virginia

BOMA/Portland

BOMA/Carolinas-West Virginia

BOMA International President Henry Chamberlain ended the program with a report on “the BOMA pulse,” a snapshot of current conditions in the commercial real estate industry and a look at opportunities and challenges ahead. Chamberlain cited stable membership, strong fund balances and a strong financial base as the keys to BOMA local associations’ continued success and noted that some stabilization in office sector jobs will boost recovery for the commercial real estate market.